

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Thursday, 17th September, 2009, at 6.00 p.m.
in Committee Room 2 at the Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Ridney (Chairman)
Councillor K Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Aston, J D Davies, K Finch, Mrs Harley, Islam, Kettle,
Knowles, Tyler, Vickers and Mr D Orme

Officers

Assistant Director Policy, Performance and Resources (Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director Older People and People with Physical Disabilities, Scrutiny Officer (all Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Assistant Director Human Resources and Citizenship and Mrs M Johal (Directorate of Law, Property and Human Resources)

Also in Attendance

Ms Val Little – Director of Public Health – Dudley PCT and MBC
Mr Steve Corton – Head of Community Engagement

15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Cowell and Miller.

16 **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was reported that Councillor Knowles had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Mrs Cowell and that Councillor Vickers had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Miller.

17 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th July, 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed.

18

DUDLEY–WALSALL MENTAL HEALTH TRUST

The Chairman reported that this item had originally been scheduled for this meeting. However, she expressed concern that the item had to be withdrawn from the agenda due to a report not being made available by the Trust. Members asked that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to include details of the Trust's management structure and information on finance and resources that the Council had put into the Trust.

The Director of Public Health briefly explained that the former Dudley Mental Health Services was organised from within the Primary Care Trust and that it had been a partnership agreement in conjunction with the Council. However, in October, 2008 the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust was set up which was a new organisation that encompassed the Walsall and Dudley Mental Health Services. Both Trust's became a single partnership, separate from the Primary Care Trust, with its own Board.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be requested to write to the Chairman of the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust requesting that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee and that a representative also be in attendance to answer any queries.

19

PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised under this item and no members of the public were in attendance.

20

WORK OF THE GATEWAY FOUNDATION IN DUDLEY

It was reported that, despite attempts having been made, the Gateway Foundation would not be making a presentation to tonight's meeting.

RESOLVED

That, should the Gateway Foundation still wish to make a presentation, the item be considered as part of the Work Programme of the Committee for the next Municipal Year.

21

CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), it was

RESOLVED

That agenda item Number 9 be considered as the next item of business.

22

UPDATE ON SWINE FLU

The Director of Public Health gave a verbal update on the current situation in respect of the Swine Flu outbreak in a local and national context.

The Director of Public Health briefly explained about the background of the virus and indicated that it had originated from Mexico and that the United Kingdom had its first case of Swine Flu towards the end of April, 2009. The initial strategy for the United Kingdom had been to contain the virus and to swab patients who had been abroad. It was reported that, in July, the advice had changed and in the majority of cases, General Practitioners (GPs) were no longer being asked to swab patients and that clinical assumption for diagnosing the illness was being used rather than testing at laboratories. Patients in Dudley were being asked to ring the Swine Flu Information Line or their GPs who in turn would contact the Flu Response Team. Anti-viral collection points had also been set up to enable people that had not been diagnosed with the virus but had been in contact with another member of the family to collect their own prescriptions, or on behalf of someone, as they were not infectious and these collection points were still continuing to be used.

The Director of Public Health further reported that the infection rate had decreased from the end of July until early August. However, in September, following the return of children to schools, data sources had shown that the infection rate had slightly increased. The Director of Public Health explained about the various data and systems used to analyse and monitor the spread of the virus, and in particular, mentioned about the absence monitoring system used at schools and indicated that this system had been very successful.

The Director of Public Health indicated that a surge was expected during the Autumn/Winter months and that efforts were being made to prepare for this but training could not be given to staff until the European Medicines Agency licensed the vaccine and confirmation of times and dates of deliveries was known. It was reported that, upon roll out, vaccines would be delivered through a programme, which some patient groups would receive via their GP's and that health and social care staff would have immunisation made available through their employers. It was pointed out that the Council would need to buy in extra Occupational Health resources to enable this to happen.

Arising from a query from a Member, the Director of Public Health confirmed that the Primary Care Trust had incurred substantial costs due to the virus in that anti viral collection points had been set up and additional staff had had to be employed.

The Chairman extended an open invitation to the Director of Public Health to provide an update on the virus to the Committee on a regular basis.

RESOLVED

That the verbal update given on Swine Flu by the Director of Public Health be noted.

23

QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on performance in relation to the first quarter of 2009/10, for the period April to June, 2009, for the services under the terms of reference of this Committee.

Arising from the presentation of the report a Member referred to Caring Matters Priority CM3, reference C3.1h, which related to the realignment of services and plans to transfer some staff from closures to bolster staffing to deal with dementia. He asked that further details be provided to explain how many staff had been identified to be moved and whether some staff were being redeployed. Reference was also made to the percentages given in the national indicators and it was requested that details of the number of contributors be made available to understand the basis of the statistical information given.

With regard to the Place Survey 2008 on "Satisfaction with area as a place to live", a Member commented that the graphs indicated that anti-social behaviour in Dudley had the biggest decline compared to other areas and further details with regard to contributors to the survey was requested to determine the basis as it was believed that anti-social behaviour was increasing in certain areas. Another Member also asked that information on the various areas used to determine statistics also be provided.

SHASC/11

With regard to staff moving to dementia services the Assistant Director Older People and People with Physical Disabilities briefly explained that currently, 30%-40% of admissions to residential homes had some form of mild dementia. Due to the levels of dementia increasing staffing had to be increased in homes accordingly. Reference was also made to Wallbrook House and it was reported that since its closure, all staff, with the exception of one, had been redeployed. It was pointed out that supporting dementia services was a challenge and it was stressed that there were no surplus resources. The Assistant Director Older People and Physical Disabilities referred to the Dementia Care Strategy and indicated that it was currently out for consultation and undertook to provide a copy for Members of the Committee. Upon a query from the Chairman, the Assistant Director Older People and Physical Disabilities, undertook to provide information to her direct on the transfer of clients from Wallbrook House, following its closure.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and copy of the extracted report circulated separately, on performance in relation to the first quarter of 2009/10, for the period April to June, 2009, for the services under the terms of reference of this Committee, be noted.
- (2) That the Lead Officer to the Committee be requested to provide further background statistical information on the percentages given in the national indicators and the Place Survey 2008 in respect of "Satisfaction with area as a place to live" survey to include details of the number of contributors and the various areas used to base the information.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE FOR 2008/2009

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the Annual Report of the Committee for the 2008/2009 municipal year.

The LINK Co-opted Member indicated that a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on LINK plans and marketing proposals.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report of the Select Committee on Health and Adult Social Care 2008/2009 be approved for submission to the Council.

ENCOURAGING A HEALTHY WORKFORCE

A report of the Interim Director of Law, Property and Human Resources was submitted on the facilities currently in place to support Council employees' health and well-being.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director Human Resources and Citizenship indicated that, upon compiling the report, it had come to light that some employees were not aware of various benefits available to them and that internal communication systems were being looked into to promote awareness.

Arising from the presentation of the report, Members indicated that benefits and services should be made equally available to employees across all Directorates. Reference was made to eye tests that were available for employees and it was queried whether Members could also benefit from this service. A Member referred to the Healthy Towns Initiative and requested that Councillors should be fully involved due to the importance of the Initiative.

Arising from the ensuing discussion it was suggested that arrangements be made to enable the Committee to undertake an evidence gathering session to include interviewing employees to ascertain their experiences and knowledge. The Lead Officer to the Committee agreed to provide a copy of the employee questionnaire that was due to be issued in November 2009.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted on the range of facilities and policies that were currently in place to support Council employees' health and well being, be noted.
- (2) That the Lead Officer be requested to liaise with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with a view to confirming the arrangements and details with regard to a further meeting of the Committee as indicated above.

CAR PARK CHARGES

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the findings in relation to car park arrangements in place at other National Health Service Hospital Trusts across England.

In presenting the report the Scrutiny Officer referred to the paragraph under Table 1 in the Appendix to the report submitted and pointed out an error in that the paragraph should refer to up to one hours parking and not two as stated in that paragraph.

Arising from the presentation of the report Members expressed concern that individuals, particularly sick patients, had to pay considerable amounts of money for parking their cars to enable regular visits to hospitals to be made and that some people could not afford to pay. It was also pointed out that people and staff were not aware of reductions that were in place.

Arising from the ensuing debate Members were of the view that a weekly charging system should be pursued for long-term visitors and a nominal charge or free parking for those that were terminally ill. It was suggested that the Trust be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to enable concerns to be conveyed to them with a view to consideration being given by the Trust to the renegotiation of terms with the provider. A further suggestion was made that a letter be sent to CENTRO asking that consideration be given to the reinstatement of withdrawn bus services to hospitals.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report submitted, on the findings of car park arrangements in place at National Health Service Hospital Trusts across England, be noted.
- (2) That the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust be invited to send representatives to a future meeting of the Committee to enable the Committee to convey their concerns as indicated above.

The meeting ended at 8:50 pm

CHAIRMAN