
Community Well-being Board

07 March 2007

Local Government House, Smith Square, London

Chair: Cllr D Rogers OBE (East Sussex CC/Lewes DC)

Vice-Chair: Cllr G Barnard (Bracknell Forest)

Deputy Chair: Cllr R Grant (Warwickshire)

Members: Cllr M Aspinall (Plymouth), Cllr E Atkinson (Poole UA), Cllr J Couchman (Oxfordshire), Cllr D Cousins (Isle of Wight), Cllr K Glazier (East Sussex CC), Cllr B Hood (Monmouthshire), Cllr R Lawrence (Wolverhampton UA), Cllr R Martins (Watford BC), Cllr M Robinson (New Forest DC), Cllr S Whitaker (Norfolk CC)

Substitutes: Cllr P Banks (Hampshire CC), Cllr M Colston (Buckinghamshire CC), Cllr R McLaughlin (Hammersmith & Fulham), Cllr E Sheehy (Salford City)

Apologies: Cllr D Beechey (Deputy Chair, Bridgnorth)

1. Media Update on Fair Care Campaign – Richard Stokoe, Media Office (oral update)

Richard Stokoe, Chief Media Officer at the LGA, updated the Board on work being undertaken around the Fair Care Campaign. Prior to the budget on March 21, it was anticipated that there would be a release focusing on issues around cost-shunting from the NHS to local authorities. The ADSS/Finance Survey was not yet complete but the media office was pushing for this to happen before April 2007. The Board was asked to consider what it might see as sustainable long term system funding for the sector.

Members then made the following points:

- *It was important to ensure the ADSS/Finance survey was completed as soon as possible.*
- *Following the launch of publications, such as Vision to Reality, it was important that the LGA took on board the best way to promote such documents, even when they were academic in nature and not immediately easy to promote.*
- *It was important for the media office to engage with national campaigns such as those being run by the Daily Mail and Daily Express, and to impress the relation between funding in the health and social care sector, and service provision.*

2. CSCI Report on the State of Social care and its implications – Andrew Cozens, Strategic Adviser, Children Adults & Health Services, IDeA

The Board received a report from Andrew Cozens (IDeA), in which he set out the main headlines of the second annual CSCI report to Parliament, along with the implications of the report's findings for local government and the Board's work programme.

Following the presentation, members discussed the following points:

- *There was a serious workforce issue regarding carers. It was crucial that access to skills were provided for both carers of relatives and carers in the workforce to prevent them becoming socially excluded, and that recruitment of younger carers was focused on as a priority.*
- *The need to map-out and understand how ambitions for providing improved social care could be met should lack of funding mean that there was not sufficient capacity to do so.*
- *How the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) intended to communicate the messages in its report to government to ensure that future policy reflected them.*
- *There is a gap between the ambition of the New Deal for Carers recently announced and the adequacy of funding available to councils to deliver the expectations in it*
- *The fact that fewer people were receiving social care as the eligibility criteria rose needed to be addressed as a priority.*

Decision

The Board noted the report.

Action

Officers to take forward actions as set out in the paper.

TO'F

3. Other Business Report

The Board discussed the following sub-sections of the Other Business Report:

(9). LGA Asylum and Refugee Task Group

It was agreed that the Task Group could work with the Home Office to examine at the policy causes of destitution, with a view to exploring possible improvements to the asylum process. Councillor Roger Lawrence, Chair of the LGA Asylum and Refugee Task Group, confirmed that discussion on destitution and asylum seekers reflected only a small part of the Group's workplan.

John Ransford, Deputy Chief Executive, confirmed that the Task Group was hoping to lobby central government to arrange for central funding for destitute asylum seekers, as part of the LGA's ongoing work to ensure that the costs of asylum support does not fall on local authorities.

Members proceeded to discuss the following points:

- *That the Task Group considered the broader agenda, linking Children's services, including child protection and how support would be funded.*
- *There was a need to consider the link between health provision and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.*

(8) Supporting People

It was understood that the Supporting People Strategy would be published around the end of March. With this in mind, Office Holders of the board had agreed to schedule a meeting with the CLG Minister Phil Woolas for early April so as to enable input into potential finance and resource implications.

The Board congratulated Councillor Patricia Banks (Hampshire CC), as her council was the first in the country to score the highest possible score on a Supporting People inspection. It was hoped that Hampshire CC could be used as an example of best practice when Lead Members met the minister.

Action

Officers to arrange a date in early April for Office Holders and the Minister to meet

CS

(12) Feedback from meetings

Action

It was agreed that members would email feedback from meetings they had attended to Charlotte Saini for circulation to the rest of the Board (email: charlotte.saini@lga.gov.uk).

CS

Decision

The Board noted the Other Business Report with actions as set out above and endorsed the work of the Asylum and Refugee Task group.

4. Performance and Improvement- key challenges for the sector

The Board received an introduction from Trish O'Flynn, senior policy consultant; followed by a short presentation from Office Holders on the recent meeting they had attended with Cllr Sr Simon Milton, Chair of the Improvement Board regarding practical measures the CWB Board could take to implement improvement.

The following points were noted:

- It would be important that non judgemental political support was available for councils which were struggling – the LGA is not an inspectorate*
- Regional groupings of councils which were underperforming would ensure better sharing of good practice and more relevant local solutions*
- It was a good idea to have focus on the wider well-being agenda*
- The use of scrutiny as a tool to assist underperforming councils improve was not always clear cut as if the scrutiny functions were weak themselves they would not have the desired impact. It was therefore important for all councils to recognise the importance of scrutiny*
- Undertaking work with struggling councils would help the CWB Board meet aims of the LGA's Raising Our Game strategy*
- Working alongside councils to help them to improve would give the LGA more credibility with central government*

- *A variety of methods could be used including: holding an evidence gathering session, work with regulators, learning from Beacon Councils, and developing elected members to lead standards of practice*

Decision

The Board endorsed the report and presentation and their recommendations, including the recommendation to work alongside councils to help them to improve in respect of community well being services.

Action

Officers to work up a project plan in order for this work to be implemented. **TO'F**

5. Learning Disabilities – Rob Greig, National Director, Learning Disabilities

The Board received a presentation from Rob Greig which set out the need to value people and use a cross-government rights-based agenda to improve services for people with learning disabilities. Key challenges and questions were set out. The fall-out from the cases of abuse in Cornwall and Merton/ Sutton was also raised.

The Board then discussed the following points:

- *In terms of learning disabilities, the issue of cost shunting between the NHS and local government was extremely important*
- *There had to be more awareness in both the NHS and local government of learning disabilities and the fact that having learning disabilities was not the same as having an illness.*
- *Local authorities and voluntary sectors needed to work in partnership in order to commission robust services for people with learning disabilities.*
- *The bureaucracy around section 28a funding agreements is an obstruction to better joint commissioning for services for people with learning disabilities*
- *The importance of Partnership Boards having chairs or co-chairs and members who were service users.*

Decision

The Board noted the presentation from Rob Greig.

6. Note of the Last Meeting

The Board agreed the note of the last meeting.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 9th May 2007