

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

NOTES of an Informal Member Group set up to look at the Medium Term Plan, which met on Thursday, 20 November 2008 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

PRESENT: Mr R F Manning (Chairman), Ms C J Cribbon, Mr S J G Koowaree and Mrs M Newell

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr O Mills, Managing Director, Mr S Leidecker, Director of Operations, Miss M Goldsmith, Directorate Finance Manager, and Mr J Holden, Senior Accounting and Budget Manager, Kent Adult Social Services, and Miss T A Grayell, Democratic Services Officer.

1. The Chairman welcomed those present and explained that Informal Member Groups were being set up by each POC this year for the first time to allow Members an opportunity to look in more detail at the MTP and identify key priorities and areas for savings.
2. At the request of Members, the officer team set out how the budget is calculated, and future needs forecast, year on year.
3. The size of the budget gap for Adult Social Services was estimated at £10 million, for which savings now need to be identified. This sum equates to 2% of the KASS overall budget.
4. The Officer team highlighted the main areas in which savings could be made:-
 - Saving on the Commissioning requirements for Residential Care, due to the increased use of assistive technology (TeleHealth, Telecare, etc) and Extra Care Sheltered Housing. A reduction in the number of clients taking up residential care placements had already shown as a result of these measures.
 - Savings from the Directorate's management restructuring, the aims of which were to assist the development of Self-Directed Support, achieve the best value for money from existing staff, and succession planning.
 - Ongoing savings on internal, non-pay Budgets. Maximum savings here will help to protect front-line services.
5. In discussion, Members identified the following as key areas to prioritise and protect:-
 - Preserve spend on, and continue investment in, preventative care. Investment now will bring savings later. Brighter Futures, etc.

- Protect front-line services, as KASS services are for the most vulnerable people, who have nothing to fall back on.
 - The area of highest risk is Learning Disability, as here we are at the sharp end of a demand-led service, with needs and costs increasing every year. This is a huge area of commitment. There is an urgent need to address svc provision at national level
 - Address our level of debt, to keep it as low as possible, which is a huge challenge.
 - Look at the funding we give to Voluntary Organisations, as they will seek more from us in times of greater need.
6. The following were identified as key areas of concern for the future:-
- The Impacts of Recession.
 - Demographics – ever increasing demand as ageing pop, and as more disabled young people survive childhood, often with multiple disabilities. Demographics are the background to all KASS work.
 - Need to work across Directorates, for example linking education to social care to address the needs of children going through transition.
 - It was suggested that a group (possibly a Select Committee) be set up to look at how private sector providers and agencies and organisations work together to deliver services, to check that the Council is getting best value for money and best provision at the best price.
 - Need to look long term, plan ahead for services needed, address the raised expectations, in terms of range and choice of service provision, of future generations.
 - Look ahead at multiple disability needs, as this is an area of major costs.
7. Conclusion
- Members supported and were confident of the officer's ability to identify the required savings, and confirmed their support for the directorate in the challenge it faces
 - In having had this discussion we are now prepared for the unknown, which is good.