

ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 MAY 2011

Extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 19 April 2011.

CHANGES TO THE INTERNAL HOME SUPPORT SERVICE

Cabinet considered a report that set out the results of a 3 month consultation exercise into proposed re-provision of a range of internal Home Support services which employ around 320 staff and support 500 Service Users and that sought final approval of the proposed changes to service provision.

Councillor Jenny Hannaby, Shadow Cabinet Member for Adult Services expressed her admiration for the staff who provided a flagship service that was the envy of other authorities. She stated that she had spoken before about her concern over the speed of the changes and the impact on the ability to assist the most vulnerable users of the service. She was pleased that the contract would be monitored and she would be pressing for a regular report to the Adult Services Scrutiny Committee. There was still a lot more assistance required by staff who were required to adjust to a working life outside the Council and she urged continued support. The financial savings would not be known until the process was completed and she hoped that the changes would not be in vain with the savings not achieved. She sought clarification on Annex 2 and assurances about service continuity and cost for service users in the event of a service provider not delivering. She continued to have some concerns over quality and supervision and hoped that the Council would be sure of providers' ability in terms of capacity, expertise and financial stability before their inclusion on the contract list.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services in introducing the report stated that they had listened and taken on board the comments made during the consultation. He added his thanks to the internal Home Support Service staff for their efforts. He praised the positive manner in which they had approached the consultation. He emphasised that the approach was largely the same as that agreed in December but highlighted the changes made following the consultation. He added that only 20% of services were provided by the internal service and that the cost was no longer affordable. In a recent inspection the existing external providers were found to be good or excellent and he was confident that new providers would be found likewise. The providers were well aware of the cost structure so he was confident in moving the recommendations to proceed.

The Director for Social & Community Services stated that the changes were being proposed with regret but were necessary to maintain a viable service. This was largely accepted by both service users and employees. He understood the concern to protect staff and to maintain continuity of care. In relation to contract monitoring the Directorate was well used to dealing with the issue of service failure. The Contracts Team work closely with providers and this was the value of having a wide range of providers. They had experience of stopping provision where necessary and

finding alternative provision for service users. Contracts were actively managed and they had 20 years experience of commissioning services. With regard to staff he believed that for many the right way forward was to become personal assistants. This allowed people to provide care for users on a personal basis allowing continuity of service married to the needs of the providers. The authority could provide practical assistance in this regard.

RESOLVED: to

(a) note the outcome of consultation with staff and Service User groups, and agree the changes to original proposals set out in paragraph 7 of the report;

(b) agree that the internal Home Support Service will cease to operate by April 2012, subject to satisfactory re-provision arrangements set out in paragraphs 10-13 and any other necessary actions required to maintain continuity of service; and

(c) request a progress report from the Director of Social and Community Services to Adult Services Scrutiny Committee in December 2011.