

## **HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & INCLUSION SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

Monday 19 January 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

**Panel Members present** Councillor T Oliver (Chair)  
Councillor M Bird  
Councillor J Barton  
Councillor A. Paul  
Councillor I Robertson  
Councillor V Woodruff

**Officers present** Dave Martin- Executive Director, Social Care and Inclusion  
Sue Byard – Assistant Director Strategic Housing  
Margaret Willcox – Assistant Director – Adult Services  
Steph Simcox – Head of Finance Social Care & Inclusion  
John Greensill- Joint Head of Disability Services  
Colin Teasdale- Performance and Scrutiny Officer

**Other Invitees** Maureen Bradley- Director of Care and Support, Accord Housing  
Charles Watson- Chair of Residents Group, Old Vicarage Close  
Maureen Payton

### **66/08 APOLOGIES**

There were apologies for absence submitted on behalf of Councillor C Ault

### **67/08 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting.

### **68/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

### **69/08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **Resolved**

**That the minutes of the meetings held on 24 November and 1 December, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

### **69/08 FORWARD PLAN**

#### **Resolved**

**That the forward plan as at 6 January 2009 be noted**

## **70/08 ACCORD HOUSING- OLD VICARAGE CLOSE UPDATE**

At the introduction of the Chair, Maureen Bradley presented the report circulated to members (annexed) which included the recommendations from the independent review of the lift at old vicarage close and the work that had taken place to rectify the problems.

In discussions, members debated whether the replacement of all the separate parts of the lift at different stages constituted a new lift or not. In response to a question from a member Maureen Bradley informed the panel that the expected life time of the replaced lift was 25 years.

Charles Watson informed the panel that despite work on the lift, residents were still experiencing problems with it, including it not stopping level with the floor and so creating access problems for people with trolleys or wheelchairs.

Maureen Bradley explained that there was some remaining work to be carried out at a cost of £40k and the budget process to secure this funding was currently going through.

As there were still issues with the lift, the Chair requested that a further update was brought to the panel at its March meeting in order to satisfy members that the issue has been resolved.

### **Resolved**

**That Accord Housing bring an update on the lift to the Scrutiny meeting of 26 March 2009**

## **71/08 LINKS TO WORK**

The Chair invited John Greensill to present the report on Links to Work to the Panel, John took members through the report (annexed) and invited questions.

Members identified from the report that the preferred option being pursued would put 9 of the 33 staff currently employed at risk. As the current workforce was currently made up of 50% of staff with a disability and 50% without a disability, they queried how these proportions would be changed by any redundancies as there was potential for it to have a disproportionate affect on the percentage of staff with a disability. Officers said they did not have this information to hand but agreed to feed it back to the panel.

Members asked how many people the service had successfully helped into sustainable work. John Greensill responded that he did not have this information to hand but that it was relatively low, something like less than 10 a year but that it supported 150 people in work like conditions.

Members commented that they felt it was important to view Links to Work as a social service and not just a business but acknowledge the need to move towards a more sustainable model. They highlighted the difficulties that would be likely to be faced with this in the current economic climate and encourage officers to think outside the box in looking for new opportunities. John Greensill agreed with this comment from members and informed them of work being done to align with other authorities and also focussing on the council as an employer, along with the pct, to identify jobs through a process

called job carving and also examining the application process to make it easier for people to apply for and get suitable jobs.

The Chair commented that there was a clear message of support for the Links to Work service but as they were only at stage one of the process it was important that scrutiny was kept involved and also seek the views of staff and users. Officers invited Members to visit the Links to Work service to be able to see first hand for themselves and also agreed to facilitate getting a cross section of staff and service users to a future panel meeting to present their views to scrutiny.

### **Resolved**

- 1. That officer's feedback to the Panel the breakdown of the 9 staff members at risk from redundancy by the number with a disability;**
- 2. That Members are invited to attend Links to Work to see the facilities and speak to staff and users;**
- 3. That Links to Work is brought back as a substantive item on a future panel meeting to provide members with an update on progress; and**
- 4. That a cross section of service users and staff are invited to attend the panel meeting and present their view when Links to Work is next discussed.**

### **72/08 QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING**

Steph Simcox tabled a report on the quarter 3 in year budget position and apologised to members for the paper not being ready earlier but explained that it would not ordinarily have been ready until the February meeting but they had taken the decision to bring it forward to help inform members ahead of their deliberations on the budget for next year.

Members commented that, given the size of the task given to officers they had done a remarkable job in successfully bringing it in on budget.

Members noted with concern the underspend in aids and adaptations and asked the reason for this. Sue Byard responded that this was mainly due to staff shortages and sickness absence within the team meaning they did not have the capacity to deliver. Members commented that given previous discussions at this panel regarding the limited resources available for aids and adaptations and the increasing levels of demand for this service, they felt it was unacceptable that money that was available was not being spent due to staff absence and felt that other means of continuing to deliver the service should have been explored. It was agreed that more details on this should be brought a future meeting of the panel for more detailed discussion.

Members queried whether sickness absence was impacting on any other area of the service. Officers explained that high sickness absence was a feature across all council's and in social care work in particular but that the service had had a lot of success recently with managing sickness and in particular bringing down the levels of long term sickness absence.

### **Resolved**

- 1. That a report on the underspend in the aids and adaptations service is brought to a future panel meeting to allow more detailed discussion**

## **73/08 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2009/10-2011/12**

The Draft Budget Proposals as put forward by Cabinet were presented to Members for discussion and recommendation.

Members went through each proposal paying particular attention to the impact on service delivery and whether post deletions affect filled or vacant positions. It was noted that most post deletions affected vacant posts but there were some at risk from redundancy. Officers also made it clear that most savings were efficiency savings resulting from reengineering of processes, particularly through the People First programme and these did not impact in service delivery but inevitably cuts would mean some reduction in service in certain areas.

The Portfolio Holder commented that it had been a very difficult budget with some very tough decision but wanted to formally thank officers for their hard work in helping to deliver a budget that would have minimal impact. It was noted that the ongoing monitoring of the budget throughout the year had put the service in a strong position to identify where cuts could be made without impacting on service delivery.

Whilst some members reflected their support for the budget, others opted to reserve judgement at this time.

### **Resolved**

**That the draft budget proposals 2009/10-2001/12 be noted**

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 19 January 2009.

The meeting terminated at 7.40 p.m.

Chair:

Date: