

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the additional meeting held on 9 December 2010 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Tony Hall in the Chair.

County Councillors: John Batt, John Fox, John Marshall (Substitute for Bill Hoult), Dave Peart, Peter Popple, John Clark (Substitute for John Savage), Melva Steckles and Helen Swiers.

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: Bridget Hardy and Alex Bird.

Present by Invitation: County Councillor Jim Clark.

Officers: Derek Law (Corporate Director, (Adult and Community Services)), Seamus Breen (Assistant Director, Commissioning & Partnerships, (Adult and Community Services)), Julie Blaisdale (Assistant Director, Library and Community Services (Adult & Community Services)), Debbie Hogg (Assistant Director Resouces (Adult and Community Services)), Ray Busby (Scrutiny & Corporate Performance), Mary Davies (Legal & Democratic Services).

Apologies: County Councillors Brian Marshall and Joseph Plant.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

58. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

The Committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

59. CONSIDERED –

(a) Issues in Social Care – National Picture, Local Pressures and NYCC Priorities.

Derek Law, the Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services gave a verbal report regarding issues in Social Care; the national picture, local pressures and North Yorkshire County Council priorities. He advised of two forthcoming seminars that were being held to advise Members of planned changes. He also explained that the coalition government had launched its Vision for Adult and Social Care which included the 7 P's:

- Prevention.
- Personalisation with emphasis on direct payments.
- Partnership.
- Plurality of the market to offer more choice.
- Protection offering greater safeguards.
- Productivity driving improvements through innovation and local accountability.
- People.

Derek Law said that the Vision for Adult and Social Care was now out for consultation and was the forerunner to the new Health and Social Care Bill planned for 2011. The Bill would include the long term cost of care in the Country, which at present was unaffordable, and would highlight the contributions needed to be made.

Derek Law advised of a meeting he had attended with representatives of the PCT and Acute Trust to discuss the way forward implementing the new NHS commissioning arrangements from 2011 onwards. He highlighted the many challenges ahead with GP consortia managing the NHS budgets.

In regard to local pressures, Derek Law highlighted issues with the legal category 'ordinary resident', people placed by other authorities in North Yorkshire and issues on deprivation of liberty standards, both he said were huge challenges to the Adult and Social Care Directorate. Derek Law highlighted four priorities to the Adult and Social Care Directorate:

- Safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- Personalisation.
- Prevention.
- Investing in re-enablement/early intervention.

Members made the following comments:

- In answer to a question on the budget workshop seminar on the 10 December 2010, Ray Busby advised that the Chairman would be taking the Committee's views to the seminar.
- A member questioned whether the majority of GP's were enthusiastic about taking over the role of managing the NHS. Derek Law said that the Chairs of Practise Based Commissioning Groups which represent GP's were enthusiastic about the prospect of working with the local authority and the opportunity to link services. He acknowledged the challenges ahead but highlighted many opportunities for the future.
- In answer to a question on cross boundaries, people living close to the borders of North Yorkshire using services in other authority areas, Derek Law replied that this was already happening.

(b) Budget Issues, Savings Transformation.

Derek Law, the Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services introduced the report. He reminded the Committee how the Adult and Community Services budget was made up and the proposals for budget savings highlighted at Paper B2 on page 7 of the report over the next four years. Derek Law explained that the Adult and Community Services Directorate needed to identify the highest percentage of savings within the next two years; frontloading reductions in net spend over the first two years of the four year period.

Julie Blaisdale, Assistant Director - Library and Community Services, advised that one third of the budget would be taken out of the library service over the next four years. She highlighted that at the end of the four year budget restraint the Directorate would look at the 18 key sites and the affect this had had on smaller communities. Julie Blaisdale advised that she had written to Parish Councils asking for ideas on local communities taking responsibility for the library service. She also said that she would be consulting area forums and each of the area committees.

The Chairman passed on a letter he had received in support of the library service to Julie Blaisdale. Derek Law acknowledged the Directorate had received many letters in support of the library service and against any cuts in the service.

Members made the following comments on the library service:

- A Member felt that he would be unable to comment on the budget proposals in respect of library services without detailed information such as lending activity by particular libraries. Julie Blaisdale replied that this information was available for Members from the Adult and Community Services Directorate.
- That some local groups were prepared to take on responsibility of the service but may need more time to be able to do so. Derek Law said that after the feedback from the consultation exercise there would be a clearer picture on what was “doable” but he highlighted that any delays would mean funding would need to be taken from elsewhere.
- That older people would be the hardest hit by the loss of the service. Derek Law acknowledged that the house bound service would not be affected.

Derek Law referred to the remainder of the report. He explained that at present all budget reductions were pro rata but that some Members may have differing views and feel that some services were more important than others. This would be an area to be assessed at the end of the budget consultation period in February 2011. Derek Law advised that over the next 4 years locality management support would go from 31 teams to 15 teams across the County taking 32 managers out of the service. He acknowledged that the ratio of manager to staff would be tight but felt the Directorate was “a victim of its own success”. Members were advised of the potential loss of staff across the Directorate.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on the latest proposals by the Adult and Community Services Directorate to deliver contributions towards required budget savings. The Committee asked for the following views to be made known to the Seminar on 10 December:

- The budget was set at a time when social care faced changes – the launch of “Putting People First”, and the Vision for Social Care. The Committee supported the 7 p’s principles of the Vision - prevention, personalisation, partnership, plurality of the market, protection, productivity and people.
- The Committee recognised that the authority was a high performing authority in terms of modernisation of social care services. It was felt that the Adult and Social Care Directorate was a victim of its own success and that North Yorkshire was at a disadvantage because unlike other social services authorities, there were no outmoded or traditional services which could be re-configured to find efficiency savings.
- The Committee supported the decision not to raise the criteria threshold for potential users. It was felt that narrowing the focus of care provision in serving fewer individuals at higher cost could prevent social care providers from intervening in crucial cases.

- The frontloading of reduction in net spending over the first two of the four year period presented unique challenges for the Adult and Community Services Directorate:
 - The particular legal constraints, which required the directorate to review and reassess service users' needs before support arrangements are changed.
 - Service change such as the closure of residential units, are subject to a clear and lengthy process, which if not complied with completely, raised the potential for successful legal challenge.
- The Committee was mindful that the reductions in Management at locality level, by increasing the ratio of management to field staff, may adversely affect support for vulnerable service users and compromise the directorate's capacity to support the change agenda.

Members also made the following comments which were not specifically for the seminar:

- The Committee recognised the high level of public interest on the proposals for Libraries and Community Services and would review the consultation proposals and emerging views at the February meeting.
- Noted the changes to the voluntary sector, the Committee would continue to monitor this as the authority look towards reviewing the extent to which social care services can move forward in the way envisaged in the vision for social care papers.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and Members comments on the savings proposals for Adult and Community Services as identified in Paper B2 of this report be noted.
- (b) That Members of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee views are given, through the Chairman, to the Budget Workshop scheduled for 10 December 2010.
- (c) That a report on the proposals for Libraries and Community Services be brought to the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee after the consultation period finished in February 2011.

MD/ALJ