

## **JOINT HEALTH AND ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 15 July 2008

At: 6.00 pm

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Tom McGee (Chair) in the chair; Councillors Chris Blackburn, Walter Brett, Owen Breen, Christine Corris, Chris Gordon, Sylvia Humphreys, Susan Ingham, Les Jones, Hazel Lees, Wendy Meikle, and June Somekh.

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

### **3. CALL-IN**

There were no items to consider.

### **TRANSFORMING SOCIAL CARE: FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES (FACS) AND BEYOND**

This meeting was suggested by the Executive in its response to recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Committee's review focusing on 'Older People's Preventative Services in Stockport' (with specific regard to recommendation four "that further clarification on the policy on equipment and adaptations, the prioritisation criteria therein and implications of any amendments to this be sought with a view to considering whether the Council is working appropriately to prioritise access to bathing services"). Given the Government review of how the current system of eligibility for social care, called 'Fair Access to Care Services' or FACS, can be improved and the national debate, launched in May and lasting until November 2008, about the future shape of care and support services, it was considered to be appropriate and timely to hold this informative meeting at this time.

### **4. FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES AND WIDER SOCIAL CARE REFORM – PRESENTATION AND VIEWS**

The Service Director, (Adults) gave a detailed presentation which (i) informed Members of the Fair Access to Care Services framework (used to decide eligibility for adult social care services) and how this would work in terms of social care provision for adults in Stockport, and the current national review of this system of eligibility; and (ii) considered the wider challenges for adult social care and how the existing care and support system for England could meet the challenges of the future.

Following the presentation invited professionals submitted their views on the current position and future challenges and made the following key comments and observations:-

- The changing criteria between health and social services care and the difficulty of handling the division between the two services would need to be addressed.

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- Managing expectation around individual budgets and how much choice was made available to an individual. Problems of identifying and applying necessary care to those with intermediate needs should be considered.
- The negative stigma relating to receipt of Council services needed to be eradicated and consideration was needed on all the various key issues relating to self funding.
- There was a need to get vulnerable people assessed and provide the correct information in order to carry out accurate signposting of services.
- An acceptance was needed in respect of the relinquishment of power to allow adults to take their own decisions regarding their future service provision.
- There was a need to recognise that direct payments would not suit all and that a toolbox would need to be available to act as a net to those who might require an alternative approach or might make mistakes with payments.
- Should individual budgets be introduced then the relevant services would need to respond as imaginatively as possible and provide brokerage and support.

In addition, comments were made in respect of the potential resource implications in promoting awareness amongst the whole of the Stockport population and of the general availability of information and advice, even if these were not eventually utilised.

In response to a Councillor's question, it was reported that a series of pilot schemes were ongoing in order to identify and learn from mistakes. In addition, it was recognised that self assessment was open to abuse but that a panel would be introduced in order to adjudicate on cases in dispute.

Councillors generally recognised the need for publicity through the various types of media available and in cooperation with the voluntary sector organisations such as Age Concern.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm.