

**CHILDREN AND HEALTH
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Wednesday 13th July 2011**

PRESENT – Councillors O’Keeffe, Law Riding, Patel, Riley, Solkar, Taylor, Wright, J.Smith, Julie Slater, Gee, Foster.

Also Present –

Councillor M. Bateson –	Executive Member Children’s Services
Councillor M. Khan –	Executive Member Adult’s Services,
Councillor D. Talbot –	Executive Member Culture, Leisure and Sport
Councillor D. Walsh	
J. Berry –	Senior Supporting Officer
G. Rhodes White–	Strategic Director Families, Health & Wellbeing
H. Devenport–	Director of Education
M.Bobat -	Head of Service Schools and Culture
L. Maguire–	Communications Manager (Health)
J. Wyllie-	Head of Service Policy, Planning and Performance
A. Rashid–	Youth Forum
A. Hyat –	Member of the Youth Forum
Z. Chaka –	Member of the Youth Forum
B.Simpson –	Chair of School Governors Forum
M. Hindle –	Director of Service Delivery and Transformation (Care Trust Plus)
R. Davis –	Network Director – Mental Health Commissioning
A. Rose –	Project Director – Capital Programme (Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust)
G. Rich –	Scrutiny Officer

RESOLUTIONS

5. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed those present. Apologies from M. Zammit Link Chief Officer and Councillors Entwistle, Smith, Desai, John Slater and Mahmood were recorded.

6. Minutes of Meeting held on 13th July 2011

Members wished to further discuss the closure of Southern Cross Care Home and the implications for Blackburn with Darwen. The Chair recommended that any questions on this matter could be asked when the Executive Member for Adult Services delivers his report.

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on June 22nd 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

7. Declarations Of Interest in items on this Agenda

There were no declarations of interest made

8. Work of the Executive: Transformational Agenda, Portfolio

Children's Portfolio

The Executive Member responded to questions that the Chair of the Children's Task and Finish Group had submitted prior to the meeting.

- 1) Can the Executive Member give more detail on the remodelling of the Social Work Team?

The Executive Member informed the Committee that the remodel has progressed well and that the Social Work team has been re-modelled so that it now responds differently. She explained that the key aims of the Service are to keep children safe and out of care whilst at the same time ensuring that there is sustained change in families.

She informed members that there were currently sufficient Social Workers to deal with statutory cases and that they were being supported by Family Support Workers as well as Play Therapy. It was also explained that a £1 million saving had been made through Invest to Change.

Questions and discussion were then had around the high levels of children currently in the Authority's care and the impact that budget cuts were having. Blackburn with Darwen currently has 384 children in the care system. It was explained that the reason why the numbers of children in care are so high is due to the fact that families with large sibling numbers are being taken into care.

Members were informed that whilst the Service, is having to deal with cuts core services were being protected and they were trying to get children through the system quicker. It was explained that the greatest challenge to the Department is if numbers of children coming into care continues to rise. The Executive Member spoke about the Think Family Project and explained that this early intervention programme for families would be important in keeping numbers down. Looking at future cuts the Executive Member told the Committee that they are currently managing however concerns do exist.

The Executive Member also explained to Members how the Continuum of Need and Response works. It was agreed that this was to be e-mailed to members.

- 2) Can the Executive Member give an update on the phased transport charges for Yr 7 children and why can they not be implemented now in 2011?

The Executive Member directed Members towards the Executive Board Report for the answer to this question.

- 3) The review of S.E.N. Policy on transport.
 - a. What is the policy that is being reviewed and please provide details
 - b. What appropriate modelling is taking place and how is it being done?
 - c. Subject to outcome what will the overall effect have on the user and their choices? E.g. Gold, Silver and Bronze levels of service.

The Executive member explained that the policy is not being reviewed and that work is being done with schools and families to ensure that there is consistency with the transport policy. The Committee were also informed that they were looking to move costs from the Council budget to the schools budget.

Adult Portfolio

The Executive Member for Adult Service provided answers to the questions that the Chair of the Adult Task and Finish Group submitted prior to the meeting.

- 1) Please provide details of remodelling, including changes to staffing numbers and the actual or projected impact on assessments (frequency, quality, delays) – Please also provide details of the PCT funding and the sustainability of the staffing structure after 2 years if the PCT funding no longer continues.

The Executive Member for Adult Services started by explaining that it had been a difficult challenge for the service having its budget reduced by £6.6 million. He told Members that staffing levels were now at 90.5 staff. He explained that the £2 million Community Commission had created nine posts. The Executive Member felt that the Community Commission will provide some long term sustainability however he is concerned by what may happen if the funding gets removed after two years and feels that this is a big challenge.

The Executive member spoke about making processes more efficient and eliminating duplication.

The Executive Member also addressed the issue of quality, and explained that the Customer Liaison Team were ensuring that the team were working together therefore enabling quicker decisions to be made.

The Strategic Director informed members that they would continue to monitor customer satisfaction levels to help ensure that services continued to meet customer demands.

- 2) What are the current state of negotiations with external providers and the future of the Borough's quality scheme?

Negotiations are currently taking place with both Care Trust Plus and private providers. The Executive member informed the Committee that there is a 'Plan B' should negotiations prove to be unsuccessful.

When the Executive Member was asked about differential pricing he explained to the Committee that he wanted to make sure that those who were providing a quality service would be paying more.

- 3) Please provide more details on how telecare is reducing care packages and how this is being monitored to ensure that the quality of service is being maintained? To what extent will the savings achieved here be counterbalanced by increased demand on the commissioning budget due to increase in clients? (demographic changes etc)

The Executive Member informed the Committee that telecare is helping to keep people in their own homes. There has been an increase of staff from 3-6 in this department.

A re-ablement system which assesses people is also in place and this system allows people to get back on their own two feet. By using telecare and reablement this has been successful in keeping people in their own homes and has saved £375,000 to date. There has also been a 14% decrease in people receiving homecare.

Members asked about the change from 'amber' to 'red' of the TUPE Contracts on the Transformational Agenda 'RAG' Report. The Strategic Director explained that she had asked for this to happen two weeks ago as Care Trust Plus have no contingency plans in place.

Southern Cross

Members took the opportunity to question the Executive Member on the current situation regarding Southern Cross Care Homes and the plans that are in place should the two homes in Blackburn with Darwen close. The Executive member explained that Southern Cross were doing

everything possible to keep the care homes in Blackburn with Darwen open. With regards to the situation things are not currently clear; however the Executive Member explained that he hoped that things would become clearer over the next two months. He also informed Members that the Council were working with Care Plus Trust to put an action plan together in the event that no buyers are found for the homes resulting in the earlier than anticipate closures of the homes.

Culture, Leisure & Sport Portfolio

The Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport provided answers to the questions that the Chair of the Culture, Leisure and Sport Task and Finish Group submitted prior to the meeting.

- 1) Please provide a detailed breakdown of the savings made in library services?

Please include all library sites and specifics around opening hours. Can you demonstrate the relationship between savings on staffing and total savings for each site?

The Mobile Library has now been withdrawn. Vulnerable people who previously accessed this service now have access to the at home library service.

There has also been a £170,000 saving following the review of library services and a public consultation, a further £145,000 has been saved from the Resource Fund. A further £95,000 has been saved by reducing staffing and management and just over £20,000 has been saved on staffing costs at Darwen Library. The Executive Member explained to the Committee that following the consultation it became clear that new books and resources were important to those people who took part in the consultation. The Executive Member spoke about a possible further reduction in library opening hours in order to have more money to spend on resources.

The Library in Blackburn Town Centre will now be closed on Sundays and Darwen Library is now shut an extra half day. The opening hours at Mill Hill Library have been reduced from 27 ½ hours to 21 ½ hours, whilst Roman Road will become a Gateway Model. The Executive Member explained that they are currently looking for Third Sector groups to run the building and are awaiting tenders; he also told the Committee that if this model works then he would like to try it with other libraries as well. As a result of the reduced opening hours £70,000 has now been put back into resources.

- 2) Please provide details of income targets for CLS including all leisure centres and King Georges Hall complex (KGH). Please identify areas of concern and any pressures currently known or anticipated.

The Executive Member informed the Committee that the combined income target for KGH and Darwen Library Theatre is £1.632 million. He explained that due to the nature of shows and bookings it is difficult to predict income targets, however he was upbeat about KGH and informed members that the shows they put on attract people to KGH from across the country.

The Executive Member then addressed the issue of Leisure Centres and provided targets and where they are currently at. Waves has a target of £208,000 and is £3,000 up for the first quarter, Darwen Leisure Centre has a £½ million target and is £44,000 up for the first quarter, Daisyfield has a £120,000 target and is £5,000 up for the first quarter and Shadsworth Leisure Centre is £13,000 up for the first quarter.

The Executive Member identified the Building Schools for the Future Programme as a possible threat to existing leisure services.

3) Can you provide details of the savings made and those forecasted by the current work being undertaken in the boroughs community centres?

Please include details of levels of support being given from the council in all resource areas and forecasted levels of support once the work is complete.

Due to time constraints the Executive Member enquired as to whether it would be acceptable if he e-mailed out the answer to this question. The Chair agreed to this request.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Executive Members for Children's Services, Adult Services and Leisure Culture and Sport be thanked for their attendance.
- 2) That the answers to the pre submitted questions be noted and that these answers will be explored further at the relevant Task and Finish Groups.
- 3) That the Continuum of Need and Response be e-mailed out to Members the following day.
- 4) That the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Sport e-mail his answer to question 3 of the pre submitted questions to the Scrutiny Officer who will then circulate the answer to Members.

Youth Forum

Members of the Youth Forum were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair and the Executive Member for Children's Services. It was explained to Members that the Youth Forum have always had a voice in representing young people in Blackburn with Darwen and that the Forum does a tremendous amount of good work. The Chair thanked them for their attendance.

9. **Lancashire Mental Health Acute Reconfiguration Presentation**

Members received a presentation from NHS Blackburn with Darwen Teaching Care Trust Plus on the reconfiguration of inpatient Mental Health Services. The presentation outlined intentions for Mental Health Services in Lancashire, the process they have gone through and the consultation process they have undertaken in order to help them to reach their decision. Following the presentation an update was given.

In the update Members were informed that the service is being re-configured in order to create a sense of re-balancing. It was explained to Members that older adult beds would be moved from Blackburn and be re-located in Burnley. This is being done to allow for the efficient use of beds and wards and also to allow for the redevelopment of the Blackburn site.

Members were informed that there would be a further public engagement exercise later this year following on from the consultation. Members were also asked to provide support in explaining to constituents the reasons why the reconfiguration was happening.

Members held detailed discussion with the Director for Service Delivery and Transformation, the Network Director for Mental Health Commissioning and the Project Director for the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Director of Service, Network Director and Project Director be thanked for their presentation and update
- 2) That the presentation and update from the Director of Service, Network Director and Project Director be noted
- 3) That the Director of Service, Network Director and Project Director be invited back to provide the Committee with a further update early in the new year.

10. **Committee's Work Programme**

The Chair informed the Committee that the three Task and Finish Groups have now been formed, following Members responses to the

questionnaires e-mailed out following the previous meeting. It was explained to Members that between now and September these groups would scrutinise the Transformational Agenda 'RAG' Report.

The Task and Finish Group for the Children's Portfolio and the Culture, Leisure and Sport Portfolio will be taking place on Tuesday 19th July at 6pm. Co-opted members have been invited to attend the Task and Finish Groups. The Youth Forum have been invited to send a member to the Children's Portfolio Task and Finish Group and a member to the Culture, Leisure and Sport Task and Finish Group.

The Committee were informed that Senior Officers with knowledge of the Transformational Agenda 'RAG' Reports would be in attendance at these meetings in order to answer questions. It was suggested by Members that they look to meet half an hour prior to the Senior Officers arrival in order to plan which areas of the 'RAG' report they will focus in on.

The Senior Supporting Officer informed Members that the Committee would be keeping a watching brief on the 'RAG' reports until September, however this would remain as a standing item on the agenda throughout the rest of the Municipal Year.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Task and Finish Groups will scrutinise the Transitional Agenda 'RAG' Reports between now and September
- 2) That the Task and Finish Groups for the Children's Portfolio and the Culture Leisure and Sport Portfolio will take place on Tuesday 19th July at 6pm with Senior Officers arriving at 6:30 pm.
- 3) That the Chair of the Adult Task and Finish Group will send out an e-mail to his Members with dates and times for their first meeting.
- 4) That the Committee would keep a watching brief on the Transformational Agenda 'RAG' Reports between now and September and that this would remain a Standing item on the agenda for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Signed.....

Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were signed

Date.....