

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 23 October 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor Carr (Chair), Councillors Bishop, Cole, Cox, Ismail, G Rogers, Rooney, Ward and Williams.

OFFICIALS: J Bennington, G Brown, P Clark, A Crawford, J Ord, T Punton and E Williamson.

**** PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Trish Fewster, General Manager, Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust.

Councillor P Thompson, Executive Member Economic Development.

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Biswas, Dryden, Mawston and Sanderson.

**** 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 24 September 2007 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

RESPIRE AND PALLIATIVE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

The Chair welcomed Trish Fewster, General Manager, Children's Disabilities Team, Middlesbrough Council and Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust, who presented a briefing report in response to the recommendations of the Middlesbrough and Eston Health Scrutiny Joint Committee following its review of Respite and Palliative Services for children with life limiting illnesses. The report provided a briefing on the issues to be considered in progressing the Joint Committee's recommendation that the 'local Health and Social Care economy commence a debate, led by elected members on the types of services required to address the needs of this cohort of children.'

Despite the availability of a range of short break services for many disabled children, it was pointed out that there was a deficit of suitable provision for children with complex health care needs in the South Tees area. The numbers of children with complex health needs were increasing and also their life expectancy as a result of significant medical advances. Such children and their families required a flexible package of care, based on assessed need to meet their physical, psychological, social and educational needs. The trend in recent years was to move away from the traditional support and provide assistance for families for keeping children at home or respite care.

Reference was made to the National Review for Palliative Care Services for Children and Young People in England (2007) which had found that there was significant overlap between children with disabilities and complex health care need and children requiring palliative care. In view of this they had suggested that the services for such a group of children should be planned on a multi-agency basis. It was pointed out that a regional group was currently being convened to consider how the recommendations within the submitted briefing paper could be met. Given the relatively small number of children within such a group it had been recommended that consideration must be given as to whether services were provided locally, sub regionally or regionally.

It was acknowledged that the complexity of a child's health needs should not preclude them from a similar range of short break support services that were currently available to other disabled children. Support for parents was considered vital in enabling children to remain at home with their families.

It was confirmed that there was no criterion in place for accessing continuing health care funding. The Local Primary Care Trust and Partners were awaiting national guidance anticipated in 2008. Clarification was also awaited from the Government regarding the use of health funding as part of individualised budgets for disabled children.

Information was provided of short break provision in relation to the Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust, Primary Care Trust funded care packages and Voluntary and Independent Sector.

The Board's attention was drawn to where there was considered to be gaps in service provision including the following: -

- a) there was no residential service for children who were fully ventilated;
- b) there were limited residential services for children with complex health care needs which did not have a learning difficulty;
- c) although the level of care provided at 179 Normanby Road was considered to be of a high standard the building was not considered to be fit for purpose;
- d) Direct payments although being promoted as the most appropriate route for families to seek care could not be used to employ a carer for a health care task;
- e) there was no home-based service provision easily accessible to support a child or family with a health care task and as a result individual packages were commissioned which could take some considerable time to put in place;
- f) there were no home-based services including shortbreak services for children who required palliative care;
- g) there was limited access to emergency care which potentially could lead to family break down;
- h) for the children with the most complex health care needs there were not always appropriate services for transition into adulthood.

It was acknowledged that further clarification was required from the Government regarding the funding arrangements. Reference was made to a new national Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare implemented on 1 October 2007. The Framework defined a 'primary health need' and set out the criteria assessing if someone was eligible for continuing healthcare of NHS funded nursing care. Although the framework currently applied to only adults it was envisaged that similar criteria would cover children by 1 April 2008.

Members questioned the extent to which those families who didn't need to be assessed would want to deliver the service or would prefer professional help. In response it was indicated that it was likely that most people would want to continue to provide the service but may want greater access to respite for which there was a shortage especially of a specialised nature in the UK.

It was confirmed that work had commenced by Middlesbrough PCT to compile information from the various agencies and also that initial joint discussions had started regarding a possible replacement facility for 179 Normanby Road.

Elected Members had been asked to consider the types of services required to address the support needs of children with disability and complex health needs across South Tees and to consider the extent to which such services could be developed on a joint Health and Family Service basis with pooled budgets where possible.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That in order to raise awareness to the issues involved on the types of services required to address the support needs of children with disability and complex health needs across South

Tees approval in principle be given to organising a public open event involving representatives of local authorities, Trusts and PCTs.

2. That a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Health emphasising the urgency to publish both the eligibility criteria guidance for accessing continuing health care funding, and clarification regarding the legality of using health funding for individualised budgets.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Councillor P Thompson thanked the Board for the invitation and opportunity to outline the work and scope of the portfolio of the Executive Member Economic Development which focussed on the Council's economic development initiatives. Such areas included business growth incentives, community/business cohesion and supporting businesses in Middlesbrough.

The main areas of responsibility included the following: -

- a) promotion of key business areas;
- b) working with businesses and key agencies to assist in accessing support required;
- c) economic development and town centre management;
- d) working with public, private and voluntary sector projects which provided initiatives and support for local people;
- e) specific reference was made to a number of local employment initiatives in targeted priority areas such as those at Grove Hill, Whinney Banks and Hemlington;
- f) to pursue more effective co-ordination of activities through Middlesbrough Works.

ORDERED that the Executive Member Economic Development be thanked for the information provided.

SCRUTINY REVIEWS - CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS

It was confirmed that no requests for scrutiny reviews had been received prior to the meeting from the Executive, Executive Members, Non Executive Members and members of the public since the last meeting of the Board.

SCRUTINY PANELS – PROGRESS REPORTS

A report of the Chair of each Scrutiny Panel was submitted which outlined progress on current activities.

NOTED

CALL IN REQUESTS

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

ANY OTHER BUSINESS – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD – ADDITIONAL MEETING

The Chair advised Members of the intention to arrange an additional meeting of the Board in order to meet with representatives of the Post Office Limited, Postwatch and W H Smith regarding the decision to relocate the post office services from Grange Road to the basement of W H Smith in The Mall Shopping Centre, Middlesbrough.

NOTED