

ADULTS, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 29TH June, 2011

Present – Councillors Ashcroft (Chairman), Greenhalgh (Vice-Chairman) P. Brierley, Clare, A. Connell (as deputy for Councillor Iqbal), M. Connell, Gillies, Jones, Kellett (as deputy for Councillor White), McKeon, Mistry, Rushton, Mrs. Swarbrick and Mrs. Wild.

Lay and Co-opted Members

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| Ms. J. Martin | - Foster Carer |
| Mr M. Pickering | - Parent Governor Representative |
| Ms J. Pritchard-Jones | - Unison |

Also in Attendance

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| Ms S. Schofield | - Assistant Director,
Neighbourhood Services and
Committee Chief Officer Support |
| Mr I.D. Mulholland | - Principal Scrutiny Officer |
| Councillor Bashir-Ismail | - Executive Member for Adult
Services |
| Councillor Peel | - Executive Member for Children's
Services and Safeguarding |
| Mrs M. Asquith | - Director of Children's Services |
| Mr J. Livesey | - Assistant Director Performance,
Planning and Resources |
| Mr D. Grogan | - Assistant Director Building
Schools for the Future |
| Mr A. Birch | - Assistant Director Enjoy and
Achieve |
| Mr J. Daly | - Assistant Director, Staying Safe |

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| Mr A. Kilpatrick | - Chief Officer for Health and Social Care |
| Ms E. Miller | - Assistant Director Strategy and Commissioning |

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hall, Iqbal and White and Mr G. Evans of Age Concern and Mr J. Firth of Bolton Links.

Councillor Ashcroft in the Chair.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Committee, held on 5th April, 2011 and the minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held on 7th April, 2011 were submitted.

Resolved – That subject to the inclusion of Mr G. Evans in the list of attendees for the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Committee both sets of minutes be signed as a correct record.

2. COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

The Committee were appraised of the agreed meeting dates for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

Wednesday, 29th June at 6.00 p.m.
Wednesday, 17th August, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.
Monday, 17th October, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.
Wednesday, 30th November, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.
Tuesday, 31st January, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.
Wednesday, 4th April, 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

Resolved – That the position be noted and that an additional meeting be factored into the diary to be held on Thursday 8th March, 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

3. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received presentations from the Director of Adults and Community Services and the Director of Children's Services to aid Members in their deliberations on possible work programme items.

In addition to the presentations Members were also furnished with:-

- the Committee remit;
- the Work Programmes for the last Municipal Year in respect of Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Committee and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee;
- details of issues to be taken into account when putting forward work programme items; and
- matters left over from last Municipal Year.

In terms of the issues concerning Adult and Community Services, Mr Andrew Kilpatrick, Chief Officer for Health and Social Care and Ms Ellen Miller, Assistant Director Strategy and Commissioning gave a presentation which reminded Members of the essential work of the Department and that the Culture and Community Services Section had a total net budget of £5 million and the Social Care/Strategy and Commissioning Section had a gross spend budget of £89 million.

The presentation then went on to focus on the following areas:-

National Policy Issues

The Committee was advised of the following key drivers in this area:-

- Personalisation;
- NHS and Social Care Bill;
- Dilnot Commission;
- Law Commission Review;
- Safeguarding Legislation; and

- Learning from the challenges to the Libraries Act.

Local Policy Issues

In terms of the Local Policy Issues, the following were raised as the key matters going forward:-

- implementation of Library Review;
- implementation of Personalisation (quick and easy; my choice; right care);
- dealing with demographic pressures;
- integration with NHS partners; and
- quality of services.

Improving Performance

With regard to Improving Performance, the following areas were covered:-

- the level of ambition in challenging times;
- managing performance with reducing resources;
- awaited the national adult social care outcomes framework;
- focus on improvement on safeguarding adults; and
- evidence of continued delivery of a quality cultural offer.

Savings and Efficiencies

The Committee was advised that the 2011/12 target was £6.23 million.

The major proposals were:-

- review of Care Management;
- reduction in the commissioning budget;
- reducing cost in Council Care Services;
- new charging policy; and
- review of the Library network.

In terms of 2012/13, the target was £4.7 million and this involved:-

- review of strategy; and
- review of staff development.

Members in their discussions referred to :-

- matters around the customer journey and enablement and funding issues,
- monies coming across from the PCT and issues around whether funding would be used to alleviate pressures in Adult Social Care and the demographic pressures; and
- matters around the courses available at the College Campus and at satellite locations for young adults with disabilities.

In terms of possible items for inclusion in the 2011/12 Work Programme, Members put forward the following suggestions:-

- matters around concerns that some individuals at care homes might not be located with like minded people. Also issues of integration and stimulation;
- matters around the personalisation agenda and possible visits to care homes. It was also indicated that this matter could possibly be a scrutiny panel;
- issues concerning a reduction in the elements of the eligibility criteria and matters around meeting moderate needs;
- matters around the impact of those in the care sector who did not speak English;
- engagement with Bolton Links in terms of their power to view care homes;
- a response to care home closures;
- updates regarding the personalisation agenda take up and case studies;
- the library review;
- matters around the need to make savings and the issue of museum charges; and

- issues around individuals moving from children's to adult's services, the process and transition.

With regard to the Children's Services element, Members were advised by the Director, of issues around the following five areas:-

The Committee was informed that the Department had an overall budget of £274m for 2011/12 and a Capital Programme of £38m.

Members were also reminded of the various functional areas of the Department viz:-

- Children's Social Care;
- Early Years and Child Care;
- Schools; and
- Other, for example, alternative provision, YoT.

National Policy Issues

With regard to the National Policy Issues it was indicated that these were:-

- academies;
- free schools;
- new post 16 funding model;
- Education Bill; and
- SEN (Special Educational Needs) Green Paper

Local Policy Issues

The key local issues were as follows:-

- Improved provision for pupils in the PRU (Pupil Referral Unit) system; and
- demographic change.

Improving Performance

It was explained that the key priorities remained:-

- economic prosperity; and
- narrowing the gap.

The areas for improvement were:-

- educational improvement;
- NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training); and
- children's health.

Savings and Efficiencies

The Committee was advised that the 2011/12 and 2012/13 programme was approved by The Executive in January 2011.

The total savings target was £16.8m – (£11.2m in 2011/12 and £5.6m in 2012/13), as follows:-

- Early Years - £2m;
- positive activities - £3m;
- school improvement - £2.8m; and
- back office/support services - £2.6m

In terms of the next steps, it was indicated that this involved the identification of a challenging 2013/14 programme totalling £5m.

With regard to school budgets, the Committee was advised:-

- overall funding was maintained but inflation unfunded;
- pupil premium shifting funding to FSM (free school meals pupils); and
- schools DFC (Devolved Formula Capital) reduced.

Members in their deliberations referred to:-

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- matters around the Pupil Premium and whether individuals in the middle missed out;
- fixed terms exclusions and the protocols around this;
- the funding of school dinners and pricing for children from poorer backgrounds;
- reduced funding for early years and the impact of this including at the children's centres; and
- matters around connections and personal advisers in schools.

In terms of possible items for inclusion in the 2011/12 work programme, Members put forward the following suggestions:-

- exclusions including fixed terms and issues around control, protocols and data;
- issues around looked after children;
- matters around the obtaining of hard evidence that the Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures actually work in terms of the identification, tackling and reduction of bullying in schools;
- the Educational Maintenance Allowance abolition and its local effects;
- ADHD in education and how the different Centres deal with different aspects;
- the impact on children of food additives and stimulants;
- the reduction in the free bus services and the impact on the Pupil Referral Units;
- the opportunities for Post 16 young people and the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) issue;
- the impact of academies on the Council and admissions Policies;
- funding for the combined Authority regarding early intervention, any duplication and the fair allocation of funding;
- academy achievement and a joint Policy Development Group meeting with the Scrutiny Committee;
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- the future of post 16 – funding, numbers and approach;
- place planning for schools; and
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) statement allocation and timing.

Resolved – (i) That the various documents and presentations to aid the work programme discussions be noted.

(ii) That the suggested work programme items be noted and that discussions be now held with the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of this Committee and both Directors and a draft programme be prepared for agreement at the next meeting.

(iii) That the issues of the Library Review be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

(iv) That Members of this Committee be furnished with details of the actual cost to the Council of school meals.

4. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee was informed that two questions had been submitted for consideration under Standing Order 36, viz:-

Question submitted by Councillor Greenhalgh.

1. Q.

In view of the recent revelations regarding the finances of “Southern Cross”, could the Executive Member update the Scrutiny on the dialogue that had taken place between the Council and, “Southern Cross”, and the future implications for staff and service users in Bolton within the organisation?

A.

The following response had been prepared by the Director of Adult and Community Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Adult Services:

There were three care homes in Bolton run by Southern Cross. These were Meadowbank, (47 beds), Four Seasons (121 beds) and Astley Green (30 beds). All three were regulated, had good inspection reports and were viable, well-run homes with good occupancy. Both the Council and the NHS Bolton purchased placements within all three homes.

The Council had regular contact with the three local homes and with NHS Bolton and were monitoring the local situation. Good relationships existed with local management and they fully understand the current situation.

The Director had a telephone conversation with the Southern Cross Northern Regional Director on Friday, where details were shared about national developments. Southern Cross confirmed that the Bolton homes were viable and well-run and there were no concerns about their future.

The Director was involved in regular conference calls through ADAS, the Directors organisation, sharing feedback from national meetings between Southern Cross, Department of Health and ADAS.

Regionally, all North West councils had collated information on Southern Cross homes and had shared intelligence etc. This would continue for the foreseeable future.

The latest statement from Southern Cross confirmed from Friday's call was as follows:-

Southern Cross had reached agreement with their various landlords and there were standstill arrangements in place until October 2011. It was believed that some further information might be available by the end of July on the future plans of some landlords - i.e. they might decide to run homes themselves, if they were already a provider. By October, some homes might transfer ownership but care continuity was secure. Southern Cross were planning to arrange regional meetings with Councils, NHS, regulators and others during late July to provide updates on the above,

In summary, dialogue continued locally, regionally and nationally. There were no concerns for the three homes in Bolton and monitoring of developments would continue.

Question submitted by Councillor Mrs. Wild

2. Q.

Could the Officers/Executive Member please advise the Committee in light of the recent proposals to introduce Free Schools, how many applications/expressions of interests in such schools were there in Bolton?

A

The following response had been prepared by the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services and Safeguarding:

There were 2 current applications for a free school in Bolton, one at Lever Park Special School, and one for a Muslim Boys School.

It was understood that a decision would be made on these applications by September, at which point the Local Authority would be consulted formally.

Members in their discussions referred to matters around possible impact issues and the number needed for a Free School.

The Committee also received extracts of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) Executive held on 18th April, and 27th June 2011;
- (b) Children's Policy Development Group held on 25th May, 2011;
- (c) Executive Member for Children's Services held on 7th June, 2011; and
- (d) Executive Member for Adult Services held on 7th June, 2011.

Resolved – (i) That the two questions submitted and the responses be noted.

(ii) That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 8.22 p.m.)