



Buckinghamshire County Council

Minutes *OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR ADULT SERVICES*

AGENDA ITEM: 3

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR ADULT SERVICES HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2005, COMMENCING AT 9.50 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.25 AM IN MEZZANINE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr B G Allen (Chairman), Mr S Kennell, Mr B Lidgate, Mr C F Robinson, OBE, Mrs D Summers, Mr F Sweatman, Julia Wassell and Mr H G W Wilson

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs C Capjon Policy Officer
Mrs S Moore Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Mr J Cartwright, Mrs B H Jennings, Mrs E Lay and Mr D Rowlands.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Adult Services held on 9 November 2005 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following addition under Item 1 – 'Apologies were also received from Mr P Roberts.'

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Caroline MacKinnon gave a brief overview of performance management and performance monitoring within the County Council. She explained that as a Member led Council, Members set the overall policy direction and senior management was responsible for implementing it. Implementation cascaded down the organisation as managers supervised teams and employees delivered services. Caroline touched on the Corporate Plan which contained 7 new cross cutting aims along with objectives and targets for the Council as a whole; the Medium Term Resource Plan which identified areas for investment or protection with the remainder of services being deemed cash limited and the Medium Term Financial Strategy which outlined 3 year spending plans for service areas. She also commented on best value performance indicators (BVPIs) and how targets were filtered down through service plans, teams plans and individual plans.

Caroline explained the role of the 9 Policy Advisory Groups (PAGs) in giving informal Member advice to Cabinet Members on particular policy matters. In terms of corporate reporting, there were quarterly traffic light reports presented to Cabinet by the policy team with respect to the 31 targets which related to the 7 Council aims. (It was noted that there were over 900 targets contained within all the service plans.) The Chief Officers' Management Team received information on a range of matters including targets relating to Council aims, customer satisfaction organisational health, risks register and BVPIs. Portfolio performance reports brought to the attention of Cabinet any areas of concern.

With reference to monitoring the Council aims, it was explained that the Adult Services OSC would receive a traffic light report on those targets which mapped onto the Council aims that were within the remit of the Committee. With reference to Appendix 1 on page 12 of the papers, it was explained that a report would be submitted to the Committee on a quarterly basis for scrutiny. The Committee may wish to focus on those identified as invest/protect areas or may wish to identify trends emerging over the course of the year.

In response to a question, it was commented that an additional high level report had been requested by COMT as a means of receiving additional operational advice. This "executive summary" type report was still in the process of being developed by the policy team.

A Member enquired as to whether there was an expectation that performance would drop in services areas that were deemed cash limited. Caroline indicated that this was not the case.

In response to another enquiry, Caroline explained that if it looked unlikely that a particular target would be achieved within the timescale set, when entering this information into the performance management software a field emerged requiring production of an action plan to ensure the target was met. A report on the progress made towards achievement of targets within a service plan could be run off the performance software at any time. Targets that had already been achieved were not dropped within a particular year but continued to be monitored to ensure performance was maintained. However, each service plan was an annual one and targets

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might differ from year to year. Caroline also commented that Cabinet Members and Strategic Directors were reviewing the 7 Council aims and thus the 31 targets mapping onto the aims might change in future.

A Member commented that performance management appeared to be a top down process. The Policy Officer remarked that employees had an input into development of the Corporate Plan and in the service planning process. The Member suggested that details of employee input into the development of the Corporate and Service planning process was included in future presentations.

Caroline MacKinnon

There was some discussion around how the Committee wished to scrutinise the adult services targets. In response to comments made it was agreed that the Committee would receive a "traffic light report" on the targets set in the Corporate Plan on a quarterly basis. Clare Capjon undertook to explore provision of financial figures relating to each target in the report. Members also asked that the Policy Officer write to the Portfolio Holder on behalf of the Committee requesting:

Clare Capjon

Clare Capjon

- a) Details of the percentage of enquiries currently answered at first contact with respect to target 1b
- b) Information on how target 4d was to be performance managed through the year as the target was an annual one
- c) Development of measures for targets 5b, 5c and 6d as per suggestions outlined below.

Clare Capjon

With respect to target 5b, it was suggested that a measure could be "increase of x number of assessment for carers and families" or " x number of care plans including respite care." It was felt that exactly what type of support was envisaged by "supporting parents in later life" needed to be defined.

Regarding target 6d, it was remarked that community needs should be researched further. A measure could be "x communities researched" and/or "target funding to x communities." Caroline agreed to feed these back to the relevant target owners working on these measures.

Caroline MacKinnon

The Committee thanked Caroline for her presentation and looked forward to receiving the traffic light report in February 2006.

5 SCOPING FOR AN INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINTS TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE FROM MEMBERS OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITIES

There was extensive discussion around the merits of setting up a working group to understand why there were comparatively few complaints about Adult Social Care services by members of Asian communities. During the discussion the following points were made:

- The number of complaints received by Asian communities was proportionally lower than expected given the percentage of the population that Asian communities comprised.
- Certain Members felt that the Asian community should not be singled out as the subject of a working group investigation. There were other minority communities such as those from former Eastern Bloc

countries that could potentially be the subject of a similar working group. Alternatively, the working group could consider all communities for whom English was not a first language. On the other hand, it was mentioned that lessons could be learnt from an investigation into potential barriers to a community engaging with Adult Care Services which could be applicable to other minority or hard to reach communities.

- Concern was expressed about what would be the most culturally sensitive consultation mechanism. It was commented that there were differences between various Asian communities and it was vital not to generalise or stereotype. It would be important to consult a cross section of people in the various Asian communities.
- Some Members came out strongly in support of formation of a working group, viewing this was an opportunity to understand the Asian community better. They felt it important to establish if there were barriers to certain sectors of the population accessing County Council services.
- Concern was expressed about an alternative complaints procedure being set up for Asian communities. It was explained that this was definitely not the intention. The County Council had one complaints' procedure for the whole population.
- A Member relayed comments made by a representative of a Racial Equality Council (REC) which could be seen as being opposed to the proposed project. Another Member commented that different REC's might have different views on the merits of the proposed working group project and that the Aylesbury REC was in support of the project.
- It was suggested that instead of setting up a working group, comments could simply be sought from Racial Equality Councils on whether there were barriers to Asian Communities making complaints.
- It was noted that some District Councils had already done similar work
- Some Members disputed the need to set up a working group, feeling that there was insufficient evidence to suggest there was significant dissatisfaction with Adult Care Services that was not being reported. Another Member suggested that without an investigation, the level of dissatisfaction could not be known with any certainty.
- It was highlighted that the Head of Service for Older People had indicated that the Council was not engaging well with minority communities. A Member felt that as concern had been expressed about this, it was important to enquire as to whether there were barriers to engagement.
- Clare Capjon explained that she had already contacted representatives from RECs, an Imam and colleagues at Wycombe District Council when preparing the scoping paper to establish if there was a need for a working group investigation.
- The Chairman enquired as to which Members would like to sit with him on the Working Group. Mrs D Summers, Julia Wassell and Mr S Kennell expressed their interest.

It was agreed that the Policy Officer would prepare a comprehensive paper on the proposal to convene a working group to look at why there are so few complaints from Members of the Asian Community about Adult Social Care Services encapsulating the discussion held at Committee. This would be circulated to members of the Committee inviting comments and expressions of interest in joining the working group.

**Clare
Capjon**

6 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman commented that the Cabinet Member had requested that the Committee consider the failure of the implementation of the Domiciliary Care Review to achieve the anticipated savings.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 11 January 2006 at 9.45am in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall

CHAIRMAN