

ITEM 4

Time commenced : 6.00pm
Time finished : 7.45pm

SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH COMMISSION 24 JANUARY 2005

Present: Councillor Hussain (in the Chair)
Councillors Dhindsa, Hird, Jones, Leeming, Nath, Turner,
Webb and Willitts

Co-opted members – Elaine Jackson, Philip Johnson and Sir
Michael Raymond

48/04 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

49/04 Late items

There were no late items.

50/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

51/04 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2004 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendment:

to remove Councillor Jackson from the Apologies for Absence and include Elaine Jackson.

52/04 Call-in

There were no call-ins.

53/04 Revenue Budget 2005/06 – 2007/08

The Commission received a presentation on the draft revenue budget for 2005/06 – 2007/08 from Margaret McGlade – Director of Social Services.

Members considered those aspects of the Council's draft 2005/06 – 2007/08 revenue budget that fell within the remit of the Commission. The Council's draft revenue budget was issued to Overview and Scrutiny Commission members at the briefing meeting on 11 January 2005. Members were aware that decisions had yet to be taken about the ways in which to spend a sum totalling £700,000 to be allocated for spending on public priorities.

The Performance Eye Performance Monitoring facility gave the Overview and Scrutiny Commissions the means of monitoring the affects and outcomes of the funding for Council services, agreed through the budget process. It was suggested that each Commission could identify particular service areas within its remit and could at subsequent meetings use Performance Eye to track progress and examine performance and the outcome of the budget allocation within those areas.

Social Services budget was influenced by national and local planning agendas which included, amongst other issues, the Children's Act, 2004: reducing the number of children in care; recruiting more in-house foster carers and adoptive carers; supporting people initiative; the joint equipment service with the NHS, and reducing the number of people in residential and nursing care.

Margaret McGlade advised members that the key budget issues included:

- ongoing changes in funding regimes
- independent sector fee levels
- demographic pressures
- recruitment of children's social workers
- use of independent fostering agency placements
- safely reducing the numbers of children looked after.

The key pressures provided for included, the cost of modelling the cost of care, foster care fee increases, social work traineeships and adult care volume increases.

There was a planned reduction in the number of elderly people in long term care. A forecast net reduction of 40 placements for residential nursing care during 2005/06 and for younger adults, a forecast increase of 18 placements during 2005/06.

Margaret outlined the key risk for 2005/06 which included:

- pressures above budget for children's services
- inability to recruit and retain staff
- electronic social care records
- budget reductions in 2006/07 – department received £1m one-off payment in 2004/05 to cover pressures but this would be kept in the budget this time with a view of reclaiming in 2006/07.

Councillor Turner asked if the pressures in children's services meant there was an issue with the service. Margaret McGlade responded that some children were in long term care and some short term. Four to five years ago assessment criteria was more relaxed and some children were in care that needn't have been. There were some cases that were easier to look after than some coming in now. The issue was whether carers wanted to work with the Council and whether the package was attractive enough.

Councillor Berry supported the Commission's next topic review of Children Looked After Services and commented that this was an excellent topic for review.

Councillor Nath commented that a reduction in residential care might create a pressure in home care. Would the money saved from residential care automatically go to home care or could it go elsewhere? Was the Council moving away from lower level care and were higher charges being removed. Margaret McGlade advised that she did not propose taking any money out of home care as they wanted to manage the pressures there. There was currently a best value review of home care being conducted. They had not shifted their position and were still providing low-level care and there was no intention to revisit until after the best value review. There was also no intention to review home care charges currently. There was nothing in the budget to change the limit on the maximum charge.

Councillor Nath asked how the Supporting People service was going to be improved and had they budgeted for improvement. Margaret McGlade advised that the Supporting People budget was in the Policy budget although a number of Social Services were funded through Supporting People. Supporting People did not receive all the income that they expected this year and its budget had to be adjusted to compensate.

Councillor Hussain asked what was the size of gap between the proposal by the Council for home care and the expectation of the private sector. Margaret McGlade advised that the independent sector wanted 15% whilst the Council was offering 7% return on capital since the residential and nursing care market was stable.

Jim Manton advised that when the Council did the model, they use 7%, 5% as the base rate and 2% risk premium. Councillor Leeming commented that 7% was a good investment and 15% was far too high and should go on what the market forces.

Councillor Hussain asked if we ever saw the bottom line of care homes' accounts. Jim Manton advised that the smaller local providers were private companies and they could choose what information they shared. The national accounts were only composite accounts. Councillor Berry commented that there was no effective watchdog and they were hoping that this would change.

Councillor Hussain asked how our fee levels compared with Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. Margaret McGlade responded that in the October 2003, Derbyshire put their prices up and this year Derby had caught up but we did not know their proposals for next year. Jim advised that Nottinghamshire were the highest and we paid more than Leicester City but not Leicestershire. One outcome of the Gershon report was that eventually all fees would be agreed regionally.

Councillor Webb commented that the 15% fee levels was what Pricewaterhouse recommended for a brand new 50 bed home and not the homes currently used in Derby.

Mahroof Hussain asked in terms of purchasing for independent fostering agencies, did the Council spot purchase. Margaret McGlade responded that currently all purchasing was spot purchasing and they were trying to bring this

down. They did speak to the independent fostering agencies about block purchasing. The Councils policy was to reduce the total number of placements in the independent sector and the Council would try again with this approach this year.

Resolved to ask Mahroof Hussain, Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Officer, to formulate recommendations to be agreed in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair.

54/04 Review of Hospital Car Parking Charges Final Report

Mahroof Hussain advised the Commission that the draft report had been sent to the Primary Care Trust in November and a response had been received in December and they found on the whole the report was quite balanced, although they did make some comments.

Members agreed that they should reaffirm the stance regarding charges not being used for hospital services and that these should be put back into car parks. The Chair asked Mahroof Hussain to write to Brian Ibell with comments on behalf of the Commission and the PCT would have to respond within 28 days by law with reasons for not carrying out any of the recommendations.

Elaine Jackson commented that it would be a good idea to patrol the car park checking people parked in disabled people bays.

Resolved to approve the final report and submit the report to the Derby Hospitals Foundation Trust.

55/04 Inspection of Children's Services

The Commission considered the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) Report of Children's Services conducted in October 2004. Margaret McGlade advised that an inspector from CSCI attended the Cabinet meeting and the presentation was very positive. This report reflected really well on children's services. It made a range of recommendations and noted that staff were very committed at all levels.

Councillor Hussain commented that the report was extremely positive, although the Council needed to take a strategic approach to procurement and arrangements need to put it in place. Since the time taken to complete assessments was taking too long, were we likely to improve on this? Margaret McGlade responded that an action plan would be compiled taking into account all recommendations made by CSCI. Margaret advised that they were trying to parallel a plan for children who came into care and if they had doubts in a case and were not able to send a child back home, they would start arranging adoption immediately. There was no age limit for adoptive parents or children but it was difficult to find adoptive parents for older children.

Resolved to note the report.

56/04 Healthcare Commission – Assessment for Improvement Consultation

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services about the proposals by the Health Care Commission for a new approach to assessing performance of organisations providing health care in the NHS and the independent sector.

The Commission were advised that the Health Care Commission was responsible for assessing the performance of NHS bodies annually and awarding a performance rating. The Commission had developed a new approach to the way they assessed the health care organisations and it intended to adopt this from April 2005. A new process aimed to make the assessment less burdensome and target resources at those that needed it. The key elements of the new approach were detailed in the report. These included more emphasis on improvement and better outcomes and proposals to change the existing star rating of 0, 1, 2, 3 to very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory and serious concerns.

The Commission was invited to give its comments to the new assessment process by 21 February 2005. The Health Care Commission had produced a detailed questionnaire and welcomed views on all sections of the document, it particularly sought views on whether they were assessing the right things and that they assessed them in the right way.

Councillor Leeming commented that a lot of people did not know what the three stars meant. Councillor Hussain also commented that the proposed rating would be easier to understand.

Members agreed to:

- thank the Healthcare Commission for offering the opportunity comment on their proposals
- welcome the opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to contribute in their annual assessment process
- comment on the areas for assessment and support the balanced approach to be taken in using existing data and only seeking additional information where necessary, to minimise the workload for the health bodies
- ask for clarification on how Overview and Scrutiny Committees could be involved in setting local targets
- seek clarification on how the new assessment process related to other inspection regimes such as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of local authorities by the Audit Commission and awarding Excellent, Good, Fair, Weak and Poor ratings and suggest their ratings system adopts a similar terminology.

Resolved to ask Mahroof Hussain, Overview and Scrutiny Coordination Officer, to submit a response to the Healthcare Commission on behalf of the Commission.

57/04 Review of Children Looked After Services

Mahroof Hussain suggested to the Commission that it would be useful to listen to people who delivered the service first and then consider the terms of reference for the review. Councillor Hussain asked that Social Services give a presentation at the next meeting of the Commission. Councillor Dhindsa asked that background papers and reviews that had already been completed be provided to Commission members and sent to them before the next meeting.

58/04 Matters referred to the Commission by the Council Cabinet

There were no items.

59/04 Responses of the Council Cabinet to any reports of the Commission

There were no items.

60/04 Council Cabinet Forward Plan

The Commission identified the following items on the Council Cabinet Forward Plan for consideration at a future meeting:

Reference	Decision Matter
59/04	Joint Funding Commitments to the Voluntary Sector 2005/06
88/04	Supporting People Financial Plan
57/04	Best Value Review of Home Care for Older People – Final Report and Improvement Plan

MINUTES END