



Notes of the SOCIAL SERVICES CO-ORDINATING TEAM held on MONDAY 9 AUGUST 1999 at 5.30 pm

Present: Councillors Long (in the Chair) and Swepston

Officers: D Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services), P Sutton (Head of Children's Services), D Moore (Principal Manager - Regulation and Commissioning Unit), K Page (Head of Neighbourhood Services) and S Heap (Members' Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Lloyd and Turnbull

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 1999 were agreed.

2.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 Minute 5.0 - Social Services Conference: 26 to 29 October 1999

The possibility of organising a 'fringe' event at the Social Services Conference was considered with the suggested theme of 'The Interface with Health Services'.

It was agreed that:

- (a) Councillor Long would approach the Local Government Association and the Local Government Information Unit with a view to sponsorship/input for the prospective event; and
- (b) the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services would check the Council's conference hotel as a possible venue.

2.2 Minute 7.2 - 'Modernisation of Social Services'

It was noted that more work needed to be done as a matter of some urgency.

3.0 BEST VALUE IN SOCIAL CARE

3.1 It was reported that Councillor Long would be meeting with the Chief Executive, the Head of Policy and Communications and the Corporate Policy Manager on a monthly basis to consider Best Value issues.

3.2 It was also reported that the Labour Group had agreed an approach to Best Value which involved identifying services which already performed well and agreeing an action plan, with targets, for these services. Other services which were performing less well would be tested against other methods of providing the service.

3.3 It was noted that the Council's Performance Plan was to be presented to the District Auditor by March 2000, with the programme of Best Value studies commencing from April 2000. In the meantime the Council needed to identify, through the Best Value/CCT Sub-Committee which services were to form part of the plan.

3.4 It was noted that all services needed to be reviewed over the five year period commencing 1 April 2000 and that it was important that the sequence of reviews as logical where one dove-tailed into another.

3.5 The issue of cross cutting reviews was also considered.

3.6 It was recognised that services must be improved as a result of the reviews.

4.0 CHILDREN'S ADVISORY PANELS

4.1 It was agreed to defer consideration of this item until Councillor Turnbull was present.

4.2 However, it was noted that Minutes of the Panel meetings were to be submitted to both the Children's and Youth and the Neighbourhood Services Committees, however, the approach had still to be confirmed with the Chairs of the Panels.

5.0 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

5.1 Performance Indicators

The meeting received details of the most up-to-date performance indicators (PIs) which were to be circulated to all Members. It was particularly noted that the number of children without an allocated Social Worker was considerably reduced as a number of new staff members had now started work with the Council.

It was noted that a number of other PIs were being provided to the Leader of the Council, based on the Learning and Development Directorate Strategic Plan. A number of additional PIs were also being developed, particularly around referrals and assessments.

5.2 Raising Standards

It was reported that action was being taken to address performance problems with a number of Social Workers, in an attempt to raise standards.

5.3 Children's Services Budgets

It was noted that there would be pressure in the forthcoming budget round on the Children's Services Budget, as it was seen by some Members as having done well in terms of the allocation of resources over the last two years.

5.4 Social Services Database

It was noted that the work on the implementation of the new Social Services database was proceeding satisfactorily.

5.5 Support for Foster Carers

Councillor Swepston raised the issue of support given by the Council to foster carers and suggested that if effective support was given, the use of carers outside Milton Keynes could be reduced.

5.6 Tattenhoe Assessment Centre

It was reported that the staff at the Tattenhoe Assessment Centre would continue their current roles pending a review of the service. A review of their office location was also ongoing, which would allow the Tattenhoe house to be put to other uses. It was stressed that the house should not be left unused.

5.7 House - Wilton Avenue

It was noted that Children's Services had stopped using the property at the corner of Wilton Avenue a considerable time ago, but it still appeared to be empty. The current status of the property would be investigated.

6.0 ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

6.1 Mental Health Services

Councillor Swepston suggested that attention needed to be given to the interface between the Council's Mental Health Services and Health service providers. To this end, it was noted that a meeting was to be held with the Chairs of the Primary Care Group and the Community Trust.

It was reported that the Council's Commissioning Unit was now in operation and that this would provide an opportunity for joint working arrangements with health service officers.

6.2 Services for the Elderly

Councillor Swepston suggested that how the Council delivered its services to the elderly needed to be reviewed.

6.3 Disabled Adaptations

Councillor Long expressed concern that the Disabled Adaptations budget for 1999/2000 was already committed and suggested that the Capital Programme could be slipped to provide additional resources. It was noted, however, that in order to restore balances to the Housing Revenue Account any slippage on the Capital Programme was to be used to capitalise repairs.

Other options to free up monies for disabled adaptations were considered.

It was recognised that the adoption by the Council of eligibility criteria was key to the allocation of monies for disabled adaptations.

It was also suggested that closer working between Technicians and Occupational Therapists would help the allocation of disabled adaptations monies as it would help prioritise need.

It was recognised that the provision of disabled adaptations was key to many enjoying independent living, and therefore there needed to be a review of how the budget was spent and its relationship with the Housing Repairs Budget.

7.0 SSI REPORT - RURAL AREAS AND SOCIAL CARE PROVISION

7.1 The publication of the above report was noted and it was recognised that its findings needed to be considered.

8.0 PERFORMANCE AND ASSESSMENT VISIT

8.1 It was noted that details of the visit's findings would be reported to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee as part of the regular report of the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services.

9.0 DENISE PLATT VISIT

9.1 It was noted that the visit was scheduled for 27 September 1999.

10.0 SOCIAL CARE BUDGET

10.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of the Team should be dedicated to consideration of the Social Care Budget.

11.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of the Team should be on 20 September 1999, subject to the availability of the Chairs of the Community Learning and Children's and Youth Committees.

11.2 It was also agreed that Councillor Miles as Vice-Chair of the Community Learning Committee should be invited.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.04 PM