

**MINUTES of the meeting of Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny
Committee held on 28 January 2013 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present: Councillors Wendy Curtis (Chair), Mark Coxshall (Vice Chair),
Sue Gray, Martin Healy and Tony Fish (arrived at 7.45pm)

Apologies: Councillor Wendy Herd

In attendance: Councillor James Halden
Councillor Shane Hebb
Mike Jones – Finance Officer
Les Billingham – Head of Adult Services
Roger Harris – Head of Commissioning
Matthew Boulter – Democratic Services Officer

37. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 4 December 2012, were approved as a correct record subject to attributing a comment regarding the CCG to the CCG Chief Operating Officer and also amending the sentence to 'the National Commissioning Board has power to assign GPs to the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group'.

38. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair raised the current issue of ambulances running over their prescribed response times and the Committee agreed to send a letter to the East of England Ambulance Service to ask for further explanation.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Curtis declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 5 by virtue that her daughter works in adult social care.

Councillor Fish declared two non-pecuniary interests, both in relation to Item 6 by virtue that he was a blue badge holder and that he sat on the Board of Directors for the CVS.

40. ADULT SOCIAL CARE DRAFT LOCAL ACCOUNT 2012

The Committee was informed that this had been the first local account ever produced by adult social care and it summarised a number of achievements, new ways of working and future projects including:

- A user led service in partnership with the Thurrock Coalition.
- Tackling areas of challenge in the personalisation agenda.
- Developing the Carer's Strategy.
- Outsourcing the Carer's Advice and Information Service.
- Working towards integrated services with the NHS.
- Greater work around early intervention.
- Becoming more of a commissioning authority.
- Reducing the demands put on the adult social care service through building capacity in community support, early intervention and changing housing service to provide more suitable homes for older people.

In response to a question officers highlighted that complaints were very low with regards to this service and although external providers accounted for three quarters of the service, the Council's own internal provision accounted for fifty percent of the complaints. Officers explained that because the Council dealt with the allocation of resources, this was the area that attracted most complaints so this was to be expected.

Officers clarified that the document did not go out for official consultation but was circulated to partners for comment and comparison with other strategies to ensure it was complimentary to them, it would then go to the Health and Well-Being Board for final sign-off.

Members welcomed the use of case studies and noted the impressive service user feedback.

RESOLVED That the report is noted.

41. BUDGET 2013/14 – 2014/15 SAVINGS AND CAPITAL PROPOSALS

Contracts Management and Provider Development: Agency Costs

This saving was achieved through deleting an agency budget reserved for peak activity during tendering processes. Officers confirmed that the budget for this would be under spent this year also.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Contracts Management and Provider Development: IT Costs

The current system for logging this information would end this financial calendar year and the proposal was not to renew this but use other established IT systems to capture the same data. It was confirmed that historic data would be transferred over to the other systems at no extra cost.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Performance Quality and Information

This saving was achieved by merging the adult and children's services and reducing the service manager posts by one. Some under spend would be made this year on this budget but there were redundancy costs to be paid.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Performance Quality and Information: Agency Budget

This was an agency staff budget saving in the Performance quality and information team. It would under spend slightly this year.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Service Managers – Adult Social Care

This budget had previously been used to buy in external specialists to help on project management. This was now funded through the standard budget and was no longer required. It did not impact on any existing staff.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Cafe Kynoch and Cafe Piggs Corner

The Kynoch cafe was making more profit than the council had expected so it was planned to extend the service to Piggs Corner using the profit from Cafe Kynoch. Cafe Piggs Corner would then turn over enough money next year to become self-sufficient. The subsidy currently used to support Cafe Kynoch was no longer needed and could be offered as a saving.

Officers clarified that the cafes were open to all and were run commercially.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Provider Side Efficiency Review

Officers stated that this saving had already been made but was taking effect over a number of financial years. This proposal gave the committee more detail on the proposals already agreed.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

HIV/AIDS Grant

This proposal would maintain the coverage and quality of the service but would delete half a specialist role which would be subsumed within an existing general social worker role. There would be no redundancies from this proposal.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Review of Charging Policy

This proposal was to only increase the cost of blue badges from £2 to £10 for a three year badge. The scheme had not been reviewed for a number of years. Councillor Halden spoke in favour of the proposal but requested that the Committee establish a working group in the next municipal year to further scrutinise the charging schemes of all the relevant services in preparation for further savings already scheduled by Cabinet for 2014/15. The Committee agreed to add this to the work programme so that it was registered for next year.

During the discussion it was stated by officers that the £10 fee would still be a subsidised charge as the cost of any administration, paperwork and any appeal processes would exceed the money made from the scheme. £10 was the statutory limit a council could charge.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Demographic Growth- Reduce Requirement

The proposal was to save 10% of the growth bid formerly requested for adult social care services. This was made possible with the newly renovated Elizabeth Gardens which allowed greater capacity for elderly people to recover post hospital and therefore reduce the pressure on high dependency residential care placements.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Domiciliary Care Tender

This saving would be achieved by reducing the rate paid to providers. Officers felt that the saving amount would increase as there could be more people in receipt of a service than previously estimated. However, the Council was currently in a court case with a domiciliary care provider who was not successful in a recent contract bid. This could incur costs that would affect the amount of money saved.

Members queried whether the case could be won and officers stated that their legal advice was that the Council had a very strong case but such cases were never clear cut. If the Council won, it would seek to reclaim all legal costs.

Members felt that the saving was not guaranteed and requested further information outside of the meeting but agreed the proposal in principal.

Deleting a post in the Performance, Quality NS Information Team

There were currently two posts within the team that were not statutory. The proposal was to delete one of these posts. Members requested that the paperwork reflect that a member of staff would be made redundant in the first table.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Placement Review Programme

The Council had established a team to review costly external placements to see if the price could be renegotiated or that the service users could be found better, more cost effective supportive living schemes within Thurrock. It was estimated that £500,000 could be saved through this in 2014/15. In addition the proposal called for an extensive review of front end processes from first contact through to commissioning of service, to ensure that any duplication was removed and that close monitoring of short term placements was embedded within the system to increase efficiency.

Officers assured the Committee that it was rare for families to move to be nearer the service user in their placement. Most placements were within the east of England.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Contracts and Commissioning Vacancies

There were currently two vacancies within the contracts and commissioning team and the proposal was to delete one of these posts. Work would have to be re-assigned to existing staff members. It was also clarified that the teams fulfilled two distinct roles although they overlapped on certain procurement exercises.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Deliver efficiencies from in-house provider services

This proposal was to invest funds now to save money at a later date. The proposal would see the Council review all its services to ascertain whether they should be provided in-house, or delivered by an external agency.

Following a question, officers stated that the initial investment would come from either a central fund or through the Council leaving positions vacant for longer or using some of the Re-enablement funding to fund relevant parts of the exercise.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Collins House Review

This was another invest to save proposal. Councillor Coxshall expressed concern that the money for investment was not guaranteed and that the future aims of these services, once invested in, were uncertain. Officers replied that the projects were supported within the Council and appropriate funding would be found. The Council had clear aims to transform the services and ways of working.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Further Budget Review – Directorate Management Costs

The merging of adult and children's services produced savings across the two budgets.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Reviewing the Meals on Wheels Service

The current meals on wheels service was due for renewal in 2014. Services were changing and this service was increasingly being provided through the personalisation budgets of individual users and domiciliary care. Therefore, savings could be made but would be brought to the committee in more detail in six to nine months.

Officers confirmed there were roughly 150 users of meals on wheels.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Trading Standards

Councillor Hebb introduced the proposal stating that an investment in a trading standards officer who looked solely at issues relating to the health and well-being agenda (underage selling of tobacco) would save costs through primary care. Members noted that this work was already undertaken in the team but there was no dedicated resource.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Zero Based Adult Social Care Packages

Officers stated that they already worked rigorously to reclaim any expenses from partners regarding the cost of care. Only statutory costs were covered. Members agreed that detailed information on this service be provided in the next performance report.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Increase Accessibility for Independent Social Care through Assistive Technology.

The finance officer confirmed that current funding was already committed. Officers agreed with the aim of the proposal and agreed to bring back a further report to committee on this.

The Committee agreed the proposal.

Community Driven Local Area Co-ordination

The proposal was to use community interest companies to discharge the local area co-ordination duties. Officers agreed this was another model but made the case for the local authority leading the process initially as there was evidence to suggest that councils were best placed to support individuals and families with complex needs and the high case loads at the start of such a transformation.

Members felt that both models needed to be compared in practice and that it was an issue that could be discussed in more detail at future meetings.

The Committee agreed the proposal for a one year pilot of both models subject to regular comparative evaluation throughout the period..

The Committee noted the capital spends.

RESOLVED That the comments and decisions written above be noted and forwarded to Cabinet.

42. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee agreed the following:

- The Chief Executive of BTUH and Quality Accounts items be removed from February's meeting.
- An additional meeting be scheduled for April to accommodate an Autism report and the Out of Hours GP Service.
- A report on CCG Authorisation be added to March's meeting.
- Blood Testing Services be added to the April meeting.

The Chair also informed the Committee that she had written to all health partners to seek assurance that all their staff were properly CRB checked.

**RESOLVED that the changes to the work programme be noted.
The meeting finished at 9.26p.m.**

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Matthew Boulter, telephone (01375) 652082,
or alternatively e-mail mboulter@thurrock.gov.uk**