

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
16 JUNE 2015
7.30 - 8.48 PM**



Present:

Councillors Harrison (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Finch, Mrs McCracken, Ms Merry, Peacey and Mrs Temperton

Executive Member:

Councillor D Birch

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Finnie

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Harrison be elected Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

COUNCILLOR HARRISON IN THE CHAIR

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Allen be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2015/16.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel held on 24 March 2015 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

- Minute 45: under the second bullet point, remove the phrase 'There was a possible limit of £160,000'.

4. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indications that members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

5. Public Participation

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

6. Director's Introductory Briefing and Service Plan 2015/16

The Interim Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing gave an introductory briefing to work being undertaken by the Department and the Service Plan 2015/16.

Legislative Reform 2015 included a focus on prevention and wellbeing, duties on information and advice, duty on market shaping, minimum threshold for eligibility, assessment including carers assessments, personal budgets, care/support plans, safeguarding boards, and universal deferred payments.

Funding Reform in 2016 included a focus on extended means test (an increase in the assets someone owns before they have to pay for care), a capped charging system of £72,000, care accounts, and a new complaints system.

Looking forward, implementation was scheduled for April 2015 for legislative reform and for 2016 for funding reform. The Care Act Programme Board would have senior officers from Adult Social Care and Corporate (Finance and Legal). A detailed programme was being created with the Head of Performance and Resources as programme manager. There would be work stream leads from commissioning, finance, IT, and practitioners.

The Service Plan 2015/16 was a delivery mechanism for statutory functions and a plan for how to achieve strategic objectives. There would be updates on the Service Plan on a quarterly basis and an annual report on what the Department had delivered over the previous 12 months. The annual report doubled as the Local Account; there was a programme of improvement and the Local Government Association (LGA) required the Local Account to be published. The Service Plan included a mission statement with key themes on, for example, personalisation and prevention.

The Care Act was a major piece of legislation and complex with all community care, other than for mental health, under new statutory guidelines. It included the role of the Care Quality Commission and was driven by the Francis Report. There would be a major new framework and there was a national minimum criterion in relation to eligibility. More information regarding the Act was available on the Council's website.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- There were plans to address the current staffing levels in the Emergency Duty Service and Bracknell Forest had been in contact with the other local authorities in Berkshire to agree a new specification for a service to serve all six local authorities. The aim was for there to be more permanent members of staff.
- Minimum threshold eligibility was previously classed as critical, substantial, moderate or low, but there was now a new national definition. Need in Bracknell Forest was mainly classed as critical and substantial but the need varied among local authorities and interpretations varied. There was focus on moderate and low need as well.
- There was evidence that provision for low level need helped to prevent higher levels of need. There were befriending services in Bracknell Forest and work was undertaken with the Red Cross and Age Concern, including prevention work in relation to wellbeing.
- There was a wide range of needs in Bracknell Forest and needs were met to the same level as public resource.
- If a customer decided that they no longer wanted a life service system from Forestcare, they were sent an envelope in which to return the device.

7. **Quarterly Service Report (QSR)**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the Quarterly Service Report (QSR) for the

fourth quarter of 2014/15 (January to March 2015) relating to Adult Social Care and Housing. An overview of Quarter 1 for 2015/16 was provided.

The Head of Performance and Resources for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing gave a presentation on the QSR. QSRs were slightly out of date, by approximately three months, when they were received at Overview and Scrutiny meetings but a Forward Look was provided to bring Panel members up to date.

The Chief Officer: Older People and Long Term Conditions commented on this area of work in the Department. There had been a training day in relation to crisis response and more joined up working and looking at areas to avoid duplication of work. There had been a volunteer day to encourage recruitment of volunteers to look after people held in custody and initiatives in relation to support for unpaid carers. There was a need to think about winter pressures early on and many demands were met by acute trusts. There was a new specification for Bridgewell Intermediate Care Centre and a consultation regarding this was open at present.

The Head of Performance and Resources for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing gave an update on the area of Adults and Joint Commissioning. Awareness raising, prevention and self-care events were a focus at present and there was more information regarding this on the Council's website <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/selfcare>. Winter messages to members of the public were due to be delivered at the end of September 2015 and would include, for example, the appropriate benefits of pharmacies. The week this meeting was held was Learning Disability Awareness (LDA) Week <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/selfcareld> and people would be at Princess Square shopping mall in Bracknell town centre talking about healthy eating and healthy living. There would be a market stall dedicated to LDA Week on Friday in the town centre.

The Chief Officer: Housing gave an update on this area in the Department. A planning application for Amber / Regency House was due to be submitted by the end of September 2015. There had been an exchange of contracts with Thames Valley Housing (TVH) and TVH would now proceed with this work. The site would not be completed until after 4 July 2016 as funding for the site would not be received until this date. A local housing company had been established and needed to be developed with a business plan. A report on the Local Council Tax Benefit Scheme was due to be considered by the Council's Executive in July 2015 for permission to undertake a consultation. In relation to the Forestcare IT system, information was fed back to the Commercial Centre so that there was not a need to undertake this work twice.

There would be a report considered by the Council's Executive on 23 July 2015 on the implications for Adult Social Care changes arising out of the Care Act. The Finance and IT Departments were focusing on changes to the IT systems needed for the next stage of the Care Act. The Human Resources (HR) Team would be assisting Chief Officers with the implementation of the Workforce Strategy. E-monitoring involved a telephone call when a carer arrived at a property and a telephone call when a carer left a property, and there had been challenges with some aspects of this. The Quality and Family Portals would show how often the same care worker was sent to the same person and how often they were on time. The Quality Portal would show the reliability of companies and the Family Portal would show families in real time whether a care worker attended a family member.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Panel members requested information by e-mail on events from the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department, so that they may possibly be involved.
- The Emergency Duty Service (EDS) required volunteers to apply for a role and they would undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check. EDS covered the whole of Berkshire, so volunteers would be sought from outside the area as well. The Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department was regularly contacted by and had good links with corporate organisations offering volunteers.
- There was a constant turnover of staff and a focus on quality of service and permanency of staff but there was a national shortage of social workers, which meant an ongoing reliance on agency workers. This number was roughly constant but fluctuated slowly over time, however, the number did not vary much on year on year comparison.
- The Chairman requested that any particular questions regarding the QSR be directed to the Scrutiny team in advance of the meeting where possible to allow for answers to be obtained.
- A workforce review had taken place over the past year and a certain level of posts were kept vacant in order for there to be employment opportunities for existing staff if there was redeployment or restructure. It was common to have around the current 12% level of vacancies in Adult Social Care and Housing. It was up to Directors to maintain an adequate level of service.

8. **Adult Social Care Annual Report 2014/15**

The Head of Performance and Resources for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing presented the Adult Social Care Annual Report (Local Account) for 2014/15.

The Department had been producing a Local Account for five years and the Bracknell Forest version of the Local Account had been cited as a good version in terms of accessibility and being easy to read. There were podcasts / videos attached to the written version and liaison had been undertaken with partnership boards to consult on the content of the document. There were different teams and functions and videos on each of the priorities. There was a focus on the right care accommodation for people and statistics were highlighted, for example, 100% of people receiving care through the Council were now supported in a personalised way and there had been a reduction in the number of people in residential care.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Members had suggested changes to the report which was due to be considered by the Executive in July and these changes would be incorporated in the report, including what would be done next year.
- Bracknell Forest continued to have the best statistics in enabling people to come home from hospital safely. There were three hospitals near to Bracknell Forest so this would always be a challenge. Time had been spent working on providing the right support to enable people to leave hospital promptly and it was expected that this would improve.
- Health and social care delays could include waiting for a health care assessment. The number of people being processed had been gradually increasing.
- The top reasons for people entering hospital included respiratory problems and falls. Much work was being undertaken by the three acute trusts on winter support and prevention. There was a joined up service for the elderly and work had been undertaken to provide rapid access to care where needed.

The town centre regeneration was an opportunity to engage with new companies early in relation to becoming a dementia friendly community.

- There was an out of hours GP service and longer opening times for GP surgeries. There was a health infrastructure task and finish group. The Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing commented that the capacity in the primary care system was not good at present and population included the highest retirement rate ever. There was an out of hours service in Bracknell Forest but other local authority areas were not as fortunate. The first integrated meeting with NHS England, the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and Bracknell Forest was due to take place to start the process of similar provision in other local authority areas. Work would be undertaken to look at hot spots for GP needs. There was enough capacity in Bracknell Forest at present but there were concerns about future needs.
- The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel had undertaken some work on GP capacity and a representative of NHS England had been invited to a meeting of that Panel and questioned on this topic.

The Chairman commented on the report being well written.

9. **Annual Complaints Reports 2014/15 for Adult Social Care and for Housing**

The Head of Performance and Resources for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing presented the Annual Complaints Report 2014/15 for Adult Social Care and for Housing.

There was a statutory complaints process for Adult Social Care, and for Children's Social Care. Complaints and compliments were recorded and the number of complaints remained fairly static. There were examples in the report of learning from complaints to reduce the likelihood of a similar complaint again.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- Some of the automatic entitlements for blue badges had been changed and more people needed to be assessed to see if they met the criteria.
- There was an appeal system for application of blue badges.

10. **Next Review Topic / Working Group**

The Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel commented on the next review topic / working group item. There had been less capacity at the end of the last municipal year to undertake further review work but suggested areas for review included: older people's housing or affordable housing policy, Forestcare alarm system, pressure on the housing market.

The Chief Officer: Housing suggested a review of homelessness as the Homelessness Strategy was due to be developed this year.

Panel members agreed to establish a working group on homelessness and the following Members agreed to be part of the working group: Councillors Mrs McCracken, Mrs Angell, Peacey, Ms Merry, and Mrs Temperton.

This topic would need to be agreed through the Overview and Scrutiny Commission before the working group could commence work on it, the next meeting of the Commission was due to be held on 9 July 2015. The Chairman offered to speak to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission about this.

11. **Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions**

The Panel noted the forthcoming Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Adult Social Care and Housing.

The Chairman requested if the report on the Care Act to be considered by the Council's Executive in July 2015 could be circulated to Panel members for comments before the Executive meeting.

CHAIRMAN