



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 2009

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2009/10 TO 2012/13

MINUTE EXTRACT

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adult Social Care and Health and the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2009/10 to 2012/13. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. D. A. Sprason CC the Cabinet Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health in introducing the report advised the Committee that given the difficult financial conditions facing the Authority he was pleased with the additional investment, in excess of £4million, that had been included in the budget whilst still protecting existing services. The difficulties facing the Council of a dramatic reduction in capital receipts had impacted on the programme for future years but he was pleased with the retention of some important schemes in the 2009/10 programme, in particular the replacement of the learning disability respite care centre in Wigston.

In response to questions the Committee was advised as follows:-

General

- i) The level of inflation provision of 2.5% in the budget would be monitored closely and budgets might be adjusted as required.
- ii) The transfer of employment schemes from the Community Services Department were not part of the proposed savings listed in Appendix C;

Growth

- iii) the additional growth included to support Direct payments was essential given the pressures on the Department from the personalisation agenda. The level of additional resource for strengthening the Direct Payment Support Team was adequate and recognised that over a period of time there would need to be an organisational shift in mainstream activity to deliver personalised social care services. Delivering this agenda would be challenging and posed some risks but the Department was confident that the changes would be manageable and sustainable;

- iv) the Department was acutely aware of the need to establish mechanisms to monitor the use of funds made available through Direct Payments and Individual Budgets both in terms of monitoring expenditure but more importantly to ensure that the expected outcomes were, in fact, delivered;
- v) the additional provision for CRB checks was to cover the additional costs of such checks;

Savings

- vi) there were currently no plans to amend the existing eligibility criteria for services. It was noted that if eligibility criteria were tightened then any savings accruing might not necessarily qualify as efficiencies;
- vii) the review of high cost packages would seek innovative solutions to meet the challenging circumstances faced by such individuals. Care would be taken to ensure that the assessed needs were met;
- viii) the proposed savings from reduced bureaucracy would impact on administrative and support staff by improving and streamlining procedures and processes;
- ix) the total saving requirements for 2009/10 had been identified but not yet delivered. Work was in hand to identify the saving requirements for 2010/11 and beyond but it was too early to be specific;

Increased Income – Service Charges

- x) the proposed increases in homecare hourly and weekly charges would be means tested, subject to the Fairer Charging assessment. The level of such charges, even after the proposed increase, would be below that of other authorities. A number of members expressed concern at the proposed level of charges and the impact these might have.
- xi) the community meals charge would increase from £2.90 to £3.00 per meal. A 2.8% uplift would have resulted in a charge of £2.98 but this had been rounded up to £3.00 for customer convenience and ease of administration. . Some members expressed concern that this increase which would amount to 3.4% had not been specifically identified in the report.

Capital Programme

- xii) the concerns expressed by some members about the delay in the planned investment in Extra Care Schemes was shared. The drastic fall in the level of capital receipts had prompted a review of commitments. Discussions were also taking place with District Council's to make provision for such schemes in the context of their emerging Local Development Frameworks.

Motion 1 – Service Charges

It was moved by Mr Moore and seconded by Mrs Page:-

‘That the Cabinet be advised that this Committee is concerned about the impact that the proposed homecare charges would have on those who would be assessed to pay at a time when interest earnings on their savings had reduced markedly and request that the proposed increases be reconsidered’.

An amendment was moved by Mr Bailey and seconded by Ms Newton that the following be added to the motion:-

‘That the Cabinet be also advised of the Committee’s concern at the proposed increased charges for community meals which would be payable by all recipients of the service.’

Mr Moore with the concurrence of his seconder and the consent of the Committee accepted the amendment.

The motion as amended was put and carried.

Motion 2

It was moved seconded and carried:-

- c) That the proposed revenue budget and capital programme for the Adult Social Care Service be noted;
- d) That arrangements be made for a workshop/seminar for members on how the ‘personalisation agenda’ is to be developed.

Accordingly it was RESOLVED:-

- a) That the Cabinet be advised of this Committee’s concern at the impact the proposed increases in home care charges would have on people who would be assessed to pay at a time when interest earnings on their savings had reduced markedly and request that the proposed increases be reconsidered;
- b) That the Cabinet be also advised of the Committee’s concern at the proposed increased charges for community meals which would be payable by all recipients of the service;
- c) That the proposed revenue budget and capital programme for the Adult Social Care Service be noted;
- d) That arrangements be made for a workshop/seminar for members on how the ‘personalisation agenda’ is to be developed.