



Minutes of the SOCIAL SERVICES CO-ORDINATING TEAM held on MONDAY
7 FEBRUARY 2000 at 5 pm

Present: Councillors Long, Miles and Swepston

Officers: D Jones (Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services), D Moore (Principal Manager Regulation and Commissioning), A Farr (Children's Services Manager) and J Marshall (Committee Manager).

Apologies: Councillors Lloyd and Turnbull

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2000, were agreed.

2.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

2.1 Minute 3.0(i) – Adult Services – Inquest on Springfield Mental Health Case

The Team felt that it was wrong that the local press had named the social worker involved in the case. It was noted that a report on the case would be presented at a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, however the Team also asked the Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services to write to the newspaper in question making the Council's objections known.

3.0 CHILDREN'S SERVICES

3.1 Referral and Assessment

It was reported that the Department of Health had produced a draft document for children in need and their families, with final guidance due at the end of February or beginning of March 2000. This was thought to include a more holistic approach to assessing children and family needs and also set out a clear timescale of 7 days for initial assessments and 35 days for core assessments. Groups had been established to look at training social workers.

3.2 Parents Fight Back

It was reported that the newly published National Children's Homes report had been received, at an initial meeting Amanda Farr would present an embryonic action plan and hopefully involve the local Member of Parliament Brian White.

3.3 Recruitment

It was reported that there were still very few applicants for vacancies. Work had been commissioned to look at the image presented. Officers would also be exploring the possibility of providing bursaries for social work students. In addition officers would write to those people who had shown an interest in vacancies but did not apply, in order to get feedback which could aid future recruitment strategies.

3.4 The Management Action Plan for Quality Protects

It was reported that the Management Action Plan had been submitted. It incorporated measures to try and make positions more appealing, for example creating 12 month, part-time practitioner and part-time action research positions.

3.5 The Waterhouse Report

It was reported that the Waterhouse Report on North Wales Children's Homes would be published next week and would be likely to focus on the issues raised by the Warner Report. Officers had liaised with officers in the press office in order to prepare a media briefing to focus on how far these aims had been achieved.

3.6 Petition

It was reported that a local newspaper had received a petition of 300 signatures with regard to a case recently covered by the newspaper. This has been forwarded to officers who would meet to discuss the positive aspects of the case with a journalist from the newspaper in question.

It was noted that the issue would be taken to stage two of the complaints procedure

4.0 REGULATION AND INSPECTION

4.1 It was reported that four complaints had been received about one nursery. This had highlighted the problem of low public perceptions of the nursery. Inspectors were investigating these complaints.

5.0 ADULT SERVICES

5.1 Social Services Inspectorate Inspection for Older People Services –

It was reported that preparations were being made for the forthcoming inspection, including contact with partner agencies and the production of a self-evaluation document.

The Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services reported that a report on the strengths and weaknesses in relation to each of the standards against which the Services would be tested, was being compiled.

As part of the inspection process the Council would have to pre select two lots of 100 case files to select individuals to whom questionnaires could be sent. Some of these people would also be interviewed.

5.2 Adaptation Budget

It was reported that the £129,000 underspend which had been reported at the Policy and Resources Committee had been in the budget for disabled facilities grants and disabled adaptations. This money was however committed to projects and some would be carried over to the next financial year.

Nigel Long noted that often in officer reports the difference between capital and revenue budgets was unclear. The Team agreed that in future reports to this meeting, officers would endeavour to present information clearly.

With regard to the Housing Improvement Team budget for Disabled Adaptations the Team requested that officers consider whether it would be less confusing for tenants if there was a "single housing pot" as opposed to separate pockets of money.

It was noted that it would not be possible to carry out all work which had been requested on adaptations, due to a lack of funding and the need to retain some contingency funds.

5.3 Shenley Common Farm

The Team discussed the Shenley Common Farm project. It was reported that the Housing Committee had agreed the necessary policy changes to make further progress on the agreed course of action possible. It was reported that the NHS Trust had offered some equipment to the scheme. Officers would also look at sponsorship opportunities and recruitment was being looked at.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.00 PM