

FAMILIES AND WELLBEING POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, 4 November 2013

Present: Councillor W Clements (Chair)

Councillors M Hornby T Norbury
S Mountney D Roberts
C Povall W Smith
M McLaughlin J Stapleton
P Brightmore J Williamson
B Mooney Shoebridge
S Niblock Scott

Deputies: Councillor P.Kearney
(In place of P.Hayes)
Councillor P.Gilchrist
(In place of P.Williams)

Co-opted Members: Mrs H.Shoebridge – Parent Governor Representative
Mr.A.Scott – Diocesan Representative

24 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Councillor Clements declared a personal interest by virtue of her employment in an early years setting.

Councillor Hornby declared a personal interest by virtue of his appointment as a trustee/Director of Voluntary and Community Action Wirral.

Councillor Roberts declared a personal interest by virtue of her appointment on the Management Committees of Arch Initiatives and Wirral Council for Voluntary Service.

Councillor Mooney declared a personal interest by virtue of her employment with Age UK.

Councillor Norbury declared a personal interest by virtue of his employment with Merseytravel and by virtue of him having a relative employed at a Children's Centre

Councillor Williams declared a personal interest by virtue of his appointment on the Management Committees of Arch Initiatives.

25 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the accuracy of Minutes of the meeting of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee held on 9 September, 2013 be approved.

26 **BUDGET OPTIONS**

The Committee considered the summary documents and the budget proposals for the Families and Wellbeing Department. Clare Fish, Strategic Director, Families and Wellbeing introduced the proposals and explained the key principles behind the proposals and indicated that the Directorate would be working alongside, Public Health, Schools and Health to design appropriate services to support those most in need. The priority for the Department was to fulfil its duty to support the most vulnerable whilst providing value for money.

1. **Option: Paying for Social Care**

- Were any of the neighbouring Authorities doing this?
- Was there an estimate of how many people would be charged?
- What was the procedure for dealing with those people who have estates to sell to pay for their care?
- What were the charges for respite care, and how many people could potentially be affected?
- Why was the proposal to increase the Council's debt recovery rate set at 87.5%?

In response to the above questions raised by Members, Ms Chris Beyga, Head of Delivery confirmed that other neighbouring authorities were charging along with the Wirral and indicated that regular assessment were being undertaken but it was expected to affect a small number of people who would be charge and those facing maximum increases would be appropriately financial assessed to ensure affordability. In relation to those people who have property to sell to pay for their care, Ms Beyga indicated that this was a sensitive issue dealt with between the Department, lawyers and the families. In relation to those affected by the charges for respite care, it was confirmed that the estimated number would be minimal; this would be confirmed to Members.

2. Option: Shared Services and Integration (Adult Social Care)

- In relation to the work being done already, were the NHS going to be asked to pay for what they should in relation to services provided?
- In relation to reviews detailed in the option summary how was the savings going to be made?
- What was the potential impact on staff?
- In relation to the proposed reduction in Mental Health provision, would this be kept under review to ensure services could be provided for all ages?
- In relation to the Staff options review, what was the timescale?
- What were the Shared Services options?
- Would there be a negative impact on the delivery of care services?
- Need more specific details and options before consideration at Council

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Beyga indicated that the Department were currently consulting with the NHS regarding service provision and agreed to provide a briefing note on the details of this to Members. In relation to reviews and the savings to be made, Ms Beyga indicated that the Department were reviewing all its services provision to ensure they were fit for purpose and identify savings where possible. In relation to the impacts on staff, this was yet to be determined a full review on the options would be undertaken in November/December.

With regards to reductions in Mental Health provision. Ms Beyga indicated that she was working closely with colleagues in CWP and undergone a robust review to ensure that there is a high quality service provided and that the service is regularly reviewed.

In response to Members request further information regarding this Budget Option will be presented to the next Policy and Performance Families and Wellbeing Committee meeting to be held on 5th December

3. Option: Commissioning and Contracting

- What is different than that, that's already been done on commissioning and contracting?
- What are Standards for providers?
- Would these services cover a whole range? And how will they be monitored and quality assured?

- Would the contracts include ethics monitoring in relation to zero hours contracts?
- Will there be a mechanism for monitoring care received?
- In relation to the review process, how will actual care provision be monitored?
- In relation to the transitional period, would this be reviewed?
- Is the proposed review process adequate for those with complex needs?
- What timetable will contract providers be given?
- What if people aren't happy with their service provision?
- How will safeguarding issues be monitored?
- Will the process for the letting of contracts be done through Constituency Committees?
- How will the potential impacts on service users in relation to service changes where providers are changed be managed?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Jacqui Evans, Adult Social Services indicated that previous contract commissioning posts had been deleted in previous structural changes but were essential to enabling the department to improve its commissioning arrangements. Adults restructure proposals supported by cabinet, had agreed to reinvest in these posts and the Department was now confident it was able to move forward and form effective integrated commissioning partnerships with the CCG and shared services opportunities with Cheshire West and Chester Council. In relation to standards, Ms Evans reiterated that the Department would ensure that the standards of care in the provider sector were acceptable and were above the minimum standard required. The system would now be more robust and contracts would be let with a heavy emphasis on quality.

Ms Evans indicated that the contracts would cover a whole range of services and that she was currently working with Legal and Procurement officers on the tender and interview process and also ensuring robust contract arrangements in place. Regular reviews are to be undertaken, more so with new providers. In relation to ethics monitoring, this would be built in to all contracts going forward

In relation to the monitoring of care, Ms Evans indicated that Quality Assurance officers had been employed and monthly contract monitoring meetings held with providers, evidence is also requested from the providers in relation to performance targets; mystery shopper arrangements were also in place. The department is implementing an electronic care monitoring system which will be cross checked and reviewed at monthly monitoring meetings. Contracts were awarded with a heavy emphasis on quality and providers ability to implement the principles of the ethical care charter. This includes

zero hour contracts. The contract monitoring process will include scrutiny of providers implementing these principles.

Ms Evans indicated that the implementation of the new domiciliary and re-enablement contract would mean a change for many customers. There may be possible TUPE arrangements which would minimise any change of support and therefore mean there would be no change in providers. The transition plan would not be known until the provider contracts confirmed. There was a project and communication plan and the Department would work together with providers to minimise any impact on service users. The full contract will be in place by 6th April 2014. If people are unhappy with their service provision, they can speak directly to their provider or contact Adult services directly, so we can investigate and reach resolution. Individual annual reviews will also continue to be undertaken.

4. Option: Service Redesign and Improvement (Adult Social Care)

- Will the savings target projected for Year 1 be met?
- Are there any plans for the Council to ensure there was one charge for all?
- What are the plans for managing the transition from Childhood to Adulthood Social Services support and how will an integrated service save regarding this save the Council money?
- In relation to the assessment processed, are there plans to improve these?
- In relation to adults with learning disabilities, is the Council moving away from crisis care?
- In relation to respite care do we have any beds? And what if patients don't like the respite facilities we have? What options are available to them?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Evans indicated that if the Department kept up the focus and pace then yes the projected target savings could be met. In relation to the regulation of charges for day services, these were dependent on the costs of the service provided, the whole of the day services provision was to be redesigned along with a costing model.

Ms Beyga indicated that in relation to the transition from child care to adult care, an all age disability service is to be designed and services implemented to aid the transition, this would enable the Department to plan for growth and suit all individual needs. Ms Julia Hassall, Director of Children's Services

indicated that by making the service more proportionate and planning appropriately this would lower the cost of care packages.

In relation to the assessment process and crisis/respite beds, Ms Evans indicated that the assessment process was to be improved and that this would be regularly monitored; crisis bed were still commissioned and the service provision would be reviewed to see if services could be provided more effective and efficiently and to offer more choice in the community.

5. Option: Review of Transport Depot and Fleet

Members made no comments on this item.

6. Option: Accommodation for 16-17 year olds

- How was this helping in encouraging young people to stay at home?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Hassall indicated that a more structured support mechanism with skilled intervention put in place to help mediate between families to try and resolve issues.

7. Option: Working in Partnerships with Schools

- School crossing patrols, cost of employment was in the past £3,500, now it's risen to £5,000, why?
- This was a lot of money that the school would have to find if they wanted a patrol officer
- Education Social Workers, what was the incentive to get young people into school?
- In relation to the consultation period for schools to be consulted with, why was this so close to the option being considered by Cabinet in December?
- In relation to the figures on non-attendance at schools, was this apparent in particular areas of the Borough?
- Schools Improvement Budget, were there proposed changes?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Hassall indicated that in relation to school crossing patrols consultation and a series of meetings was to be held with schools in November 2013.

In relation to the Schools Improvement Budgets, It was reported that there would be a change but not to the service schools received.

8. Option: Early Intervention to Support Families

- What are the criteria used to ascertain a child living in poverty?
- In relation child poverty figures was this higher or lower than the neighbouring authorities and are these figures increasing or decreasing?
- Request for an update on child poverty at a future meeting

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Hassall indicated that compared to other neighbouring authorities such as Sefton, the Council was slightly higher with our figures showing a slight increase. Work was underway to improve this through better case management.

In response to the request by Members, a further report on child poverty would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

9. Option: Careers, Advice and Guidance

- Concern that this option may jeopardise the excellent work done in the past
- Has the careers advice for schools declined over the years?
- In relation to the Combined Authority and skills gap, how will schools access opportunities arising in the region?
- What is the support given to those in deprived areas who have no access via electronic means?
- What brought about the need for change?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Hassall indicated that most of the schools have provided their own careers service, but the Council had a statutory duty to provide guidance. A portal has been commissioned for the City Region and also Mersey Interactive which is an online tool available to school regarding the employment opportunities available.

10. Option: Children's Centres

- Under the new plans will families have to travel to access children centres?
- Early Intervention Policy, will this have a negative impact?
- New Ferry: What will the model be for delivery of service for a joint library / Children's Centre?
- Can we have an update on this at the December meeting?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Hassall indicated that it was hoped that staff would be able to travel to outreach centres in local communities to support families. Further information regarding this Budget Option will be presented to the next meeting on 5th December

11. Option: Review of Commissioning of Family Support

Members raised no questions or comments on this item

12. Option: Children's Services Commissioning

- What are the impacts on voluntary services?
- Potential impacts differ from those first published for this option, why?
- How will the Department monitor that service users get the support they need?
- Will both the private and voluntary sector be monitored the same?

In response to the above Questions/comments raised by Members, Ms Hassall indicated that it was too early to see what impacts this would have on the voluntary services but all parties would be fully consulted.

27 ATTAINMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

In relation to the Attainment Sub-Committee, Ms Hassall indicated that the Terms of Reference were currently in draft and that the membership had now been agreed with the Chair and Spokespersons.

28 WORK PROGRAMME

In relation to work programme items, A Members suggested that a Task and Finish Group be undertaken to look at Safeguarding Children.

RESOLVED:

That a Task and Finish Group in relation to Safeguarding Children be added to the work programme.