



Executive Advisory Panel for Pathways to Independence

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Friday, 24 February 2017.

Present:

David Walsh (Chairman)
Steve Butler, Ronald Coatsworth and Fred Drane.

Members Attending

Jill Haynes, Cabinet Member for Adult Health Care and Independence.

Officers Attending: Julie Caswell (Senior Exchequer Services Manager), Michael Ford (Service Manager - Policy, Welfare Reform and Income Generation), Steve Hedges (Group Finance Manager), Paul Leivers (Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Services) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies for Absence

1 Apologies for absence were received from Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Code of Conduct

2 There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Cllr Fred Drane declared a general interest in Notes 5 and 6 as his wife was disabled.

Notes from Previous Meeting

3 The notes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016 were agreed.

Adult Social Care 2017/18 Budget

4 The Group Finance Manager drew members' attention to the section of the Cabinet report relating to Adult and Community Services. He advised that there was a current base budget pressure of £7.6m of which the majority was associated with Adult Social Care.

The Group Finance Manager advised that whilst there was still £7.5m to find he highlighted that there was a quite a lot of risk in the savings programme. He added that the whole directorate, not just adult social care, was under pressure to achieve the savings.

Following a question from the Chairman about whether it was believed that the savings were achievable, Cllr Jill Haynes as the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence advised she was confident they would be as officers now had more understanding of what things actually cost. There was also more awareness of where things could be cut back. For some time the County Council had not been robust enough in the way it challenged the NHS in respect of offloading costs, as the County Council was just responsible for the social care element of charges. Part of the challenge in respect of the savings programme would be to manage the market.

One member expressed concern that the Clinical Commissioning Group's plans still

appeared to be based around buildings and services and they did not appear to be any closer to determining the differences between social care and health problems for service users. He felt there was still more joined up thinking to be done.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence advised members that the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) was now making people work together and she felt it was all moving in the right direction. The STP Leadership Group had now agreed that the two Health and Wellbeing Boards would act as the Steering Groups for the STP and working with localities and GPs would give it all a better chance of happening.

Noted

'Making Chargers Fairer' for Adult Social Care

5 Members considered a draft report for the Cabinet which presented an analysis of the outcomes of the consultation that had been held to examine the impact of phasing in some more policy changes designed to promote equity and other principles as set out in the Care Act. The report showed that a wide range of views was expressed and strong support was given for most of the proposals that were consulted on.

The review also considered the levels of fees and charges for non-residential care and recommended an increase of up to 5% alongside work to ensure that individual personal budgets more accurately reflected actual costs. It was noted that the same rate had been held for past 5 years.

In respect of the key proposal to stop giving the 25% discretionary disregard of disability-related income there was divided opinion.

Cllr Jill Haynes, as the Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Care and Independence, explained to members the proposal to backdate non-residential care charges in appropriate cases and highlighted the importance of informing people beforehand.

The Service Manager for Welfare Reform, Finance and Income Generation noted that further work needed to be undertaken around the information and advice that was given/made available for people.

The Senior Exchequer Services Manager advised that circulating information to surgeries and libraries and targeting those people in receipt of social care informing them that advice on welfare benefits was available would help to raise this profile. Cllr Haynes felt it would be helpful to also include Town and Parish Councils in this regard.

One member felt it was important to also provide telephone contact numbers on information literature as there were still a high number of people that either did not have access to a computer or were not computer literate.

The Assistant Director - Early Help and Community Services felt it would be useful to include more of the EQIA information in the report before it was presented to the Cabinet in order to give more visibility of the decision making process.

Resolved

1. That the Panel supported the recommendations going forward to Cabinet.
2. That the Interim Director for Adult and Community Services undertakes further work to investigate the source of financial advice and information which people make use of and to signpost people more effectively, particularly self-funders, to appropriate sources of financial advice and information.

Reason for Decisions

To help secure a sustainable approach to the County Council's corporate plan aims that people in Dorset be safe, healthy, independent and prosperous.

'Making Chargers Fairer' for Adult Social Care - Draft Equalities Impact Assessment

6 Members were presented with the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) from the Making Charges Fairer consultation proposals.

The Service Manager for Welfare Reform, Finance and Income Generation advised members that the EQIA described the data, evidence and research which had been compiled to produce the policies and also highlighted the negative impacts which were contained in the assessment. The Head of Early Help and Community Services noted that the consultation had shown support for the policy changes.

Following a question from the Chairman about any work that would be done in respect of those groups where the impact was unclear, the Service Manager for Welfare Reform, Finance and Income Generation advised that a review was planned post implementation. He also highlighted the Action Plan, Monitoring and Communication section of the assessment for members.

In respect of referrals the Senior Exchequer Services Manager advised that these had increased from 45 to 60 per week.

Noted**Date for Next meeting**

7 **Resolved**
That the next meeting of the Panel be held on Friday 23 June 2017 at 10.00am in Committee Room 2.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 11.25 am