

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 25 June 2010.

PRESENT: Mr P W A Lake (Chairman), Mr K Pugh (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr R Brookbank, Mrs P T Cole, Mr N J Collor, Mr J Cubitt, Mrs V J Dagger, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J E Scholes and Mr C P Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M J Angell, Mr D L Brazier, Mr G K Gibbens and Mr R Tolputt

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr O Mills (Managing Director - Adult Social Services), Mrs M Howard (Director Of Commissioning And Provision - West Kent) and Miss T Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

56. Membership - to note that Mrs V J Dagger has joined the Committee in place of Mr D A Hirst
(Item A1)

The Committee noted the change in membership and Mrs Dagger was welcomed.

57. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2010
(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

58. Meeting Dates for 2011
(Item A5)

It was noted that the following dates have been reserved for the Committee's meetings in 2011:-

Wednesday 12 January 2011

Tuesday 20 September 2011

Thursday 24 March 2011

Thursday 10 November 2011

Thursday 7 July 2011

All meetings will commence at 10.00 am at County Hall.

59. Chairman's Announcements
(Item A6)

The Chairman referred to the size of the published agenda papers for the meeting and the problems this causes with Members' capacity to read and consider all the information in the time available, as well as officer workloads and the associated

costs of printing and posting such large documents. He asked that alternative methods of sharing documents be explored, eg depositing documents in the Members' room at Sessions House.

60. Cabinet Member's and Director's Update (oral)
(Item A7)

1. Mr Gibbens gave an oral update on the following issues:-
 - a) the 'Valuing Employment Now in Kent' conference, which he had attended recently. This had been an excellent event and a valuable opportunity to see the possibilities for employment for vulnerable people;
 - b) the Later Life Strategy event on 24 June, which had been attended by all key stakeholders, including KASS, the Fire Service, the Police and NHS. The challenge for partners would be to achieve real outcomes, and the Older Persons' Forum was currently addressing an action plan of issues arising.
2. The Chairman commented that all POSC Members needed to be aware of such conferences taking place so they would have the opportunity to attend if they so wished. He asked that advance notification of future conferences be given to all POSC Members.
3. Mr Mills then gave an oral update on the following issues:-
 - a) Age Concern funding: Members would continue to have briefings, and a third update letter would be sent soon. An item on this would be included on a future POSC agenda, once the current programme of change had been completed. The recent amalgamation of Age Concern and Help the Aged to form Age UK would not affect the consultation and decision making process,
 - b) the week of 16 June had been Adult Safeguarding Week, and events in that week had aimed to raise awareness. This, along with the extensive media coverage of the Pilkington case in Leicestershire, and ongoing staff training initiatives, would ensure that the issue remained in the public eye.
 - c) Carers Week, beginning 14 June, had been very successful, with initiatives to contact younger carers in particular making use of social networking and twitter.
 - d) Members had had briefings on the Older Persons' Strategy, and the presentation scheduled at the end of today's POSC meeting would add to this to ensure that all Members have the opportunity to understand the proposed changes to Older Persons' provision in the KCC.
3. RESOLVED that the information given be noted, with thanks.

61. Presentation - After the Election: What now?

1. Mr Mills presented a series of slides which set out briefly the work being done to continue and monitor the delivery of social care services in the changing political and economic climate. He asked Members if they had received 'The Coalition: Our Programme for Government' which set out the five social care commitments, as this is the key document in understanding the government's priorities.
2. RESOLVED that the information given in the presentation be noted, with thanks.

62. Outcome of Formal Consultation on Closure/Variation of Service Use of Maidstone Day Opportunity Service

(Item B1)

Miss S Bullen, Project Manager, Good Day Programme, and Mr M Walker, Head of Service, Learning Disabilities, West Kent, were in attendance for this item, with Mrs M Howard.

1. Mrs Howard introduced the report and presented a series of slides which set out the services which would replace those delivered at the former Boughton Mount Centre in Maidstone. She explained that the changes were part of the countywide programme of changes to the way in which services for people with learning disabilities are delivered, to ensure as wide a range of alternatives as possible. She summarised the aim and key outcomes of the public consultation process which had run from January to May 2010.
2. Mrs Howard, Miss Bullen and Mr Walker received Members' thanks and congratulations on the thorough and well structured consultation programme, which was held up as an excellent example of how to consult on service changes.
3. In response to a question, Mrs Howard explained that the changes made would continue to be monitored closely and feedback from service users taken on board. Any lessons learnt from this exercise would be taken into account when undertaking the next such consultation in the county, in the same way in which lessons learnt from past consultations had been used to shape this one.
4. RESOLVED that:-
 - a) the feedback gained through consultation, and the way in which Maidstone Day Service has continued to main and develop its service through the last six months, be noted;
 - b) a continued community presence be supported, so that people with learning disabilities can continue to access and develop a full range of opportunities and networks; and
 - c) the proposed closure of the old Boughton Mount site be referred to the Cabinet Member for a formal decision.

63. Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

(Item B2)

Mr G Hills, Operational Director, Kent and Medway Networks Ltd, and Mrs C Jackson, Governor, Liaison with Priority Panel, were present for this item at the invitation of the Committee. Mr N Sherlock, Head of Planning and Public Involvement, KASS, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Hills thanked the committee for the invitation to address it. He explained that LINKs was a recently-established organisation, and emphasised its independence from the County Council and any other service provider. LINKs has an ambitious programme of work, and he gave examples of project work done. The key role of LINKs is to work with the POSC and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to complement the scrutiny function.

Mrs Jackson referred to the ongoing fight to establish/expand LINKs' social care role to ensure that social care concerns are covered, and sought the POSC's support for this work.

2. Mr Hills then responded to questions from Members, from which the following issues were highlighted:-

a) one role of LINKs was to simplify for the public the picture of social care and health service provision, and to work closely with partners to avoid duplication of work; and

b) LINKs help facilitate links between the POSC and the public.

3. Mr Mills added that, given the need to achieve better value for public money than ever before, it was important to explore the best way for the public's voice to be heard, especially hearing the experience of people who use services and carers.

4. RESOLVED that the information given in the report and in response to questions be noted, with thanks, and that the POSC welcome any issues which LINKs might want to refer to it.

64. Draft Kent Annual Carers Report April 2009 - March 2010 *(Item C1)*

Mr M Thomas-Sam, Head of Policy and Service Standards, was in attendance for this and the following item. Ms B Hagan, Co-Chair of the Carer's Advisory Group, and Mrs S Collins, Carer, were present at the invitation of the Committee.

1. Mr Thomas-Sam introduced the report and pointed out the policy changes and key developments which had taken place since the previous annual report had been presented to the POSC, for example, the delivery of Caring with Confidence training to more than 8000 carers. Mr Thomas-Sam received Members' congratulations on the work his team had put in to addressing the issues faced by carers and in enhancing awareness of the vital role of carers.

2. Ms Hagan added that the work of the Carers Select Committee had been very useful in the development of the National Carers' Strategy, which raised carers' issues in the political agenda. The Kent Carers' Strategy reflected the issues in the

National Strategy. Mrs Collins said that she had been a carer for 10 years, and also worked with carers, particularly in highlighting the need for respite for carers.

3. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gibbens, paid tribute to the vital role undertaken by carers, and thanked them on behalf of the people of Kent for the savings that their work brings to the public purse. He said he fully understood their need for ongoing support and respite care, especially for those caring for an increasingly elderly population.

4. In discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- a) it is particularly important to recognise the role of young carers, and to take advantage of all opportunities to support them, for example, by linking in to charities which can offer holidays for carers;
- b) there is an apparent disparity between East and West Kent in NHS funding for carers' respite services, and this is unacceptable. Respite care should be available to all carers, irrespective of location; and
- c) the Chairman expressed a wish that POSC Members be given the opportunity to attend carers' training sessions, and asked that they be invited when future sessions are being arranged.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the content of the Kent Carers Annual Report be noted and endorsed;
- b) The Chairman write to the Chairman of HOSC raising Members' concerns about the apparent disparity between East and West Kent in NHS funding for carers' respite services, and an explanation sought; and
- c) POSC Members be invited when future training sessions for carers are being arranged.

65. Autistic Spectrum Disorder - 'One Year On' Report (Item C2)

1. Mr Thomas-Sam introduced the report and highlighted the progress which had been made on addressing the recommendations made by the Select Committee in its report in March 2009. The work of the Select Committee had influenced the development of the National Strategy. The development of the latter, while being immensely helpful in steering future work, had caused a delay to some of the work the KCC had wanted to do in implementing the Select Committee's recommendations.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the report and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks; and

- b) annual updates on progress on implementing the recommendations be submitted to the POSC.

66. Outturn Monitoring of the Annual Operating Business Plans 2009/10
(Item C3)

Mr N Sherlock, Head of Planning and Public Involvement, was in attendance for this and the following item.

1. Mr Sherlock introduced the report and emphasised that progress on delivering business plans had continued, despite the major restructure of the Directorate.
2. RESOLVED that the information given in the report be noted, with thanks.

67. 2010/2011 Annual Operating Business Plans
(Item C4)

1. Mr Sherlock introduced the report and explained that the six business plans for KASS had previously been considered by the Cabinet. Out of the six being presented, the Learning Disabilities Plan was new this year. Mr Sherlock and Mr Mills answered questions from Members, explaining the following:-

- a) the £15.5 million of savings which the KCC had been required to find would not impact on KASS in the current financial year, although the future situation was likely to be substantially more challenging. The situation would become clearer after the emergency budget on 29 June and the comprehensive spending review in the autumn of 2010; and
 - b) the Directorate was still seeking to recruit to the Director of Operations role. In the meantime, Mrs M Howard would continue in a general Deputy Managing Director role.
2. RESOLVED that the information given in the report and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks.

68. Adult Social Services Budget Outturn Report 2009/2010
(Item C5)

Miss M Goldsmith, Directorate Finance Manager, was in attendance for this item, with Miss S Abbott, Head of Performance and Information Management.

1. Miss Goldsmith introduced the report and explained that the small overspend and the level of secured debt were both as previously expected, but that the level of general debt had reduced slightly and was staying down.
2. In response to a question, Miss Abbott explained that patterns of income from Older Persons' Residential Care were very difficult to predict. However, income in the last year from standard residential care had decreased while income from residential care for people with dementia had increased. This has caused an overall slight increase in income.
3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information set out in the report be noted, with thanks;
- b) an Informal Member Group be established to meet on a regular basis in order to get a fuller understanding of the implications of potential budget reductions and to report back to the full POSC; and
- c) further update reports on debt management, including numbers of debts and examples of values, be submitted to the POSC, at a frequency to be decided.

69. End of Year Results for Performance 2009-2010

(Item C6)

Miss S Abbott, Head of Performance and Information Management, was in attendance for this item.

1. Miss Abbott introduced the report and she and Mr Mills answered questions from Members. Points highlighted were as follows:-

- a) the Directorate had set itself a less challenging target for the next year for the number of social care assessments completed within four weeks (NI 132), as the personalisation agenda would make the assessment process unavoidably slower. Kent's performance against this target compared very favourably with other local authorities;
- b) the definitions of various terms which are used when measuring performance can affect the results. For instance, the number of clients receiving 'personal budgets' did not include those who received one-off payments, but would show a much higher figure if these were to be included; and
- c) this sort of detail can make the true picture much more complex, and Miss Abbott undertook to include some more detailed information in the next annual report.

2. RESOLVED that the information given in the report and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks.

70. Sustainability and Climate Change Update

(Item C7)

Ms C Mckenzie, Greener Kent Manager, was in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Mckenzie introduced the report and outlined several areas in which the Directorate had made progress against its green targets and was advanced in addressing climate change in its daily work. The Directorate received Members' congratulations on its progress.

2. Ms Mckenzie and Mr Mills answered questions from Members, and the points highlighted were as follows:-

- a) the importance of developing 'homes for life' was supported, and the KCC was working with District Councils to address the issue of retro-fitting energy-saving features and installing them in new- build homes;
- b) similarly, KASS had done and would continue to do much work with care homes to advise them how to reduce their fuel bills; and
- c) fuel poverty was a major problem for many vulnerable people, and the proliferation of advice and guidance available from different energy suppliers would need to be simplified and streamlined to make it easier to follow and help people to make informed choices.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the report and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks; and
- b) the future approach and priorities set out in section 4 of the report, and the suggested changes to the KCC Environment Policy, be agreed.

71. Kent Contact and Assessment Service (KCAS) Abandonment Rate
(Item D1)

Mrs P Huntingford, Transforming Social Care Lead Officer, was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Huntingford introduced the report and outlined the role of the KCAS service as part of KASS's client assessment process. The number of client contacts with KASS had increased year on year, in all forms, including telephone calls, letters and emails, and the changes to KCAS made in 2009 were intended to streamline the contact process. It was not yet possible, however, to see the full effects of those changes.

2. Mrs Huntingford answered questions from Members, and the points highlighted were as follows:-

- a) although 60% of calls received were about adults' services and 40% about children's services, the amount of work generated by each type of call did not reflect this percentage split, with calls about children's services taking much more time to resolve;
- b) some calls to KCAS were dealt with by that service and did not need to be referred onto KASS. It is hoped that the number of calls needing to go on to KASS could be reduced by a further 35%;
- c) a complex set of data was generated weekly, which showed up-to-date patterns and allowed resources to continue to be used in the most cost-effective way. Regular performance reports are considered by the Directorate's Senior Management Team;

- d) Members asked for a 'crib sheet' to help them direct enquiries from local residents in the most helpful way, and Mrs Huntingford undertook to develop some suitable guidance;
 - e) it must be borne in mind that callers contacting the service are often distressed. An automated system which offers a caller options to help route their call (eg 'press 1 for x, press 2 for y') does save time but is not always user-friendly; and
 - f) the length of time that most callers are willing to hold for a response is generally very short, and from the data available it is not known how many people make repeat attempts at getting through.
3. RESOLVED that the information given in the report and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks.

72. Update on Select Committee Work
(Item E1)

- 1. Miss Grayell gave an update of the progress of the Extended Services and Renewable Energy Select Committees and planned future work, and the monitoring of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Select Committee's work, one year after the publication of its report, which had been discussed under item C2 on today's agenda.
- 2. RESOLVED that the update be noted and that Members notify Miss Grayell of any topics they wish to put forward for inclusion in the 2010/2011 Select Committee topic review work programme.

73. The Future of Older Persons' Provision in Kent County Council - Presentation
(Item C8)

Miss C Highwood, Director of Strategic Business Support, and Mrs A Tidmarsh, Director of Commissioning and Provision, East Kent, were in attendance for this item, with Mrs Howard.

- 1. Mrs Howard and Miss Highwood presented a series of slides which set out the need to review older persons' provision, for which the consultation process would run from 21 June to 1 November 2010. KCC Members were being briefed on the outline proposals at the very start of the process. They would be asked to consider the matter formally early in 2011, once the consultation has finished, and before the Cabinet Member takes a formal decision on the proposed changes.
- 2. Mrs Howard and Miss Highwood responded to Members' questions and reassured them about concerns raised. In particular, that the inspection regime is exactly the same for the independent sector as for KCC, and the KCC has a contracting function that seeks to ensure the quality of all care it commissions.
- 3. The points highlighted by Members in their questions and comments were as follows:-

- a) the public will have a full range of concerns about how the changes will affect them personally – losing their job in care, losing the rapport with their current carers, losing continuity of care for themselves or a vulnerable relative. All Members will need to understand the proposed changes so they can help and support local people with their questions and concerns;
- b) the rationale for the changes will need to be couched in terms which are easy for the public to understand;
- c) consultation must give service users maximum opportunity to give a view, and must take full account of those views;
- d) many service users might not mind a change in location as long as they continue to receive excellent care;
- e) the private and voluntary sector should offer sheltered housing which is available to buy;
- f) although the process of change is awkward and can be worrying, the outcome will be well worth it;
- g) great attention has been paid to detail, which is good as this obvious thoroughness will give confidence; and
- h) the POSC should convene a special meeting to discuss the changes, once the consultation has been completed.

4. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gibbens, thanked the officer team for the way they had conducted the very difficult process and extensive consultations with residents and their families. Mr Gibbens reassured Members that he and his Deputy Cabinet Member, Mr Angell, would do all they could to assist Members in trying to answer the questions and concerns of local people.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information given in the presentation and in response to Members' questions be noted, with thanks; and
- b) the POSC convene a special meeting to consider the issue formally before the Cabinet Member takes a decision.