

SHOPSHIRE COUNCIL

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2015
in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

Responsible Officer: Amanda Holyoak
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Present

Councillor Gerald Dakin (Chairman)
Councillors David Minnery (Vice Chairman), John Cadwallader, Heather Kidd,
Pamela Moseley and Madge Shineton

49 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillors Tracey Huffer, Simon Jones, Peggy Mullock and Peter Nutting. Councillor Paul Wynn substituted for Simon Jones and Councillor Roger Evans substituted for Tracey Huffer.

50 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Mr Jones informed the meeting that he was employed by Shropshire Community Health Trust and Mrs Shineton informed the meeting that she was a Member of Health Concern.

51 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

52 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

53 Member Question Time

A question had been submitted by Councillor Pam Moseley regarding the reputation of the Council following a notice published by the Ombudsman in the Shropshire Star, and about complaint procedures. (a copy is attached to the signed minutes). It was agreed to address this at agenda item 8 as it linked with a request for an item to be added to the Committee's work programme.

54 Adult Social Care Annual Account

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care introduced the Adult Social Care Account for Shropshire 2013 – 2014 and explained that it was designed to provide a snapshot of the past year, and outline the challenges expected in the coming year. (A copy of the report is attached to the signed minutes).

Jon Hancock, the Co-Chairman of the Making It Real Board, reported that he and the Making It Real Board had encouraged a different, lighter approach to the Annual Account in order to demonstrate performance in adult social care using real life stories and people. The report was designed to be more accessible and interesting to read than previous versions, was user-focussed, and highlighted the quality aspects of services provided, rather than focusing solely on quantitative information.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee arising from the account and from the national performance measures included within it, officers explained that:

- There were two measures related to the proportion of adult social care users in employment and Shropshire Council was either the best or second best in the West Midlands and in the top 5% in the country.
- The drop in 2013-2014 figures regarding proportion of service users who found it easy to find information had been addressed through improved information available online and the commissioning of an information, advice and advocacy service. The 2013 – 14 figures did not reflect the position now that the First Point of Contact had been established and there was confidence that the 2014/15 would show improvement.
- Loneliness had been clearly linked with poor health and work was being undertaken to identify people who were at risk of this as part of resilient communities work.
- Community resources were being utilised within the New Operating Model and the GUSTO project was now a mainstream activity delivered by the Community Council.
- Let's Talk local meetings were held at 18 different localities on a weekly or fortnightly basis and provided an opportunity for people to plan to meet their needs in community buildings, in recognised communities. 18 was not a fixed number and might increase in future.
- Where appropriate technologies would be used to help meet people's needs but this was being implemented carefully and slowly on a sustained basis.
- The IT support capital budget being rolled forward to next year related to the re-tender of the Care First system, not the use of assistive technology which was still being rolled out as planned.
- Shropshire spent the lowest amount of money on over 65s in the country with a good variety in the market place utilising the voluntary and business sectors.

In response to further questions from Members about the location of Let's Talk meetings, and the distance people might be required to travel to attend one, officers explained that locations did vary, although they tended to be held in Market Towns. The majority of calls were concluded successfully through the First Point of Contact but if that was not possible a visit to the nearest Let's Talk meeting would be offered, or a home visit arranged if needed, such as in the case of a vulnerable or elderly caller who was unable to travel.

A Member from a rural electoral division emphasised the importance of work in tackling loneliness, particularly in very rural areas where it would be more difficult to put into practice. Efforts appeared to be focused on Market Towns. She thought it would be interesting to see data related to geographical spread and success in relieving pressure on the health service.

The Director agreed that this was an important issue. Initial work had been focused on the Shrewsbury area and was now being rolled out across Shropshire. Exploring the impact

of the roll out would be useful in addressing concerns about the potential of missing people, particularly in the most rural areas. Members suggested such a piece of work should be all encompassing and cover craft groups, WIs, GP liaison services, theatre groups, lunch groups.

A Member representing a rural division expressed reservations around use of technology particularly where broadband connections were less well developed. She went on to compliment the First Point of Contact Service in relation to cross border working with Worcestershire, citing a recent example of a transfer of a patient from an acute Worcestershire setting back to Shropshire for home care effectively.

In answering further questions from Members, the Director explained that:

The significant drop from 2012/13 to 2013/14 in permanent admissions into residential or nursing care homes had resulted from significant work in developing alternatives, particularly those that were home based and made use of assistive technology and domiciliary care.

The current year had seen increased confidence in quality of reablement data. Consistency of data had been variable previously as it was provided by a number of different systems and organisations.

A recent national radio broadcast had drawn attention to Shropshire having the lowest spend on over 65s in the country and best performance on quality with good variety in the market place including the voluntary and business sectors. However, this good performance made it harder to reduce expenditure further.

Some Members referred to reports due to be considered by Cabinet showing savings required and still to be made, whether these were achievable and what areas would be affected. As the Committee did not have the reports before it, the Director offered to meet individually with the Members raising these questions to explain the figures in detail.

In the meantime, he explained the significant pressures on financial performance from in year pressures and referred to the higher than ever number of people who had been self funders now approaching the Council. He reiterated how the new operating model focused on avoiding people coming into the system with 73% of calls were successfully diverted at the First Point of Contact. Although there was knowledge of some self funders approaching the threshold most people were reluctant to share their financial details before they needed to. The Council was working with Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC) in an attempt to map self funders.

The Director also referred to the pressure from increased costs, and unattained savings, for example, the lack of success in re-negotiation of the PFI contract. Pressures faced year on year were substantial.

The Director thanked members of the Making It Real Board, who had been driving forces behind putting the report together, provided constructive challenge and helped develop the report in its new dynamic format.

In response to queries around the recommendation to note the report, the Director explained the status of the Account. All Adult Social Care Services were required to produce one to be presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny but not for revision or amendment. It was an evolving document that would improve year on year and would be presented to the Committee again in the Autumn.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Making It Real Board and Jon Hancock for attending the meeting. In noting the Account, the Committee said it had stimulated valuable questions and debate, and highlighted areas for further work. In particular, the Committee had agreed on the need to look at work in the most rural parts of the county and asked for more context to be presented around the comparative information in the report.

55 Day Services Update

Members considered a report (copy attached to the signed minutes) which provided an update on changes made to the Council's in house provided day services between 2012 and 2015 and the outcomes for service users who were previously supported by the Council in day services.

Discussion covered disappointing levels of interest from independent providers in taking on Day Services. A helpful session had been held with providers recently to identify the reasons for this.

The Committee were informed of the 'Safe Places' initiative which had been launched to support vulnerable people in the community. Members suggested that publicity around 'Safe Places' be revisited to ensure the public was aware of the service and familiar with the logo.

Members drew attention to the absence of Safe Places in the Cleobury Mortimer, Bishop's Castle and south west Shropshire areas and the Head of Social Care Improvement and Efficiency said she would look into this. Officers referred to discussions with the Mayfair Centre regarding provision of an outreach service in Bishop's Castle. The Committee asked that all Members with a relevant geographical link be involved in such discussions.

Another Member drew attention to the Butcher Row toilets in Shrewsbury which included the county's first publicly funded disabled changing places and had been provided by Shrewsbury Town Council. She also suggested that similar facilities in Day Centres should be promoted.

The Healthwatch representative had considered the comments received by Healthwatch in relation to day services. Healthwatch were able to make enter and view visits and had identified some impact of reduced access to day services in the context of lack of regular social contact. Some service users had expressed regret that they were no longer able to see each other in the social setting of a day centre. It was suggested that the qualitative information gathered by Healthwatch be incorporated in any future discussions around social contact.

The Chairman and Councillor Moseley reported on a visit that they had made to the Avalon in Oswestry which provided day opportunities for clients with a Learning Disability.

A variety of activities were offered including gardening, walking, swimming and horse riding as well as activities in the building itself. Councillor Moseley reported on the good quality of the building and the pleasant, calm ambience with some listening to music and chatting and some participating in craft and other activities. She had felt that it had looked underused but realised that some were participating in activities away from the building. The cost was £57 day and she had heard that some people did not attend any more due to the cost.

The Chairman reported that Maggie Allan, from the Bradbury Day Centre was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting as planned to report on what had been a great success story in Whitchurch.

Officers acknowledged concerns related to social isolation and also the need to reduce reliance on an institutional type building. Learning from tender exercises would be taken on board.

Members from rural electoral divisions pointed out the importance of geography and the particular need to look for any facilities that could be used for community based services in rural areas. The importance of involving the local member for rural areas in any discussions was reiterated.

The Chairman recommended that the next meeting of the Committee be held at Avalon Day Opportunities to allow the Committee to see the service provided for themselves, with a visit afterwards to Maesbury Metals.

The Committee agreed the recommendations in the report.

56 Proposals for Committee Work Programme

The Member question was taken at this point as it related to a request to add an item to the Committee's work programme. A copy of the question and the response from the Director of Adult Social Care is attached to the signed minutes. The question related to recent criticism from the Local Government Ombudsman of the Council following a finding of maladministration in April 2013. The request for an addition to the work programme was to scrutinise the learning points stemming from Adult Social Care complaints and Ombudsman reports.

The Committee was referred to the key points in the Complaints Analysis report provided (a copy is attached to the signed minutes). Learning points had been identified in a number of areas and action taken to address these. The Performance and Design Team Leader explained that providing any more detailed information around specific complaints raised the risk of identification of complainants.

It was suggested that a further report be made in June or July as this timing would allow consideration of the end of year position and whether complaints had reduced in the areas where learning had been identified and action taken. It would also allow triangulation of information with that provided by others, eg, Healthwatch, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and CCG, and also how Shropshire compared with other authorities. The Performance and Design Team Leader highlighted the role of scrutiny in identification of

service issues and understanding the relationship between commissioning decisions and performance information.

A Member drew attention to telephone assessments and emphasised the need for assessors to research conditions, particularly fluctuating conditions, before embarking on an assessment. The Director confirmed that he would act on this feedback.

For the 30 March meeting of the Committee, Members agreed that it would be useful to look at the overall impact of all transformation activity on service users in addition to more information around the context of the performance data presented in the annual account. The proposals for other meetings were noted.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: