

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 25 September 2007.

PRESENT: Mr J B O Fullarton (Chairman), Ms C J Cribbon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr M J Angell, Mr J Curwood, Mr C Hibberd, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr P W A Lake, Dr T R Robinson, Mrs E D Rowbotham, Mr M J Fittock (Substitute for Mrs M Newell) and Mr R Tolputt (Substitute for Mr R E King)

ALSO PRESENT: Mr K G Lynes

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr O Mills (Managing Director - Adult Social Services) and Mr S Leidecker (Director of Operations)

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **29. Minutes of the meetings held on 4 July and 24 July 2007**

*(Item A3)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 4 July and 24 July 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

##### **30. Chairman's Announcements**

*(Item A4)*

(1) The Chairman thanked Members of the POC for electing him as Chairman at the 24 July meeting. He placed on record his congratulations to Mr M C Dance on the latter's appointment as Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement and his appreciation of Mr Dance's work as Chairman of the POC.

(2) Mr Lynes added his congratulations to the Chairman on his election.

##### **31. Towards 2010**

*(Item B1)*

(1) The Chairman emphasised that an annual report on progress towards the 'Towards 2010' targets, and a chance to comment on it, gave the POC a key chance to influence the development of policy making.

(2) The Cabinet Member, Mr K G Lynes, introduced the report and said that he had fought hard to highlight the Directorate's key aspirations and identify targets which would be most helpful in achieving them. He said how proud he was of KASS officers and the reputation Kent had for excellence and its innovative approach to service provision, promoting TeleHealth, Telecare, Direct Payments, etc. The Directorate was always short of resources and funding and was facing a number of ongoing pressures from demographic changes and the changing needs of the aged and those with physical and learning disabilities.

(3) Mr Lynes and the officer team answered questions and responded to concerns put to them by Members on each of the five targets, which, Mr Mills emphasised, were interdependent. Comments made by Members, and clarifications, were given by Mr Lynes and officers in response to Members' questions, were as follows. Clarifications are in italics.

#### *General Points*

- (a) The report setting out the background of, and progress towards, each of the targets is excellent, very clearly laid out and easy to follow.

#### *Target 52*

- (b) Equipment needs to be ready and available to accommodate the expansion of TeleHealth and Telecare, especially now a much bigger expansion is planned following Kent's successful £4.8m bid in partnership with both Eastern and Coastal and West Kent PCTs for the Whole System Demonstrator (WSD). *The number of Telecare installations, at July 2007, was 750 and the number of TeleHealth, at September 2007, was 247. WSD money would extend Telecare by 1,500 and TeleHealth by 1,000. The 2010 target had been set before the outcome of the WSD bid was known.*
- (c) The NHS needs to continue an active role in expanding the use of Telecare and TeleHealth, to match the efforts being put in by KASS. How can we ensure full involvement of the NHS in this and other preventative work? *The relationship between KASS and the NHS is more effective now and joint working is excellent. PCTs have huge financial issues but we believe they are doing as much as they can.*
- (d) We need to be sure that we will obtain maximum value from the WSD money by using the appropriate tender process. *The £4.8m WSD money is specific, ring-fenced Government money which can only be used for this programme..*
- (e) We need to be able to identify demographic trends and plan well ahead to meet them. *Extensive work has been undertaken on demographic predictions for the next 20 years and Kent is good at forward planning in response to these.*
- (f) We need to press for an increase in the building of Lifetime homes to avoid the need for future adaptations for the elderly and physically disabled. How can we influence other bodies and commercial companies to provide services to support independent living? *£72m has been allocated for the "Better Homes, Active Lives" PFI scheme and there are plans for some 300,000 extra care sheltered housing places across the county. Kent can work to influence District Council planning colleagues on the value of using Section 106 contributions to help address the need for homes with built-in adaptations. KCC Members who also serve on Borough and District Councils have a key role in moving this forward. The Older Persons' Strategy is being developed to address this issue, alongside Valuing People and*

*Community Partnership Boards. The Kent Design Guide now includes a clear specification for lifetime homes.*

- (g) We need to have a clear definition of what is meant by “preventative services” before we can target how to address them. *The preventative agenda is vital to head off future problems. Brighter Futures (in West Kent) is an excellent model for the future, while £1.5m for Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPPs) in East Kent will provide similar schemes.*

#### *Target 53*

- (h) It is difficult to identify the number of carers in Kent, and, until we can see the extent of demand for services, it will be difficult to assess the effectiveness of our services.
- (i) There are always a number of carers who do not wish to be identified and are happy to be left alone, but these people often only seek County Council help when they reach the end of their own resources.
- (j) The Carers Select Committee report will cover these issues and it is vital that this feeds into the POC agenda, and the POC needs to be proactive in taking forward its recommendations. It is vital that work on the recommendations is ongoing, with the POC receiving regular updates on progress.
- (k) The Carers Select Committee had identified many outside organisations and specialists who provide services for carers. Some are KCC funded and some part-funded. Many carers are simply unaware of the range of providers, so we need to publicise this.

#### *Target 54*

- (l) How does the KCC charging policy compare to those of other local authorities? *Kent has resisted raising its eligibility criteria and has consistently brought services in on budget year after year. This is better than many other local authorities. Kent’s ability to do this is a credit to the KASS staff who provide these services.*
- (m) When will measurable performance indicators be firmed up for these targets? We would need to do this soon as ‘Towards 2010’ targets have been around for a year so far. *Consultation is going on on a new set of national performance indicators and I agree that we need to put these in place soon. We have been disappointed by previous performance indicators which did not distinguish between delayed discharges caused by Social Services and by Health. We prefer to invest the money we would have paid in fines into services to prevent people having to be admitted to hospital in the first place.*

### *Target 55*

- (n) We need a clear definition of the age group to which transition services refer. *Different pieces of legislation apply to different age groups, and work is going on to simplify and clarify the process. Work is also going on in the County Councils Network at the Local Government Association (LGA). In Kent, transition is approached jointly between Kent Adult Social Services and Children, Families and Education, with KASS taking the lead.*

### *Target 56*

- (o) It is essential that Kent residents are encouraged to and do take up their maximum benefit entitlement as it gives them the optimum standard of living and also helps the KCC to identify levels of need (the potential “audience”) for our services. This in turn is helpful to KCC when bidding for Government funding. *We have a duty to maximise the take-up of benefits to offset the costs of care packages provided (thus making the best use of public money), and agree it is in our interests to do so, but there are still those who are hard to reach, who either do not know what they are entitled to or do not claim it for some other reason.*
- (4) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) the report be noted, and progress made towards the ‘Towards 2010’ targets for which KASS is responsible, be welcomed; and
  - (b) Members’ compliments on the report style and content and all the work put into progressing the targets thus far be conveyed to the staff concerned.

## **32. Response to the Questionnaire on Overview Committees**

### *(Item B2)*

(1) The Chairman introduced the paper and noted that the Adult Social Services POC had shown up well amongst other POCs as making the optimum use of its powers. He said his aim was for the POC to be the best at embracing the scrutiny role and helping the Cabinet Member to form policy.

(2) In discussion, Members made a number of comments on the report content, as follows:-

- (a) The POC has already done well in contributing to scrutiny and has always engaged well with the Cabinet Member to address issues – I would not seek to change the process we have, including the way the POC challenges the Directorate and his management team in the role of ‘critical friend’.
- (b) The split between Adults’ and Children’s Services meant that we had a reorganisation fairly recently and we need time to settle down again before we make any more changes in the way the Committee works.

- (c) The questionnaire answers said that too much time is spent listening to officers introducing reports. It would be a better use of time to assume that Members have read the reports.
- (d) Members also engage with the issue outside the formal POC meetings through mechanisms like cross-party subject briefings and District Member briefings. These raise Members' awareness and give them a chance to meet and question officers, but the success of these relies on active Member support and attendance.
- (e) Members need to be able to see issues which are coming up in good time to have maximum opportunity to engage with and comment on them.

(3) Mr Lynes stated that it was his intention at all future meetings to sit alongside the Chairman of the POC as it offered the opportunity for all Members of the Committee to scrutinise issues and question him on any aspect of the portfolio being discussed at those meetings.

(4) Mr Mills said he found the questionnaire mechanism an excellent way of gaining good practical feedback and that he welcomed the 'critical friend' role of the POC.

(5) RESOLVED that the Cabinet's response to the POC questionnaire, and the comments made in discussion by Members, listed above, be noted.