

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
11 MARCH 2008
(7.30 - 8.05 pm)

Present: Councillors Browne (Chairman), Leake (Vice-Chairman), Baily, Dudley, Finch, Simonds and Turrell

Mr R Gristwood, Tenants' and Leaseholders' Panel Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Blatchford, Harrison and Mrs Shillcock

In attendance: Councillor Birch

Richard Beaumont, Head of Performance and Scrutiny

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Scrutiny)

Ian Davey, Director of Social Services and Housing

Glyn Jones, Assistant Director of Social Services and Housing
(Community Care)

Stuart Mudie, Interim Head of Housing

Charlotte Stamper, Communications Officer

35. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

The Panel noted the attendance of the following substitute member:

Councillor Finch for Councillor Blatchford

36. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 10 January 2008 be agreed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

37. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

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

38. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

39. Departmental Overview and Performance

The Director of Social Services and Housing gave a presentation in respect of departmental performance with reference to the Performance Monitoring Report for the third quarter of 2007/08. The Director gave the Panel an overview of the Department's key highlights, staffing issues and a forward look.

Key highlights included: the continued improvement against performance indicators, the implementation of a new floating support services contract from 1 April, successful stock transfer and delivery of the Housing Management function to Bracknell Forest Homes, the successful transfer of over 3,000 housing benefit claimants to Bracknell Forest Homes, the Housing Service receiving a grading of 4 out of 4 following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection, reductions in staff turnover, vacancy and sickness rates and continued learning from complaints. Commission Plans for the care groups had received a positive sign off from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Department of Health Support Recovery Team and this would help during future CSCI inspections. Work to disaggregate the Department's functions to enable a smooth transition to the new Council structure on 1 April 2008 was nearing completion. The overspend in Community Care Services had been eliminated and the Department was confident of achieving a balanced budget by the end of the financial year.

The Chairman indicated that the Panel was satisfied with the Department's performance over the third quarter of 2007/08.

40. Update on Action Plan for the Director of Social Services and Housing

The Panel considered a report containing the Director of Social Services and Housing's Action Plan for the Department for the period 1 November 2007 to 31 March 2008. Members were informed that the Department was on track to achieve the majority of the actions by the end of March and the following points were noted:

- 5 of the 6 performance indicators targeted for improvement by one grading were on track to achieve this
- The Long Term Conditions Commissioning Strategy would be taken to the Executive by the end of March
- Targets relating to Supporting People services had been actioned
- The Home Care Modernisation consultation had been completed and work had started on implementing changes
- The Section 75 joint working arrangements with the Berkshire East Primary Care Trust were expected to be signed off by the end of March.

41. Overview and Scrutiny Activity

The Panel received updates on the progress made to date by the Working Groups.

Carers Working Group

The Working Group had met with service managers, representatives of Carers UK and Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action to discuss the range of services provided and a meeting had been held with carers to discuss their experiences of the services provided. It was expected that a report would be presented at the Panel's next meeting.

Care Homes Working Group

Visits had taken place to a number of care homes and services and a meeting to scope the review had been arranged.

Social Care Modernisation Working Group

The Working Group was making good progress with the review. Meetings had been arranged with senior Council officers and the Principal of Bracknell and Wokingham College to clarify a number of questions that had arisen following initial interviews. A number of recommendations were developing and it was expected that a draft report would be complete by the end of April.

Supporting People Working Group

A meeting would be arranged to enable the Interim Head of Housing to brief lead members on the work taking place in the Department.

42. Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Progress Report

The Panel received a report outlining the activities of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Commission and noted the positive comments contained in the Council's Corporate Assessment Report by the Audit Commission in respect of the overview and scrutiny function at Bracknell Forest.

43. Executive Forward Plan

The items on the Executive Forward Plan relating to Social Services and Housing were noted by the Panel.

44. Expression of Thanks

The Panel expressed its thanks to Ian Davey and Stuart Mudie for their work over the past year to improve the Social Services and Housing Department and wished them well for the future.

CHAIRMAN

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