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This report may be of interest to: Policy and Resources Committees

STRATEGIES FOR CARERS

Accountable Officer: David Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services)

Author: Chris Chapman (Commissioning Unit Co-ordinator) MK 253302

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update Members on the various planning processes being undertaken in relation to services for carers
- 1.2 To seek endorsement of the *Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Carers Strategy 1999 – 2004*.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report summarises the various planning processes that have been undertaken in relation to services for carers at national, county and local levels and further consultation that is being undertaken.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 To endorse the *Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Carers Strategy 1999 – 2004*. (attached as **Annex A** to this report)
- 3.2 To note that the *Milton Keynes Carers Strategy and Action Plans 1999 – 2002* (attached as **Annex B** to this report) is subject to further consultation.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 In February 1999, the Government published “Caring about Carers” – the first national strategy for carers. This wide-ranging strategy identified that there are close to 6 million carers in Britain, of whom 60% receive no regular visitor services at all and 855,000 provide care for more than 50 hours per week. The Strategy was the launching point for the £140 million Carers Special Grant, new money over the next three years to improve the flexibility and diversity of short-term breaks.
- 4.2 Locally, joint focused action in relation to carers was prompted by the Carers Impact Study held in March 1998. This was a two day event with equal representation from carers, voluntary sector, health services and local authority. This study identified a programme of local action and a joint working group was formed to take this forward. This work is outlined in objective 1.1 of the Strategic Plan.
- 4.3 The *Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Carers Strategy 1999 – 2004* (attached as **Annex A** to this report) was initiated by the Buckinghamshire Health Authority (BHA) and prepared with particular support from the two local social services authorities and the three Carers Projects in the County. It was prepared because BHA were particularly keen to ensure basic principles were applied in relation to work with carers across the County, as some of their responsibilities were delegated down to the new Primary Care Groups. This document has been the subject of widespread consultation during the summer of 1999 and is now ready for publication.
- 4.4 The local working group that was set up following the Carers Impact Study recognised that it needed to ensure that its programme of action followed through on the themes of the national and countywide strategies. In order to do this, a local Milton Keynes Carers Strategy and Action Plans document has now been drafted (attached at **Annex B**), this document will be subject to local consultation up until the end of 1999. This document attempts to reflect priorities of local carers and to detail actions that need to be taken by key local agencies to have a real impact on carers lives. A presentation on this document will be given to the Neighbourhood Services Committee on 9 November 1999

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 As assessment practice and awareness of carers rights improve, there are likely to be increasing calls upon local authority, health and voluntary sector resources. However, a lot of what has been identified in the action plans is as much about the way that resources are deployed, as the quantity of resources.

6. **Implications**

- 6.1 Environmental
None.

6.2 Equalities

Carers are often discriminated against by employment policies and by the way in which some services are delivered. *The Milton Keynes Carers Strategy and Action Plans 1999-2002* seeks to address these issues and also makes particular reference to work with carers from black and minority ethnic communities.

6.3 Financial

the implementation of the action plan points will be subject to the availability of resources.

6.4 Legal

None.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

None.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The national strategy “Caring about Carers” has added impetus to local actions to support carers and encouraged joint working as identified in *Milton Keynes Carers Strategy and Action Plans 1999 – 2002*.

Background Papers: Caring about Carers - the First National Strategy for Carers
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Carers Strategy 1999 - 2004.
Milton Keynes Carers Strategy and Action Plans 1999 - 2002