

SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 25th February, 2010. - Minute of Meeting of the SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Kiddie, Convener; Councillor Leslie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allan, Cormack, Crockett (substituting for Councillor Young), Donnelly, Ironside, Laing, Malone, McDonald, Penny, Jennifer Stewart, Kevin Stewart, Wendy Stuart and Kirsty West.

WITHDRAWAL OF ITEM

1. The Convener advised that due to the on-going wintery weather conditions especially in Aberdeenshire, Dorothy Ross-Archer was unable to attend the meeting today and provide a presentation on the Keep Well Initiative. He suggested that the Committee receive the presentation at their next meeting.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the withdrawal of the item; and
- (ii) to receive the Keep Well Initiative presentation at its next meeting on 22nd April, 2010.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2. (A) Budget Process

The Convener made reference to the Social Care and Wellbeing base budget and the on-going pressures to reduce the overspend. In this regard, he indicated that the approved Council budget for 2010/11 reflected these pressures with a further £7m included in the overall budget for 2010/11.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the position.

(B) VSA Young Carers Presentation

The Committee heard the Vice-Convener provide information on a forthcoming event to raise funding for the VSA Young Carers Project. The Vice-Convener advised that an evening with world renowned opera singer Lisa Milne would be held on 26th May, 2010 at 7.30pm in the Music Hall.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the information provided.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 14th January, 2010.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE

4. The Committee had before it the minute of meeting of the Children's Services Sub-Committee of 2nd February, 2010, for information.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the minute.

CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRESS REPORT – SCW/10/012

5. With reference to Article 4 of the minute of the previous meeting of 14th January, 2010, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing and the City Chamberlain, which provided information and progress on three projects, namely, Rosewell House, the Integrated Drugs Service at the Timmer Market site and the new Children's Residential Unit.

The report (a) explained that the projects were included within the Non-Housing Capital Programme, previously approved by Council and aligned to Social Care and Wellbeing Services; (b) indicated that monies required to fund the capital programme were achieved through external borrowing, capital receipts and grant income; (c) advised that the General Fund had adequate resources available to finance the capital spend in 2009/10; (d) explained that the overall cost of capital was calculated on a Council-wide basis and the impact on the Council would be included within the summary report to the Finance and Resources Committee; (e) stated that it was important that approved projects were managed and monitored in a robust way to ensure there was accuracy in relation to expenditure projections, thereby enabling the Council to calculate and evaluate the overall need for and cost of borrowing; and (f) outlined in the appendix, previous spend, expenditure as at 31st December, 2009 and the forecast out-turn for the three projects.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the content of the report in relation to the projects outlined in the appendix.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2009/2010 – SCW/10/011

6. With reference to Article 5 of the minute of the previous meeting of 14th January, 2010, the Committee had before it a joint report by the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing and the City Chamberlain, which provided information on the current year's revenue budget performance for Social Care and Wellbeing Services and outlined areas of risk and management action.

The report (a) advised that the total Social Care and Wellbeing budget amounted to approximately £112m net expenditure; (b) indicated that based upon present forecasts, it was anticipated that the financial performance of the service would result in an adverse movement on Council finances overall; (c) explained that this position would be reflected in the overall financial monitoring for the Council when it is reported to Finance and Resources Committee at the end of this committee cycle; (d) advised that there had been favourable movement in the overall position as a result of the management actions taken with current projections now indicating a potential overspend of 1.1%; (e) indicated that there continues to be significant pressure on the Adults Community Care Budgets, with care commitments currently £3.8m above budget; (f) stated that this position reflected additional pressures on needs led services, however, it showed a reduction of £0.9m since the last report, due to a review of the cost of block funded services and the achievement of further savings in line with 2009/10 savings action plans; (g) explained that expenditure on care commitments would reduce to £3.6m by the end of the year; (h) advised that there were also significant pressures on the Children's Residential School and external fostering budgets with service commitments currently £2.6m above budget; (i) outlined by way of appendix, service implications of short term management actions to enable a balanced budget, which were not seen as sustainable into the next financial year, when alternative solutions would be required; (j) highlighted forecast savings which showed the forecast overspend reduced to £1.2m an improvement of approximately £0.4m compared to the last report; and (k) had attached as appendices, the overall budget for the service and detailed analysis in respect of services managed by the Service Director and the three Heads of Service.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) note the report and the information on management action and risks that are contained therein; and
- (b) instruct that officers continue to review budget performance and report on service strategies to ensure a balanced budget.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations; and
- (ii) to pay tribute to the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing and staff for their efforts to ensure as near a balanced budget as possible for the year end.

COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT - SCW/10/013

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing which provided information on complaints received and registered under the formal complaints procedure for Aberdeen City Council's Social Work Service between 1st April, 2008 and 31st March, 2009.

The report (a) explained that complaints which were registered by the Complaints Section, were those where the initial requirement was for a formal investigation and a full written response under the procedure; (b) advised that responding to complaints about service type or service quality was used by the Social Care and Wellbeing Service to improve the services that are provided for the individual to meet their needs and deliver satisfactory outcomes in line with the personalisation agenda of the 21st Century Social Work Review and the Council's own personalisation agenda; (c) indicated that the recording, investigation and response to complaints made against the service was primarily defined by the SWSG Circular 5/1996, the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Social Work (Representations Procedure) (Scotland) Directions 1996; (d) outlined the methods and timescales for responding to complaints; (e) made reference to Stage Two complaints under the guidance, which were statutory complaints made by or in respect of a qualifying individual or someone acting on behalf of the individual; (f) advised that 167 Stage Two complaints had been received in 2008/09 of which, 31 were upheld, 59 were not upheld, 48 were partially upheld, 23 were not resolved and 6 were withdrawn by the complainant (a breakdown of the figures by client group was provided); (g) made reference to Stage Three complaints, where complainants were not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, and may have the right to appeal to an independent Complaints Review Committee administered by the Council's Corporate Governance Service; (h) indicated that 12 complainants took their cases to the Complaints Review Committee in 2008/09; (i) explained that Social Care and Wellbeing employs a part-time Complaints Officer and work was currently on-going to develop a new complaints policy and procedure which would include changes to the way in which data was recorded within the Care First system; and (j) advised that detailed complaints information would be reported to the Social Care Management Team on a quarterly basis and would be used by Heads of Service and Service Managers to address areas where complaints have highlighted issues relating to service provision or service quality.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that elected members note the content of the Complaints Annual Report; and
- (b) that elected members note the changes which would be made to the Complaints system from April, 2010 which would:-
 - (i) improve the way in which the Social Work service responds to complainants; and
 - (ii) ensure that information gathered from comments and complaints was used to improve service delivery.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations; and
- (ii) to instruct the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing to circulate previous years' complaints figures and benchmark figures with comparator local authorities to Members of the Committee in due course and to ensure that this information is included in future reports.

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR ADULTS 2010-13 - SCW/10/026

8. With reference to Article 8 of the minute of the meeting of 1st December, 2009, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing which summarised the feedback from the draft Commissioning Strategy for Adults, which was distributed for consultation to all stakeholders in November, 2009.

The report (a) advised that there had been over 20 consultation events with service users, carers, service providers and other interested parties with the aim to ensure the thoughts and views of key external stakeholders including the wider Aberdeen public; (b) indicated that the overwhelming response to the Strategy and the subsequent consultation process had been positive with people welcoming the opportunity to comment on the Strategy; (c) outlined the common themes of the consultation across all user groups, namely access to ordinary decent quality housing, access to employment for a range of people with support needs, supporting others and information control; (d) provided an explanation to comments received relating to the format of the Strategy which reflected diverse and sometimes conflicting opinion, specifically in areas where no substantial changes were to be made or where changes to the Strategy had been limited; and (e) appended the Social Care and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy for Adults incorporating feedback from stakeholders.

The report recommended:-

that elected members note the comments and approve the revised Social Care and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy for Adults 2010-13.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendation;
- (ii) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, and thereafter to the Finance and Resources Committee if required, on the recruitment and retention of social workers in Aberdeen City, particularly to provide detail on current terms and conditions relative to those available for similar posts in neighbouring local authorities;
- (iii) that officers be instructed to make arrangements for delivering a Commissioning Strategy presentation for all elected members; and
- (iv) to convey thanks to all officers involved in the production of the Commissioning Strategy and to acknowledge that the Strategy had been identified as a model of good practice by the Scottish Government.

OPIATE ADDICTION REPORT - SCW/10/016

9. Reference was made to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of 1st December, 2009 and the minute of Council of 18th November, 2009, wherein the undernoted joint motion by the Convener and Vice-Convener was referred to this Committee for consideration:-

“Council notes efforts to tackle the massive problems of opiate addiction including a heroin prescription programme in England.

To tackle the substantial and increasing problems of substance misuse in Aberdeen, Council agrees to work with and support NHS and other appropriate partners in investigating options for a possible pilot scheme in Aberdeen and to refer the matter ultimately to Government for consideration”.

The Committee had before it a background report by the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing which provided information in relation to the findings of the Randomised Injecting Opioid Treatment Trial (RIOTT) research project.

The report (a) advised that the research project was set up in England and initial results from the RIOTT were made public at a conference held on 15th September, 2009 and published on the ‘Action on Addictions’ web site; (b) indicated that these results had been publicised without having been formally published as an academic paper subjected to independent peer review; (c) stated that initial results demonstrated that with a very small cohort of patients (127) who were already in treatment and where other treatment options had failed to impact, there could be good outcomes achieved by providing injectable heroin and injectable methadone and that these were comparable, if not better, than optimized oral treatments; (d) outlined the measures which had to be undertaken in order to set up the research study; (e) made reference to a NHS National Treatment Agency statement in terms of the research project, which intimated that they looked forward to considering the final report against an independent cost effectiveness analysis; (f) outlined the significant implications the provision of injectable opiates or methadone may have including the need for patients to attend a clinic several times per day, the requirement to obtain a licence from the Home Secretary to allow Medical Practitioners to prescribe injectable heroin and the additional costs which would be incurred in setting up this scheme (three times as costly as the current treatment per patient per year i.e. £15,000 compared to £5,000); and (g) detailed the information which could be discussed locally at the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

The report recommended:-

- (a) that the Committee note the findings of the RIOTT research project; and
- (b) that a discussion on the findings of the research project should be placed on the agenda of the Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to inform a wider discussion about the range of approaches required to tackle substance misuse in Aberdeen.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree the terms of the motion;
- (ii) that a further report be submitted to the Committee once the Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership considers the findings of the research project;
- (iii) that members be informed on the findings of the RIOTT, specifically when they have been formally published as an academic paper subjected to independent peer review; and
- (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

ANNUAL GRANT MAKING PROGRAMME - SCW/09/035

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing which updated members on the current position in respect of voluntary sector grants from the Social Care and Wellbeing budget and identified the impact of making savings across the budget following decisions made at the Council meeting of 11th February, 2010.

The report (a) advised that during 2009/10 the value of grants awarded to twenty one voluntary organisations totalled £300,359.57; (b) indicated that organisations were informed in November 2009 of the then new grant making framework and invited to make applications to the fund on this basis; (c) stated that approximately one hundred organisations had submitted applications, however the process to determine the outcome had been put on hold awaiting further decisions on the practicalities of the programme; (d) explained that for the financial year 2009/10, a new Social Care Annual Grant making framework was introduced which tended to support long term service provision rather than provide start-up, innovation and opportunity for new ways of working; (e) advised that the voluntary sector welcomed a more competitive funding stream, which introduced greater transparency to the process and with the same level of funding, saw several new organisations in receipt of grants; and (f) had appended a table showing the names of the organisations in receipt of a grant and recommendations of officers in respect of these monies for 2010/11 as follows:-

Mainstream Funding Grants Previously Agreed at Council on 11th February, 2010 (and a Service Level Agreement to be Developed)

- Befriend a Child - £40,000
- James Tyrell Centre - £40,000
- Samaritans - £10,000
- Who Cares Scotland - £15,000
- Inchgarth Community Centre - £5,400
- Breadmaker - £21,300

Funding to Cease

- Aberdeen Action on Disability - £20,000
- Age Concern Advisory Service - £3,000
- Age Concern Scotland - £20,000
- Quarriers - £5,000
- Scottish Motor Neurone Disease - £1,196
- Shopmobility Aberdeen - £22,000
- Newhills Parish Church - £5,000
- Food Action Reaching Elderly - £4,500
- Altens Over 50's Project - £3,000
- Grampian Employment Opportunities - £4,500
- Cornerstone Aberdeen Employment Service - £9,000

Mainstream Funding Grants and Service Level Agreement to be Developed

- Victim Support Scotland -Aberdeen Service - £15,000
- WEA Reachout Project - £13,626.57
- Counselling and Family Mediation - £20,000

The report recommended:-

that the Committee:-

- (a) consider the grant awards not yet agreed and the recommendations of the officers in regard of these;
- (b) note the funding already agreed (£131,700) and approve the mainstreaming of the amounts recommended (£71,463.57) and the subsequent savings (£97,196) from the Grant Fund;
- (c) agree that the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing would write to the organisations, where funding is to cease, highlighting short term transitional support may be available; and
- (d) approve the discontinuation of the annual grant making programme from this year.

Following clarification being sought by members, officers advised that the Counselling and Family Mediation Service grant of £20,000 had been agreed at the Council meeting on 11th February, 2010, and that the report ought to have reflected this. Therefore the figures at recommendation (b) above should be amended to reflect that £151,700 had already been agreed through mainstreaming, with further mainstreaming of £51,463.57 to be approved.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice-Convener moved:-

that the Committee (1) approve the recommendations (including the amendment to the figures at recommendation (b) referred to in this minute) and in addition to that recommendation, that a report on the savings to be achieved through the cessation of funding be submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee to consider; and (2) that the grant allocation of £22,837 to Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations through the service budget for Corporate Governance would be subject to the agreement of the Finance and Resources Committee and that the matter be referred there for determination.

Councillor Ironside moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Laing:-

that recommendations (a) and (d) be approved; that the Committee note the funding already agreed (£151,700) and approve the mainstreaming of the amounts recommended (£51,463.57) but that prior to any decision being taken to cease funding to organisations as proposed in the report, the Director of Social Care and Wellbeing be instructed to discuss alternative sources of funding with these organisations.

On a division there voted:- for the motion (10) – the Convener, the Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cormack, Malone, McDonald, Penny, Jennifer Stewart, Kevin Stewart, Wendy Stuart and Kirsty West; for the amendment (5) – Councillors Allan, Crockett, Donnelly, Ironside and Laing.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the terms of the motion.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS STATEMENT

11. The Committee had before it for consideration, a statement of Committee Business prepared by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, which also contained the Business Statements for the Children's Services and Adult Services Sub-Committees for information.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove item 5 (Social Work Complaints Review Committee – Extension to Membership) from the statement, on the basis that the information requested was provided and contained within the statement;
- (ii) to remove item 6 (Community Engagement Programme on Social Care) from the statement, referred to at Article 7 of this minute;
- (iii) to remove item 7(1) (Learning Disability Day Service Redesign) from the statement, a report relating to the impact on staff at Burnside Day Centre in terms of the closure of the kitchen/dining room was included within the information bulletin circulated with the agenda;
- (iv) to remove item 8 (Performance Management) from the statement, reports relating to the Health and Safety Matrix and the reasons for the low percentage figure for eligible staff appraisal were included within the information bulletin circulated with the agenda;
- (v) to note that in terms of item 1 (Services in the Community – Next Steps), that a meeting to which all interested parties were to be invited to take forward the Routes Out of Prison concept was scheduled to be held on 26th February, 2010; and
- (vi) to note the dates on which a number of reports were expected and updates received by officers to date.

MOTIONS LIST

12. The Committee had before it for consideration, a motions list prepared by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the motions list.

- COUNCILLOR JAMES KIDDIE, Convener.