

Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission – 2013/14

This year has again seen some key decisions being made by the Executive in relation to adult social care with a lot of efficiency measures being put in place and the budgets once again facing huge cuts in order to find the savings required to meet the cuts to the local authority from Central Government. As such the scrutiny commission have been keen to ensure that whilst the changes are being proposed and implemented, the most vulnerable are supported through the processes of consultation and transition.

It has been a busy year for the commission with a mix of reviews via commission meetings and task groups. The commission has actively made an effort to hear from many stakeholders relating to particular issues before making its own recommendations and/or comments to the Executive.

Reviews

The commission has undertaken reviews continued on from last year's commission for which examination of information and reviewing of evidence has been considered in great depth.

Elderly Persons Homes

At the start of the year the scrutiny commission focussed on the proposals for the future of the Council's Elderly Persons Homes. In doing so the proposals were considered in detail with members of the public including carers and family members and other stakeholders invited to give representation at the meetings. The commission considered the implications of the proposals including occupancy rates at the homes, costings, alternatives, etc and from this a final report incorporating all of the differing suggestions and comments made by commission members was formulated.

After the scrutiny review the Executive made a decision to close the homes and move the residents to other alternative accommodation, as such the commission asked to be kept informed of progress of each individual and this has been a standing item at each meeting. Also, the decision included opening Intermediate Care Facilities and starting an Older Person's Commission, items that the commission will be attending to in the coming months.

Alternative Care for Elderly People

This review looked at whether the Shared Lives Scheme could be adapted to offer more support for elderly people. The commission sought the views of other local authorities and how their schemes are working and also heard from Liz Kendall MP about her experiences. In all the commission welcomed the progress with the scheme and recommended extra resources to be put into it with an evaluation of progress after each year.

The Executive had already agreed to put more money put into the scheme and agreed to take on board the findings of the commission and report back.

Domiciliary Care

The commission has been looking into domiciliary care including the conditions for care workers and the tendering process for providers of care. A great amount of information from key literature, visits to care providers, representations from carers and family members and evidence from officers has been considered through the process. The commission is collating all this information into findings and recommendations into a report to be considered by the Executive.

Other key areas of work undertaken

Older Persons' Mental Health Day Care Services

The commission considered options for older persons' mental health day care services in the city. After considering the proposals the commission voted in favour of closing the current service and moving existing service users to alternative provision. Commission members recommended that service users being moved are given the appropriate care during that move and the necessary checks are put in place. It was confirmed that this would happen.

Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

The commission was informed of personal budgets and direct payments and considered the impact on care services with their introduction. The commission were reassured of services being maintained and people being adequately supported to manage their budgets.

Douglas Bader Day Centre

Proposals to close the day care service for people with a physical and sensory disability were examined by the commission. The Commission supported the option for closure of the service and the provision of support to service users to source alternative provision. The commission has requested regular general updates on how current users of the centre adapt to alternative services.

Adult Social Care Local Account

The commission received the annual report on the Adult Social care Local Account which is completed annually to inform of the work done over the year. The commission offered suggestions and amendments to make the document more useful and easier to read. Most of these were taken on board for the final product.

Mobile Meals Service

A report was received with findings of the consultation to cease the service and a recommended proposal to substitute support for service users in choosing alternative meal support options.

The commission recommended that the Executive consider the phraseology of the questions on which the consultation was based as the formats used did not offer the option to retain the service. Also it was recommended that the Executive adopt an alternative option to expand the in-house service. This was explored by officers and the Executive but the commission were advised that meals sold to eligible service users were heavily subsidised so that any increased sales would lead to additional costs to the council. This would mean that the approved budget savings would not be made.

The commission were also advised that in-house costs would be higher than those of external providers due mainly to staff terms and conditions. Given the competitive nature of the market it would be hard for the in-house service to reverse the falling numbers of meals sold. The commission recognised that because of insufficient time, it had been impossible to look at other local authority run schemes, and to produce a properly considered business plan; but it recommended that the existing plan was kept in mind, should it be possible to revive a council-run not-for-profit business.

Adult Social Care Non-Statutory Support Services (Housing Related Support)

A report recommending the way forward following the consultation on proposals to remodel Ault Social Care Non-Statutory Support Services was delivered to the commission. After receiving representations from some residents of sheltered housing and providers the commission asked for some points to be considered before a decision was made on the proposed changes to the service.

The commission asked for a review of the appropriate mix of core on-site support and floating support for **Sheltered Housing Schemes** as there was concern that 15 hours of core support per week would not be sufficient to enable effective care to be given. This has now been re-modelled with a change to the allocation of core hours for each scheme with the proposals agreed with the providers, e.g. John Woolman House are now proposing 35 core hours of support per week.

The commission asked if the provision of equitable costs could be achieved across the city for the alarm system and whether there was any value in joining the County Council's alarm system. It was confirmed that the costs of funding the existing service is £117,000 per annum for 661 people living in sheltered housing schemes. If the Council funded the 43 schemes across the city, this would cost an additional £300,000. The County Council have procured a new system, which is similar to the council's LeicesterCare service so there would be little or no advantage in joining it.

The commission also asked for the funding for the alarm only provision to be maintained at its current level, for current and future service users. There are 130 people who only have an alarm system and no on-site support costing £16,500 per

annum and support to this group will continue. This will be a transitional arrangement for existing customers only.

Joint work with Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

Winter Care Plan

In conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing Commission a review was carried out into the city's winter care planning. The commission looked to seek assurances that Health Services, the Hospitals' A&E departments and Adult Social Care Services were well equipped to support elderly and frail people during the winter.

A series of in-depth meetings heard evidence from a number of services. A final report made a series of recommendations for the Executive and other Health Service providers such as Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group. An update on progress against the recommendations and an evaluation of this winter will come back in the summer.

Dementia Care for elderly people

The two commissions had a meeting to look at the provision of dementia care, particularly for elderly people. The commissions recommended that further work was done to look at more sophisticated demographic data of dementia sufferers in order to better allocate resources. An update on the progress of objectives will come to future meetings of the commission.

Better Care Fund

After an initial report and a briefing for members of both commissions, there will be a watching brief on elements relevant to each commission on the Better Care Fund.