

ADULT SERVICES AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Mohammed Ilyas (Chairman), Michael Airey (Vice-Chairman), Judith Diment, Charles Hollingsworth, Lynne Jones and John Lenton

Also in attendance: Cllr Carroll.

Officers: Alan Abrahamson, Alison Alexander, Jacqui Hurd and David Cook.

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Carroll declared a personal interest in item 7 as he was a patient at Claremont Surgery, as this was not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest he stayed and presented the item.

Mrs Sheila Holmes (WAM Healthwatch) declared a personal interest in item 7 as she worked with Claremont Surgery, she declared she would leave the meeting during consideration of this item. .

MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on the 18th October 2016 were approved as a true and correct record.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation on the latest Financial Update Cabinet report and was informed that the financial position had improved from the time of the last reporting period with an underspend of £430,000 now projected for the Council as a whole. Reserves were anticipated to total £6.5m by year end, which was above the recommended level.

With regards to the Adult, Children and Health directorate it had reduced its projected overspend by £154,000. This resulted in a projected year end overspend of £158,000 out of a budget of £57m. The presentation showed the overspend and underspend for the different services areas and was informed that with regards to Adult Services and Health there were the following pressures / underspends:

- Commissioning Adult Care Services -£103k
- Services for Older People -£764k
- Services for people with a learning disability +£400k
- Services for people with mental health problems +£16k
- Other care services -£55k

The presentation also highlighted budget issues / savings for older people as being:

- Residential care placements -£127k
- Additional income contributions towards cost of homecare -£164k
- Homecare & Direct Payments -£343k
- Grant income towards cost of care in nursing homes -£300k

- Ordinary residence dispute +£200k

And for Learning Disability the following issues / savings were highlighted:

- Slippage in planned de-registration of residential homes +£124k
- Net cost of placements in all settings +£338k
- Additional income contributions towards the cost of services -£60k
- Ordinary residence adjudication +£75k

Cllr Jones asked that with regards to older people services did we see an increase in demand over the winter months and was this forecasted. The Panel was informed that demand did increase and it was forecasted by looking at historical data and current client base.

Sheila Holmes asked how effective was the forecasting as last year there was increased demand and in the community people seemed to be asking for more help and not less. The Panel were informed that there was a spike in demand last year due to an higher than expected number of flu cases.

Cllr Hollingsworth raised concern about the legal advice being given as two cases had been lost and was informed that at the time the legal advice was correct but future findings had an impact.

Cllr M Airey mentioned that the liberty and safeguarding assessment had not had the financial impact as expected and was informed that the Council had to buy in specialist advice for this area but staff had been trained and there was a reduction in agency staff.

Cllr M Airey also questioned the budget for supporting residents into temporary accommodation as this was projecting an overspend and was informed that there would be a pressure in 2017/18 due to the change in legislation regarding the benefit cap and there would be a request for increased funding for this area. There were a number of households who due to the cap could not afford to keep their current accommodation and as there were safeguarding issues it was prudent to find them alternative provision to prevent additional budget pressures and safeguarding risks. Cllr Coppinger and the Leader were writing to our MP's to highlight the impact the cap was having on local governments budgets and giving examples of the safeguarding issues.

(Cllr Lenton joined the meeting)

The Chairman asked if the budget pressure for the provision of services for learning disability and mental health problems was expected to continue in future years and would this be addressed in the budget build. The Panel were informed that placement costs were increasing and as this cohort could stay in education until 25 costs had increased, this was allocated to the High Needs Block from schools funding.

Resolved unanimously: that the Adult Services and Health O&S Panel unanimously endorsed the recommendations in the Cabinet report.

ANNUAL STATUTORY COMPLAINTS REPORT 2015-2016

The Panel considered the report that provided an overview of the performance of the Council in respect of receiving, handling and responding to complaints received to Adult and Children Services. The report covered the periods 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The Panel were informed that there was a statutory frameworks in place governing the complaints process for Adult and Children's social care This was outside the formal corporate complaints service. The management and administration of this function was moved within the

Operations and Customer Services Directorate. This ensured that there is independence between the officer coordinating the investigation and the service areas being investigated.

The Panel were told that between February 2014 and February 2015 the complaints officer role was vacant due to the previous post holder leaving and challenges recruiting a suitable alternative. As a result the recording of the complaints during this period was not as accurate as it should have been and since March 2016 officers were raising awareness of the complaints process and improve the recording of complaints being received.

The Panel noted that tables 1 and 2 of the report showed complaints activity across Children's and Adults Directorates for the years 2014/15 and 2015/16 and compared them with the previously reported activity for 2013-14.

With regards to Adult Services the Panel were informed that there is no specific timescale for dealing with statutory adults services social care complaints. The timescales were negotiated between the complaints team, the manager of the service being investigated and the customer making the complaint. As the Council was committed to ensuring an early resolution these complaints were measures in the same timeframe as statutory children's complaints.

The Panel were informed that complaints provided important information on service provision and improvements in process. With regards to Adults Services the Panel were given the following examples of how we had learnt from complaints received:

- Implementing training and systems to try and ensure issues with delays are not repeated.
- Team Manager discussed with Social Worker who reflected on how they may have been perceived.
- Internal communication to be improved around letters/complaints received.
- Ensure staff respond to queries as they arise.

Cllr Jones asked about the structure of the complaints team and was informed that it was situated within Customer Services and there was a statutory complaints officer, corporate complaints officer and a new post called a 'Residents Champion'.

Cllr M Airey asked if there was any concern about the number of complaints responded to within the 10 to 20 working day timeframe especially complex cases. The Panel were informed that when a complaint was received the component elements were established and discussed with officers about their ability to provide a response within the timeframe. This process identified the more complex cases that would require more time to process.

Cllr M Airey also asked if we had a better referral system or if complaints were more complex and was informed that we were seeing both especially around cases where young people were transferring from Children's Services into Adult Services. The team make sure an appropriate response is sent even if this is not the resolution the client is after.

Cllr Lenton mentioned that on page 51 of the report figure 2 showed 12 complaints regarding Safeguarding and Children in Care Service yet figure 3 mentioned that there was only 1 complaint regarding safeguarding issues. The Panel were informed that the 12 complaints were not safeguarding issues but may have been complaints about the team.

Councillor Hollingsworth asked what happened when a complaint went across more than one team and was informed that these were dealt with by the Head of Customer Services who quality controlled the appropriate responses.

Cllr Jones mentioned that Members were often contacted by residents with complaints and asked how they were captured. The Panel were informed that the team could only record complaints if they were aware of them and Members should be encouraged to report complaints when received.

Cllr M Airey asked if the lessons learnt and teams KPI's would be brought to Panel and was informed that there was a complaints work plan due to be implemented and this could be brought to Panel, they may also be an option of showing complaints by ward that Members may find useful.

The Panel noted the report and thanked the Head of Customer Services for attending the meeting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion took place on item 7 on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....