
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 4 April 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor Carr (Chair); Councillors Ferrier, Robson, Rogers, Rooney and T Ward.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, G Brown, P Clark, J Ord and E Williamson.

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Booth, Dryden, Mawston and Wilson.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**** MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 8 March 2005 were submitted and approved.

EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

As part of the Board's remit in terms of holding the Executive to account a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer was submitted which identified the most recent entries to the Executive's Forward Work Programme since the last report to the Board. It was pointed out that this would not negate Non Executive Member's ability to call-in a decision after it had been made.

NOTED

SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES

The Chair of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel presented the findings of the Panel's review of Fair Access to Care Services (FACS).

The Board's attention was drawn to the conclusions of the Panel in particular: -

- i. The Panel was pleased to be given the opportunity to assess the impact of the Fair Access to Care Services and hope that Social Services can use the Panel's findings to assist them in their yearly review of the FACS's eligibility criteria and provision.
- ii. The Panel concurs with the Commission for Social Care Inspection's view that the introduction of the new eligibility criteria and charging levels has been well managed.
- iii. The evidence presented by the service area detailed that the removal of the moderate banding has delivered significant financial savings and that this had not led to any significant deterioration of those people involved. Service users long term needs are clearly taken into account during their assessments.
- iv. Whilst financial savings were made it is important to remember that the change was also about trying to improve people's lives and allowing them to realise their potential.
- v. The Panel couldn't clearly ascertain if there had been a rise in the number of critical/substantial banding of service users due to the change in policy and would like to receive further information on this issue at a later date.
- vi. The process of assessment reviews is still ongoing and will not be completed until March 2005.
- vii. FACS assessments have been undertaken in a consistent manner and there is no doubt that the work of the Validation Panel supports the assessment process.

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- viii. The Panel commended the service area for their good practice in the area of ensuring a consistent approach to the assessment of service users.
 - ix. The Panel noted the work that was being undertaken in order to ensure people were given assistance in finding alternative provision.
 - x. The work to develop preventative services seemed to be well underway, however Social Services must endeavour to ensure that those services that are provided are sustainable.
 - xi. No evidence came to light to suggest that there had been an increased burden on carers and that the needs of carers were being considered through the use of carers assessments.

The Board considered the following recommendations of the Panel:-

- a) The Panel couldn't clearly ascertain if there had been a rise in the number of people in the critical/substantial banding since the policy change and therefore it was considered useful if the Panel looked at the statistics to show the comparisons between numbers in each banding as at April 2004 and April 2005 such information possibly being presented to the Panel in November 2005.
- b) Based on current evidence the Panel considers that it would be appropriate for the current position to be maintained, i.e. eligibility for the provision of local authority funded services would be given to those people assessed as having critical or substantial needs, to be reviewed by the Panel in the light of additional evidence presented to them in November 2005 (see recommendation a).
- c) To ensure that the detailed information that is being prepared about alternative provision is available to all sections of the community, consideration should be given for a strategy for its publicity to be put in place and that the information is kept up to date and reviewed on a regular basis.
- d) The Panel is able to view a copy of the directory and are given a timetable of when the directory is to be published.
- e) That consideration is given to the inclusion of an address and telephone number in the directory which could signpost people to advice on claiming benefits.
- f) Although the Panel recognises that the funding provision for low level preventative services will be available to NRF areas in the first instance the Panel would like to see that in the longer-term, consideration be given to the provision of low level preventative services to all areas of Middlesbrough.
- g) Given the service areas establishment of good practice in the development of the Validation Panel the service area considers sharing that good practice.
- h) That the service area explore the possibility of expanding the remit of the Validation Panel by using the expertise of the Officers involved to then enable the Validation Panel to moderate and provide advice on other types of decisions and functions that the service area considers appropriate.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

SCRUTINY REVIEW - IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Scrutiny Officer submitted a report which outlined progress achieved in relation to the implementation of agreed Executive actions resulting from the consideration of Scrutiny reports in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Since the implementation of the scrutiny monitoring system the Board had made a total of 50 recommendations of which 9 should have been implemented by February 2005 details of which were outlined in Appendix A submitted. It was noted that of the 9 only one Executive action had not been implemented.

ORDERED as follows:-

1. That the information be noted.
2. That in respect of the draft Licensing Policy a target date of February 2006 be included.

SCRUTINY REVIEWS - CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS

It was confirmed that no requests for scrutiny reviews had been received from the Executive, Executive Members, Non Executive Members and members of the public.

NOTED

SCRUTINY REPORTS - PROGRESS REPORTS

A report of the Chair of the Board and of each Scrutiny Panel was submitted outlining progress on current activities.

NOTED AND APPROVED

CALL IN REQUESTS

It was confirmed that no requests had been received to call-in a decision.