

**HEATHER KIDD  
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Topics considered at the 15 April 2010 Committee Meeting**

**Caring for Carers**

Members received a report on the developments in services for Family Carers in Shropshire including the Emergency Carers Respite Scheme, Carer's direct payments, the Carers leisure opportunity, the establishment of Carers Champions in Adult Social Care teams, Training opportunities for Family Carers, and the launch of the Family Carers Partnership Board.

Members asked how people who did not recognise themselves as carers were engaged with, hearing that often people in a caring role see it as their responsibility, and that work was underway to encourage people to take up the support available. Members also raised concerns about how well publicised the emergency respite scheme was to carers and partners such as ShropDoc.

Members highlighted the need to have good publicity and promotion of the services and support to Family Carers, and that partners especially GPs needed to be encouraged to join up with the efforts to identify carers and encourage them to access support and services.

**Housing Allocation Policy**

The Committee received the report and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. Particular areas considered included value for money, partnership arrangements, how the choice based lettings process worked, accessibility of Homepoint, and that the energy ratings of homes are advertised when they come up for renting.

Some of the recommendations highlighted by the committee included the importance of publicity and the need to achieve a one stop shop for council and registered social landlord homes. Members also highlighted the need for more housing and that joint work was carried out between Planning and Housing to integrate policies and ensure agreed proportions of affordable housing were delivered for people with local housing need.

The committee recommended that proposed amendments to the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme be considered by the Council, and that ongoing training courses and refresher course be offered to elected members.

**Recommendations from Bishop's Castle SpARC Local Scrutiny Meeting**

The Committee received and endorsed the recommendations from the Local Scrutiny Meeting.

## **Community Services Scrutiny Committee Annual Statement**

The Committee considered and agreed their Annual Statement presented to Council on the 29 April 2010.

### **Topics considered at the 27 May 2010 Committee Meeting**

#### **Directorate Service Plan**

The Committee considered a summary report setting out the key achievements from the Community Services Directorate in 2009/10 and priority work areas for 2010/11. Achievements recognised the opportunities that have arisen through the creation of the new directorate such as bringing housing and adult social care together. An example referred to was the significant reduction in the time taken to be assessed for and have an adaptation to a council owned property completed. Members were pleased with the progress but requested further improvements continued to be made.

Priorities for 2010/11 included support to Family Carers, continuing to develop Housing Services, and the Transformation of Adult Social Care through the implementation of the Personalisation Agenda. Members identified a number of the priorities for 2010/11 that they wanted to have included in their work programme, such as work to achieve the Decent Homes standard and progress reports on personalisation.

#### **Adult Social Care Inspection Action Plan**

The Assistant Director Adult Social Care presented members with a report on the Adult Social Care Inspection [and resulting action plan] that was undertaken in December 2009 and reported to Cabinet on the 31 March 2010. Members were pleased to hear that the inspection had found many strengths in the Safeguarding in Shropshire and the Choice and Control for adults with Learning Disabilities. The report also identified that the councils Overview and Scrutiny Committees worked well reviewing transition, carers, value for money and safeguarding.

The Committee will be monitoring progress in delivering the action plan on a six monthly basis, focussing on the exceptions.

#### **Community Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

Members considered the draft work programme, identifying further topics to be included, and when they wanted to receive the reports.

### **Work Programme for the 8 July 2010 Committee Meeting**

#### **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**

The Council were awarded over £1m in funding to deliver this project aimed at improving access to services and information for Learning Disability service users and their family carers. The project also incorporates sharing of key information between relevant agencies

Members will receive a presentation from Learning Disability service users and Taking Part, as well as the Staff involved in the project.

### **Progress with the themed audit of care homes**

At their meeting in December 2009 the Committee identified the priority areas for the themed inspections. The first audit was on Nutrition, and the other topics identified by the Committee are Creating community; Sharing decision making; and Creating a positive culture.

This is an opportunity for Members to learn about progress to date in terms of work completed so far, the key findings and any changes that have taken place or actions taken

### **Other news**

- Meals on Wheels and Preventative Services Task and Finish Group is progressing with its consideration of services in Shropshire. The task and finish group have heard from Officers of the Council about the provision of Meals on Wheels in Shropshire, and in doing so considering the purpose of meals on wheels and how they fit with a package of care, how reviews are undertaken, what is involved in providing hot and cold meals, and what happens in other authorities. The future meetings of the Task and Finish Group will include hearing from providers of meals on wheels services and learning more about Telecare and other preventative approaches. The Task and Finish Group aims to have completed its work by the end of July 2010.