

SELECT COMMITTEE ON GOOD HEALTH

Tuesday, 22nd March, 2005 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2, Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Burt (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Faulkner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Ali, Mrs Aston, Boys, Bradney, Crumpton, Harley, Miss Nicholls, Simms and Taylor.

OFFICERS:-

The Head of Personnel and Support Services (Lead Officer to the Committee), Scrutiny Officer to the Committee (Good Health), Director of Social Services, Assistant Director of the Urban Environment (Development and Environmental Protection), Assistant Director of Social Services (Learning Disability and Mental Health), Assistant Director of Social Services (Business Services), Research Officer (Good Health) and Mrs Johal (Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Mr K Stride and Mrs B Holder – National Osteoporosis Society – Dudley Support Group

45

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th January, 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Pursuant to Minute No 39 (Proposed Revenue Budget 2005/06), the Chairman enquired as to the position of the report in relation to the effect of rationalising the bathing and nail cutting services and proposals for re-provision.

It was requested that the Committee should continue to monitor and add pressure to the development and improvement for the service.

RESOLVED

That a progress report be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee.

47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, was made by Councillor Bradney in respect of Agenda Item No 8, (Wheelchair Services Review), in view of his wife being a user of the Wheelchair Service.

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Musk, Ms Partridge and K Turner and Mr Coverdale, Mr Farenden and Ms Vilton.

49 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES FOR THIS MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

It was reported that Councillors Crumpton, Simms and Taylor had been appointed to serve as substitutes for Councillors Ms Partridge, Musk and K Turner respectively for this meeting of the Committee only.

50 RESETTLEMENT OF RIDGE HILL HOSPITAL

A report of the Director of Social Services was submitted updating the Committee on progress of the resettlement of Ridge Hill Hospital, in accordance with past agreements with the Select Committee.

Following the presentation of the report by the Assistant Director of Social Services (Learning Disability and Mental Health), a Member commented that the report served no purpose for the Committee at this stage as it had already been submitted to Cabinet. It was suggested by some members that reports should be presented to the Select Committee prior to submission to Cabinet to ensure that comments and concerns are incorporated into the final report. In response to the report being submitted to Cabinet prior to the Select Committee, the Assistant Director of Social Services (Learning Disability and Mental Health), advised that the timing would not have allowed this as negotiations with the care providers had merely concluded a few days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet. Urgent Cabinet approval was required owing to the need to ensure completion of the settlement complied with the timescales.

The Vice-Chairman enquired as to whether the residents and relatives that were affected by the resettlement were comfortable with the move and further sought assurances that resettlement would be completed by Christmas. In responding, the Assistant Director of Social Services (Learning Disability and Mental Health) commented that, slippage of approximately three months was built into the timescales, however, whilst acknowledging the timescales, the priority was to ensure that the move was managed successfully and that minimal disruption was caused to the residents affected. He further reported that, following the move, Care Teams would provide help and support to residents and assistance would also be given in completing any applications, such as extra benefit entitlements. The Director of Social Services added that extensive consultation had taken place with the patients, carers and relatives and further reported that houses had been allocated to match the needs of the residents.

A Member sought clarification on the discrepancy of figures as stated in paragraph 2.3.1 of the report that indicated that accommodation would be found for 42 residents, however paragraph 2.5.7 of the report stated that 33 residents would be cared for. In response, the Assistant Director of Social Services (Learning Disability and Mental Health) advised that the explanation was complex, however it was confirmed that spot purchase applies to nine residents (discrepancy figure) and because they were individual placements, they did not form part of the group. He further reported that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) had originally agreed to fund the placements for all residents of the hospital, however 7 of those had died. To ensure that the funding was not lost to services for people with learning disabilities the PCT had continued to commit funding to the whole project and to the original number of residents.

In response to a query from the Chairman in relation to whether Harden House would form part of the project, the Assistant Director of Social Services (Learning Disability and Mental Health), confirmed that some residents would be moved to that dwelling.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report now submitted be received and noted.

A report of the Scrutiny Officer for Good Health was submitted informing Members on the contents of a letter received from the Chairman of Dudley and District (National Osteoporosis Society) Support Group, that highlighted the current situation in Dudley in relation to osteoporosis and making proposals for development of services.

The Chairman (Dudley and District (National Osteoporosis Society)) circulated a separate report that stated statistical facts in relation to the extent of osteoporosis in the Borough of Dudley and a further paper that highlighted a business case for the need of a DEXA scanning service in Dudley. It was reported that the published Government figures on osteoporosis had increased and it was commented that figures were expected to continue to increase.

In response to a query from the Vice-Chairman on the reaction of the PCT in relation to the findings, the Chairman (Dudley and District (National Osteoporosis Society)) said that there had been unconfirmed reports that funding was to be provided for a specialist nurse to lead on osteoporosis.

A Member expressed concern in relation to the figures on osteoporosis in Dudley, which was currently at nearly 44,000 and it was considered that the seriousness of the situation should be highlighted and addressed by educating people. It was further commented that the case made for the need of a DEXA scanner was sufficient and it was suggested that the Committee should support and apply pressure for its need.

The Chairman agreed that there was a need to develop the osteoporosis service and further suggested that the PCT should be encouraged to take on the role of educating people and to disseminate material accordingly.

RESOLVED

- (1) That support be given to the need to set up a properly constructed and constituted Osteoporosis Service for the Borough of Dudley.
- (2) That a letter be written to the Government Minister supporting the application for a grant.
- (3) That the PCT be recommended to take on the role of educating people on osteoporosis and to disseminate educational material accordingly.

A report of the Head of Personnel and Support Services was submitted together with the draft version of the Review on Access to Maternity Services, for discussion and amendment.

The Vice-Chairman thanked all those that had been involved in the research and preparation of the draft review report.

Arising from the presentation given the following comments were made by Members:-

- Some of the recommendations should be made more firmer and clearer
- There needs to be a commitment to monitor and encourage organisations to implement as many recommendations as possible within available resources
- The report indicated that women from disadvantaged groups were 20 times more likely to die than women in the highest two social classes, however the recommendations did not address the problem
- Trend Graphs in the report indicated that live birth rates were decreasing, however owing to modern technology it would be assumed that live births would be increasing.
- There was a need to raise awareness of the wide range of services provided by Sure Start
- Reference was made in respect of recommendation No 5, which related to cultural and religious aspects of food and it was commented that the practice of relatives bringing food from home for patients already existed. However, if an issue had been identified, then the recommendation should indicate how the problem could be addressed. It was suggested that hospitals should address the problem by identifying the foods that patients required and then providing it for them.
- The recommendations did not indicate any input from different cultural groups or reflect the importance of culture. It was important to get all local people involved.
- There were no recommendations in relation to issues highlighted around domestic violence.
- There were no factual figures in respect of women living in poverty and missing out on benefits. The recommendation should encourage the Benefits Agency to disseminate information appropriately.
- Data given in the report was based on the old Ward boundaries and it was suggested that if new figures could not be easily obtained, a paragraph should be inserted to reflect this.
- Bad publicity of hospitals was always published, however, to regain public confidence there was also a need to publicise good news stories.
- It was suggested that when the review document was finalised and ready for publication, a promotional event should be organised at the new maternity unit, where copies of the report could be presented to staff to thank them for their input and hard work.

The Chairman referred to a question that had appeared on the website which asked if the Local Authority should allow the advertising of breast milk substitutes on its premises, namely the Crystal Leisure Centre and whether the Local Authority had infringed on the World Health Organisation (WHO) code of marketing.

During the brief discussion that followed, the Vice-Chairman sought clarification on the context of the advertising as it could be interpreted as reliably informing women and helping them in making choices that were available and best suited to them. It was highlighted that there were women that could not breast feed and also the advertising could have been targeted at women that had finished or were due to finish breastfeeding.

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the work to date of the Project Board.
- (2) That the concerns expressed by Members as described above be noted and that the recommendations contained in the draft review report be amended accordingly.
- (3) That approval be given to the Project Board to complete the draft review report and prepare it for publication.
- (4) That a report from all agencies on progress on implementation of the recommendations be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee.
- (5) That the Department of the Urban Environment be requested to ascertain the context of the breast feeding, as advertised at the Crystal Leisure Centre, including the income from the advertising, and that a report be submitted to a future meeting.

ORAL REPORT ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN RESPECT OF THE WHEELCHAIR SERVICES REVIEW

Councillor Ali, in respect of the Wheelchair Services Review, gave an oral progress report.

The Wheelchair Services Review would look at services for users aged 18 and over and a later review could look at services for children. A questionnaire would be sent out to 2000 wheelchair users, asking for their opinions about the wheelchair services, how they managed to move around the Borough for business and social purposes, how they gained access to National Health Service (NHS) buildings and other public service buildings, about transport facilities and adaptations to their homes. To complement the questionnaire there would also be a series of focus groups with wheelchair user support groups where Members of the Project Board would invite organisations to discuss services with them.

It was reported that the Project Board and Project Team had now agreed a scoping report, copies of which would be circulated to the Committee along with the questionnaire. Members were invited to submit comments on the scoping report and questionnaire to the Chairman of the Project Board (Councillor Mrs Aston) or to the Health Scrutiny Officers.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the oral report on the Wheelchair Services Review be received and noted and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting.
- (2) That, when finalised, copies of the questionnaire and scoping report be circulated to all Members of the Committee and that any comments be submitted to the Chairman of the Project Board (Councillor Mrs Aston) or to the Health Scrutiny Officers.

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ORAL REPORT ON PROPOSED SCRUTINY REVIEW OF OBESITY IN DUDLEY

The Lead Officer to the Committee gave a brief oral report on the Proposed Scrutiny Review of Obesity in Dudley.

It was suggested that, as obesity was such a vast subject and in order to ensure proper scrutiny and management, the review of obesity should be narrowed down specifically to one area. The Director of Social Services advised that Dudley had an Obesity Strategy that had been recently approved by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and that existing work and progress should clearly form the starting point for any scrutiny review, if that was to be added to the programme. It was suggested that a Project Team could be set up to research the area that the Committee should examine.

During the ensuing discussion Members agreed that the local context be investigated. It was further commented that the PCT's should also be asked as to how they were progressing on addressing obesity as outlined in the White Paper on Health.

RESOLVED

That a Project Team be set up to identify the specific area that the Committee should investigate and that the recommendation be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

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REPORT ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
ACTION PLAN 2005/06

A report of the Director of Social Services was submitted presenting the Directorate of Social Services' Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2005/06.

Arising from the presentation of the report, a Member commented that some of the statements made in the report were too broad and also that insufficient statistical information had been included which made it difficult to measure and quantify performance. In responding, the Assistant Director of Social Services (Business Services), reported that when submitting the report on achievements in 12 months time, the comments made would be addressed.

RESOLVED

That the Social Services Directorate's Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2005/06 be received and noted.

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SOCIAL SERVICES DRAFT DIRECTORATE STRATEGIC PLAN
2005-08

A report of the Director of Social Services was submitted on the draft Social Services Directorate Strategic Plan 2005-08, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report and of the Social Services Draft Strategic Plan 2005-08, as appended to the report, be received and noted and that any comments by Members be submitted direct to the Director of Social Services.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

SGH/41