

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 9.18pm

ADULTS, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMISSION 24 JANUARY 2011

Present: Councillor Skelton (Chair)
Councillors Chera, Hussain, Lowe, Radford, Shanker and
Turner

In attendance: Councillors Ingall and Webb

61/10 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Leeming

62/10 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

63/10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

64/10 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

65/10 To consider any matter referred to the Commission in relation to a Call-in of a Key Decision

There were no items for call-in.

66/10 To consider any matter referred by a Member of the Council in relation to a Call for Action

There were no calls for action.

67/10 Health Scrutiny Updates

Members received a presentation given by officers from NHS Derby City entitled "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS". An overview was given of central government's policy towards healthcare and related public

consultation leading to the introduction of the Health Bill to Parliament on 19 January 2011. Key elements include the establishment of GP Consortia for commissioning and local Health and Wellbeing Boards aimed at strengthening the public's voice in influencing service delivery. The timeline was outlined for these changes taking place between December 2010 and April 2013. An outline of work to date and planned in Derby and Derbyshire was also given.

Members asked a number of questions on the anticipated number and make up of GP consortia in Derby. Officers replied that there were, as yet, no definitive plans for GP consortia in Derby. Officers observed that there had generally been a positive response to the proposed changes from GP in Derby. Members expressed their desire to be actively involved in the forthcoming changes. Officers suggested that a positive starting point would be to engage with GP's in a member's own ward. Officers also undertook to note the desire of the commission to play an active role in the proposed changes.

68/10 Pharmacy First Decommissioning

Members received a brief update given by officers from NHS Derby City on the decision made in September 2010 to decommission Pharmacy First. Members heard that the cost of the scheme had increased by 34% over the past two years and that there is no longer a requirement to support GP practices to reduce appointments relating to free prescriptions. It was observed that there are more opportunities for service now open to patients than when the scheme was originally commissioned. To confirm that these services are available to all an EIRA (Equality Impact Risk Assessment) is currently being carried out. The Pharmacy First service will continue to operate until 31 March 2011.

In response to a question about a potential loss of service from pharmacies officers from NHS Derby City referred members to a potential consultation on a walk-in centre and offered to return to the commission in March to provide a further update if required.

69/10 Budget Scrutiny

An initial presentation was made by officers giving an overview of the budget strategy. An overall reduction in funding of £14.9M (million) has been seen from £128M in 2010/11 to £113.1M for 2011/12. Further budget pressures of £3.4M have been identified across Adults, Health and Housing (AHH) for 2011/12. Members were referred to the outline of budget pressures and potential savings for AHH given in the Revenue Budget Proposals report for 2011/12 - 2013/14.

A series of further presentations were then made as follows:

Housing Rent and Service Charges 2011/12 – It was reported that average rents are to be increased by 7.8% in 2011/12. This is in line with other authorities and government drivers. However, even after this rise rents in Derby will still be 10% below government target rents. Service charges are also to rise, by approximately 5% (that is Retail Price Index (RPI) + 0.5%). It was also observed that an income of £350M will be needed over the next 30 years in order to maintain housing stock.

Housing Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2013/14 – A final presentation on the housing element of the budget reported a potential shortfall in the Disabled Facility Grant (DFG).

Members questioned the potential shortfall in the DFG and were told that if funding was reduced in this area then waiting times, currently running at 18 months could increase towards the maximum specified waiting time of 24 months for work to be undertaken.

Further questions from members related to the impact of increasing rents on tenants. Officers replied that they might expect a small increase in numbers requiring help with paying rent, currently approximately two thirds of tenants. Additionally pressures could be transferred to young people living at home in these households.

Members asked how the commission would get sight of proposals for savings of £400k (thousand) in joint efficiencies through a review of services provided by Derby City Council and Derby Homes. Officers replied that work in this area was still being undertaken with proposals to be made at cabinet in February and at full council in March. Appropriate procedures for reporting and consultation would be followed but final details were unlikely to be known until June. Members highlighted the importance of looking at improvements to service as a way of identifying savings rather than taking savings as the starting point for investigation.

Members raised concerns over the potential savings identified in the Derby Advice service, highlighting that the service may be needed to a greater extent than in the past given the current economic climate.

A final question from members related to the completion of an EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) of the likely impact of the proposed savings. Officers replied that assessment was and would be carried out and directed members to the section of the budget proposal report showing the findings. They added that it was a requirement that the budget was balanced but that the findings of all EIA's would be used to inform decisions as to where and how actual savings would be made.

Officers next presented budget proposals around adult social care including details of budget pressures and proposed savings.

Members asked a number of questions relating to the adults accessing a minimal level of care of less than 2 hours per week and a discussion followed

as to potential eligibility thresholds in future. Officers indicated that savings of £600k for 2011/12 did not represent a full year's savings due to the time needed to confirm eligibility criteria.

Further questions from members focused on the potential for movement from long term care to enablement services. Questions were also asked as to the efficacy of enablement services with little apparent change in those requiring support. Officers replied that the service had been effective in absorbing demographic changes during the last 3-4 years. A robust evidence base supports the value of this enablement service.

Members next questioned plans to make savings on day care for older people who may be heavily dependent on care. Officers replied that all options were being considered and that savings would be looked at in satellite services as well as at the two day care centres.

The next question posed by members concerned the proposed saving of £300k from the closure of care home beds. Members asked for data used in calculating these savings and questioned whether external provision in this area would not in fact be more expensive than that currently offered by the council. Officers offered to provide this information to scrutiny members after the meeting.

Further questions from members concerned the size of grants available to the voluntary sector if, as indicated, they are to be encouraged to take over a greater provision of services. Officers replied that £6M of contracted services and £3M of grants would still be in place with a greater emphasis to be placed on contracted services. Services offered by micro providers (providers with less than 5 employees) would be actively encouraged.

Recommendations

- 1. That care is taken in evaluating the scale of possible savings through joint efficiencies identified via a review of housing services provided by Derby City Council and Derby Homes.**
- 2. The importance of the Disabled Facility Grant and the potential impact of any shortfall on other costs are to be conveyed to cabinet in the strongest terms.**
- 3. Caution to be exercised in considering funding for Derby Advice as there may be an increased demand for the service given the current economic climate.**
- 4. The Commission would like to see the financial evidence supporting the value of closing care homes. This is to be communicated as a recommendation direct to cabinet and as part of the consultation currently taking place on care home provision.**
- 5. The Commission agreed that Morleston Street and Whitaker Road Day Centres should not be closed without viable alternatives being found. Those people using the day centres need a continuing service to meet their substantial and critical needs.**

It was commented that the layout of budget papers this year made the information much easier to follow than in previous years.

70/10 Seeking Clarity on the Chair's position in relation to the Derby Homes Contract Consultation

Councillor Webb declared an interest in this item as a board member of Derby Homes and left the meeting.

A question was raised asking for clarification of the chair's position in relation to the Derby Homes Contract Consultation.

71/10 Retrospective Scrutiny

No items were identified for retrospective scrutiny.

72/10 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

Two items were identified from the council cabinet forward plan for consideration at future commissions:

- Council day services – appraisal of options
- Home care services for older people

73/10 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items referred to the commission by council cabinet

74/10 Response of Council Cabinet to Commission's Recommendations

The commission noted the response from council cabinet to the commission's recommendations.

MINUTES END