

# Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

## Minutes - 6 December 2016

### Attendance

#### Members of the Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Ian Claymore  
Cllr Barry Findlay  
Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre  
Cllr Linda Leach  
Cllr Elias Mattu  
Cllr Anwen Muston  
Cllr Patricia Patten (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Sandra Samuels was also in attendance.

#### Employees

Paul Smith	Head of Commissioning
Jas Kakkar	Lead Commissioner - Personalised Support
Alison Shannon	Finance Business Partner
Julia Cleary	Scrutiny and Systems Manager

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1 Apologies**  
Apologies were received from Cllr Brookfield, Cllr Kaur and Cllr Potter.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of previous meetings**  
Members and Officers drew attention to Page 9 of the agenda and requested that amendments were made in relation to paragraph 3 of the minutes in relation to the consultation and paragraph 6 in relation to the Epic Café which was thought not to be appropriate as a venue or meeting place.

It was agreed that the wording at paragraph 3 be amended to read:

Cllr Muston stated that the Council had a statutory responsibility to provide assistance to all areas of protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and that this included mental health. Cllr Muston expressed concern that the LGBT community had not been invited to participate in the consultation exercise which was

contrary to the Equalities Act 2010 and went against the Council's own Compact agreement.

Officers gave assurances that fuller consultation with the LGBT community and other groups such as ex-servicemen would be addressed in the future.

Resolved: (a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

(b) That the requested amendments be made to the minutes of the meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and that the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

4 **Matters arising**

In relation to consultation with LGBT Groups, Officers stated that members of the LGBT community would have been consulted as members of the public and that, Mind Out (a mental health peer support group for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people which is closely linked to and supported through LGBT) had been included within the consultation. Shen Campbell (Consultation Officer) had dropped a number of questionnaires off at Network House for Mind Out and had returned the following week to take Wellbeing Warriors some questionnaires as they also dealt with individuals with mental health.

5 **Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 - 2019/20**

A report was considered requesting the Panel to provide feedback to Scrutiny Board for consolidation and onward response to Cabinet on the Draft Budget 2017/18, in particular those elements that were relevant to this Scrutiny Panel.

**Older People Assessment and Care Management – Promoting Independence**

Member questioned what impact an overall reduction would have on the services being provided. The Cabinet Member for Adults stated that the overall goal was to promote independence and that a risk register had been produced to manage concerns relating to any reductions in service.

Officers confirmed that the savings were a result of precious resources being spent on promoting independence and smarter, better ways of working.

Members raised concerns regarding the £13.5 million cuts that were being proposed across the Council at a time when there was a growing elderly population and that over half of the proposed cuts appeared to be coming out of budgets linked to vulnerable groups. Councillors requested assurance that the correct balance had been achieved regarding the cuts. The Cabinet Member stated that the budget linked to Adults did have the highest overspend and that an additional £2 million had been added to the budget each year to help maintain the balance and address the demographic growth and the living wage. The Cabinet member confirmed that checks and balances were in place along with the risk register.

The Panel requested that this area of work be kept under review with updates being provided to the Committee.

Members stated that it was important not to place undue pressure on officers to reduce expenditure to a level that was not appropriate for the City and sacrificed quality and that comparing with other local authorities was not always the best was to

proceed and needed to be approached with care. Officers agreed that the savings needed to be appropriate.

Officers reaffirmed that the majority of the savings proposed were as a result of enabling individuals to self-care and preventative measures that allowed individuals to remain at home rather than having to enter residential care. Officers stated that the local hospital had seen a significant fall in revenue due to more people remaining at home for longer.

Members raised some concerns that it may be the case that an individual was being encouraged to remain at home for longer when in fact they should be in residential care and that individuals were not being given an appropriate amount of time to complete the required paperwork. The Cabinet member requested that any details of incidents regarding this be passed to her as there should not be any undue pressure placed on individuals and quality assurance checks were in place. It was also stated that the Council was working with the hospitals regarding discharge policies.

Concerns were raised that there would be insufficient money to care for the increasing elderly population and in particular elderly women where an increase in dementia had been identified. The Panel agreed that a good relationship needed to be maintained with Age UK and officers confirmed that they met with representatives from the Charity on a monthly basis.

The Panel considered that there had been no additional funding for Social Services in the autumn Statement and that money from the Government was crucial to keep the services running at an appropriate level.

### **Age UK Contract Review**

The Panel considered that this was a positive and that a good relationship needed to be maintained with the Charity. The Panel also considered whether Age UK could be used to help highlight issues and concerns raised by the Council to the Government and to other voluntary organisations.

### **Equipment Store Tender**

The Panel had considered this at the previous meeting and were pleased that items of equipment were managed well in Wolverhampton and commended Officers on their hard work.

### **Transformation of the Emergency Duty Team**

Officers stated that the Council was working with partners from Sandwell and Dudley to create a larger team. No job losses had been highlighted and at the moment agency staff were being used to cover for staff absences and sickness. The Panel requested that an update be brought back to the Committee once the new design had been established and before implementation.

There were concerns expressed by the Panel in relation to having members on the emergency team who were based far outside of the area being serviced. Officers stated that the teams would be based where they were needed and could even be based at home. Officers also confirmed that the service was not physical but there to provide an allocation of services.

## **Disability and Mental Health – Promoting Independence**

The Panel expressed concern that not enough funding was provided for hostels dealing with individuals with drink or drug related problems to help mitigate against any problems experienced by residents living in the vicinity of the hostels. Officers stated that often in these cases a patient had a health need and a social care need and that in most cases the health need took precedence but that if the rules were applied more robustly then there could be more opportunity for funding to come into the area.

The Panel considered that some families would be reliant on continuing healthcare and that they could be the casualties of the budget cuts and find themselves moved between different mental health commissioners and the Council. Members again expressed concerns that individuals with mental health illnesses could be expected to live independently but they really needed support that was holistic as at the moment providers would often not treat an underlying mental illness until the health problem such as alcoholism had been treated.

Members agreed that budget cuts could not be avoided but were concerned that mental health issues were not rated as highly as they should be by service providers and commissioners and that there had been little movement forward in care and treatment. The Panel considered that there needed to be one budget with one direction as at the moment there were too many departments involved.

The Panel requested that this be looked at again in detail.

## **Housing Related Support Services**

This area had previously been known as supporting people and there was still the legacy of a budget but that spend was being reduced. Officers confirmed that people were still receiving some low level support but that this was a luxury rather than a necessity given the current budgetary context. There was some concern that these services could create a level of dependency that could in fact be detrimental to the individual rather than supportive. Officers also confirmed that this was a service that the voluntary sector could provide and members stated that there were some individuals who would need this support but could not afford it.

## **Omega Contract Review**

Officers stated that this service was now being delivered in house with no additional resources. Members were pleased with this and there were no further comments.

## **Life Direct Contract Review**

Officers stated that due to extremely low footfall in the drop in and welfare advice centre there had been a mutual agreement to terminate the contract early. The Panel were in agreement with this and there were no further comments.

## **Kaleidoscope Contract Review**

This organisation provided low level mental health services and had recently been awarded lottery funding which was allowing it to continue to provide the same service but without any financial contribution from the Council.

The Panel were in agreement with this and there were no further comments.

### **Budget and Demographic Growth**

This was noted by the Panel, there were no additional comments.

## **6 Quality Assurance and Compliance Work Programme**

A report was submitted requesting the Scrutiny Panel to note the method undertaken by the Council's Quality and Compliance team to ensure all services were appropriately monitored and supported and its future work programme.

The Quality Assurance and Compliance (QA&C) team had previously consisted of three and a half full time equivalent officers, however subsequent to a commissioning restructure these posts had been increased to seven officers.

The aim of the team was to make sure that services commissioned were of an appropriate standard and quality. They did this by making sure that the terms and conditions of the Council's contracts were upheld and complied with regulations and frameworks.

Officers were currently developing a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) which would require the service/provider to evidence their practice against a range of objectives and outcomes. This would be undertaken through an online self-assessment audit by the service/provider on an annual basis.

Officers also intended to increase the number of visits to two visits per year for each service/provider (instead of every two years as at present).

Members thanked officers for the report and considered that it contained encouraging information. Attention was drawn to item 4 which was concerned with the deaths of elderly women. Members considered that a comparison was required for this and requested information on the last five years and the previous year. Officers agreed that this information could be provided.

Members queried what a 9% increase actually meant as a population increase could mean that this number was in fact lower than previously. The Panel therefore requested that real information be provided showing the total population figures against the total number of women over the age of 65 years. Officers stated that they would go back as far as possible to provide information on deaths in each age group and the number of people who were in receipt of a service from the Council. Members also requested that information be provided to allow them to compare local information against the national average.