

AGENDA ITEM: 8 (d)

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

9 FEBRUARY 2010

SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

UPDATE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members of the Overview & Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Overview & Scrutiny Board notes the progress of the Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT

3. The Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel last met on 14 January 2010, where it received further evidence in respect of its current review of the Blue Badge Parking Scheme in Middlesbrough.
4. The meeting focussed on three elements, firstly the arrangements in place for issuing blue badges under the discretionary criteria, secondly, whether any good practice in respect of enforcement could be learnt from the local authorities awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status and thirdly an examination of the results from a 'mini blitz' enforcement exercise.
5. In terms of the current arrangements for issuing blue badges under the discretionary criteria the Panel heard that in Middlesbrough the applicant's GP is written to as part of the assessment process and asked for a medical opinion. However, in other areas of the UK an independent occupational therapist / physiotherapist is used to help determine an individual's eligibility.
6. The Panel was therefore keen to hear Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust's (PCT) view on how medical assessments for blue badges are commissioned

in Middlesbrough and whether the current model offers the most consistent and cost effective option. The Panel was advised that although the information had been requested from the PCT it was currently still awaited. Since the Panel's last meeting confirmation has been received from the PCT that the information will be provided prior to the Panel's next meeting, which is scheduled for 3 February 2010.

7. With regard to best practice the Panel heard that in October 2008 the Department of Transport awarded blue badge 'Centre of Excellence' status to eight local authorities. The Panel was particularly interested in the issue of enforcement and contact was therefore made with Birmingham City Council, Manchester City Council and Rotherham Borough Council. The Panel received a comprehensive overview of the way in which enforcement activity is undertaken within all three local authorities.
8. The final aspect considered by the Panel related to the results from the 'mini blitz' enforcement exercise, which the Parking Solutions Manager had agreed to undertake in order to gather some recent data on the level of misuse / fraudulent use of blue badges within the town. The panel heard that the 'mini blitz' exercise was undertaken between 15 December 2009 and 5 January 2010. During that period a total of 258 blue badges were inspected and of those 91.5% were identified as being used correctly, with 8.5% being misused.
9. The meeting on 14 January 2009 also provided the Panel with the opportunity to consider how the adverse weather conditions had impacted on home and day care services. The Panel heard that the contingency plans had worked very well and although some service users did experience minor delays the in-house and commissioned Home Care and Care Link services had been fully operational throughout the cold weather period.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. No background papers were used in preparing this report.

Councillor P. Purvis
Chair, Social Care & Adult Services Scrutiny Panel

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