

SELECT COMMITTEE ON GOOD HEALTH

Thursday, 23rd September, 2004 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs Faulkner (Vice-Chairman) (In the Chair)
Councillors Ali, Mrs. Aston, Boys, Bradney, Harley, Musk, Miss Nicholls and K Turner, together with Mr S Ward (Scrutiny Officer to the Committee), Director of Social Services, Senior Assistant Director of Finance, Head of Public Protection (Directorate of the Urban Environment), and Mr J Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Tony Collins – Director of Public Health – Dudley South Primary Care Trust.

Val Little – Director of Public Health – Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust.

Julia Simmons – Public Health Manager – Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust.

Sue Poole – Health Promoting Schools Co-Ordinator.

Mr Gary Barker – Patients Forums Representative.

10

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 20th July, 2004, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members for the reasons indicated:-

Councillor Boys, in the light of his employment by a supplier to the National Health Service.

Councillor K Turner, as a Trustee of Dudley Zoo in relation to the reference to the Zoo in paragraph 3.2.3 of the Report of the Director of Finance attached as item no. 5 - Update on the Council's Capital Strategy.

Councillor Bradney, in respect of Item 7 of the Agenda – Progress Report on Maternity Services and Wheelchair Services Reviews – As his wife is a user of the Wheelchair Services.

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burt and Ms Partridge and The Head of Personnel and Support Services (Lead Officer).

13 UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL STRATEGY

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted on an update of Council's Capital Strategy.

Following a presentation of the content of the report by the Senior Assistant Director of Finance, Members asked a number of questions and made comments with particular reference to:-

- a) Concerns expressed about the Inclusion Strategy with a view expressed that the strategy needed to look at the well being of the Community as a whole adopting an holistic approach incorporating health and other activities.
- b) That the priorities for meeting housing needs should be clarified and linked to those of Social Services relating to people with disabilities and older people and clearly identified in the Housing Strategy, with the addition of the wording to paragraph 2.1.2 of the report to the effect that homes should also be compatible with people's needs.
- c) That there was a need to encourage the private taxi providers to make more taxis wheelchair accessible. Councillor Musk, Chairman of the Taxis Committee, undertook to pass on the comments made to the appropriate people.
- d) That references in the report submitted to a new centre for children in need (paragraph 2.1.4) and to the Summerhill School be updated to reflect the current position.

- e) That the expansion of the Metro System was to be encouraged, especially the line from Birmingham to Stourbridge, given the positive health benefits that would accrue and that the Lead Member for Transportation be informed accordingly.
- f) That the creation of Friends of Parks Groups should be encouraged to take advantage of the ODPM Liveability Fund monies available given the improvement to health and well being by the increased use of parks.
- g) That it was noted that the Primary Care Trust had obtained funding from a National Pilot Project to encourage the use of parks, which included the Steps for Health Programme, and was an example of joint working between the Health Service and Local Authorities. One aspect of this was considered to be the need to encourage Local Authorities to manage parks differently involving a change in the role of the Park Keeper where such persons were employed. The project would be evaluated in due course and details could be made available to the Committee.
- h) That the Committee's Scrutiny Officer be requested to arrange for a visit by Members of the Committee to the Brierley Hill Regeneration Partnership.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the information contained in the report submitted, on the update of the Council's Capital Strategy, be noted and that the Director of Finance be requested to take account of the foregoing comments made by the Committee, as appropriate, for inclusion in the Strategy when considered by full Council.
- 2 That the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning be requested to attend the next meeting of this Committee to be held on 16th November, 2004, to give a presentation on the Inclusion Strategy and respond to questions arising on the health aspects of the Strategy.

Dr Tony Collins, Director of Public Health, Dudley South Primary Care Trust, gave a brief introduction to this matter in his capacity as Chairman of the Healthy Schools Steering Group and commented that the Service had now been in existence for ten years and was a partnership between Dudley Primary Care Trust, The Council's Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning and other local agencies, being jointly funded with the aim of helping all children to improve their health. Of the 112 schools of all types in Dudley, 109 schools were involved and the model would be extended to colleges and youth and community facilities in due course.

Following the introduction given, Julia Simmons, Public Health Manager, Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust, gave background information on the development of this partnership working, expanding on details contained in a presentation pack for Members, which would be circulated to them. Particular mention was made of the Dudley Model, which was a whole school approach encouraging work towards targets in all aspects of school life. The process for change was also expanded upon and the activities undertaken termly with all the schools which were grouped into five groups. The meetings held with teachers were to brief and update them and share good practice and in this connection the Service did provide funding for supply cover.

Mention was also made of the definition used in defining what was a healthy school emphasising the strong links between health and a physical and social environment conducive to learning. Details of the specialist support given to schools was also given and emphasis made of the key point of the project being that it was child centred.

The use made of information from the lifestyle survey to do baseline work was also commented upon and the large sample sizes it used from both primary and secondary schools leading to valuable information being accrued over time. The importance of this data was recognised in that other agencies were buying into it. Members were asked to note that there would be a dissemination event for the latest results of the lifestyle survey on 7th December, 2004.

The details contained in the Agenda for this meeting of the Committee of the Three Year Development Plan 2004-06 for the Dudley Health Promoting Schools Service had been developed by the Steering Group referred to earlier comprising representatives from the Key Partners and the objectives contained within the Development Plan were reviewed annually and set out an action plan as indicated in the Agenda papers.

Having considered the local aspects of the service, Sue Poole – Health Promoting Schools Service Co-Ordinator – then informed Members of the national context of the Service. The Service was the first in the West Midlands to gain National Healthy Schools Standard accreditation in December, 2000 in view of the early start made in providing the service.

A key performance indicator was the need to ensure that schools were working at Level 3 of the National Healthy School Standard and as at September, 2004, 81 schools were at Level 3. Of those, 34 schools at Level 3 had 20 plus free school meals eligibility a further target to be met.

Nationally the aim was to help schools implement various other interlinking strategies, for example the National Drugs Strategy and Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, responding to needs and helping schools to respond.

Mention was also made of the 86 schools eligible to take part in the Free Fruit Scheme of which all had taken up the Scheme. In the conclusion of the presentation it was noted that the Service did not just work with schools but also pupil referral units and Looked After children.

Arising from the presentations given, Members asked a number of questions and comments relating in particular to the support given to Looked After children both in a residential and foster care context; the need to work with the existing curriculum to look for options so as to keep food/nutrition on the agenda at all times; the National and Local Evaluations of the Service and the development by the schools of their own initiatives arising from results obtained from the surveys undertaken.

At the conclusion of questions and comments, the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Dr Collins, Julia Simmons and Sue Poole for the presentations given.

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PROGRESS REPORTS ON MATERNITY SERVICES AND WHEELCHAIR SERVICES REVIEWS

Sean Ward (Scrutiny Officer to the Committee) expanded on the points contained in progress reports on these two reviews that had previously been circulated to Members.

During consideration of this item, the Director of Social Services referred to a decision at the last meeting of the Committee that a similar meeting to that held in the last municipal year with the Chairmen and Chief Executives of the four Health Trusts in the Borough be held on a date to be arranged so that discussions regarding respective work programmes and concerns/expectations or any other matters they would wish to raise to be dealt with so as to facilitate communication between all the bodies involved. That meeting had still to be arranged but was being pursued by Sean Ward.

In connection with the work programme, the Director of Social Services also commented on the three dimensions to the current work programme involving cross cutting strategic reviews, information sharing and formal consultations, recognition of the three different strands of scrutiny would help develop the work programme.

In response to a query from Councillor Turner regarding the review of Chiropody Service it was noted that Sean Ward would raise the issue referred to by Councillor Turner with the Chief Executive of Dudley South Primary Care Trust.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the progress reports circulated at the meeting, on Maternity Services and Wheelchair Services Reviews, be noted.

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PROMOTION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Further to the consideration given to this matter at the last meeting of the Committee, a draft of a postcard entitled "Select Committee on Good Health Health Scrutiny in Dudley" had been circulated to Members and they were asked to let Sean Ward have any comments they might have on the content of the postcard. The drawing on the postcard would be changed to better reflect the role of the Committee. The various ways in which the postcard might be disseminated was also discussed and in particular it was considered that Sean Ward should contact Rob Cheketts of Dudley South Primary Care Trust who could possibly help in the electronic dissemination of the postcard to General Practitioners. Further consideration would also need to be given as to how actual copies of the postcard were sent to General Practitioners.

Other aspects of promotion were also mentioned including the various ways in which the influence of the Committee was being felt by other Health Agencies.

The Chairman then referred to the receipt of a question that was on the Committee's website relating to whether the Council had a policy for encouraging breast feeding generally. Following discussion of this matter it was considered that it could be covered as part of the Maternity Services Review and that work done by the City of Birmingham Council, referred to at the meeting, would be obtained by Sean Ward so that the appropriate questions could be asked to facilitate consideration of this matter.

At this juncture reference was made to Local Service Provider of IT Services and it was considered that this issue should be considered as part of a training/information sharing session to be arranged, as discussed at the last meeting of the Committee, at a date and time to be arranged.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the foregoing details be noted.

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GUIDE FOR WITNESSES

A guide prepared by the Committee's Scrutiny Officer was submitted entitled "Giving Evidence to the Select Committee: a guide for witnesses".

Following consideration of the content of the guide it was

RESOLVED

That the content of the guide prepared by the Committee's Scrutiny Officer entitled "Giving evidence to the Select Committee: a guide for witnesses", be endorsed.

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ADJUSTMENTS/ADAPTATIONS MADE BY SOCIAL SERVICES
DIRECTORATE FOR CURRENT WORKFORCE

A note of the Director of Social Services had previously been circulated on adjustments/adaptations made by the Social Services Directorate for its current workforce due to reasons of disability or chronic long-term illness arising from the consideration given by the Committee at their meeting held on 20th July, 2004, to the Annual Review Report on the Social Services Directorate's Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2003/04.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the note of the Director of Social Services on adjustments/adaptations made by the Social Services Directorate for its current workforce due to reasons of disability or chronic long-term illness, be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN