

# Notes of Decisions Taken and Actions Required

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Community Well-being Board

5 March 2008

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1

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

**Vice-Chair:** Cllr G Barnard (Bracknell Forest)

**Deputy Chair:** Cllr D Beechey (Bridgnorth DC)

**Members:** Cllr M Aspinall (Plymouth), Cllr D Cousins (Isle of Wight UA), Cllr Glazier (East Sussex CC), Cllr Martins (Watford BC) and Cllr Z Patrick (Oxfordshire CC)

**Substitutes:** Cllr P Banks (Hampshire CC), Cllr Colston (Buckinghamshire CC), Cllr. R McLaughlin (LB Hammersmith and Fulham) and Cllr S Whitaker (Norfolk CC)

**Apologies:** Cllr J Couchman (Oxfordshire), Cllr R Grant (Warwickshire), Cllr B Hood (Monmouthshire), Cllr R Lawrence (Wolverhampton), Cllr S Ritchie (Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea) and Cllr S Woodward (Staffordshire CC)

**Action by**

## 1. **Adult Social Care: the Government's Green Paper and the LGA's Campaign**

Anne McDonald introduced the debate. She set out the current position of the LGA's social care campaign, explaining that there were two strands to this work:

- 1) Making the current system work more effectively, and
- 2) Establishing an LGA position on the future direction of social care, particularly around funding arrangements, in preparation for the government-led debate that will take place this summer.

The Board were asked to consider the main issues and principles in advance of the LGA Lead Member Summit on Monday 10 March. The Chair explained that the Board Group Leaders had agreed that a summary of this discussion would be made available at the Summit.

Members commented on the following areas:

- Sudden change to funding arrangements should not be allowed to

disrupt the ongoing work of adults' services, especially in the current context of rapid change in the way in which services are commissioned and provided.

- There was general agreement on the importance of including issues around social care and community health in all discussions of health services. There were concerns that the focus of national work on health was often based exclusively on PCT-led services which could undermine efforts to join-up the provision of services between agencies. This approach was also reflected in the membership and participation of several of the boards and partnerships working in this area.
- There was also agreement that early intervention and preventative care should be promoted. In many areas, the provision of low and moderate level care was being cut due to resource pressures, however, in the longer term this type of care could achieve overall savings through reducing the need for acute care. It was suggested that incentives could be established for Local Area Agreements to ensure that investments in preventative care were made.
- Several Members commented on the problems associated with pockets of deprivation in broadly affluent areas. It was felt that people in these areas often lost out in terms of care and that therefore the funding issues relating to deprivation and local demographics would need to be addressed as part of the debate.
- The new system would need to encompass signposting and brokerage for self funders. Members welcomed the fact that the issue of social care had finally moved up the national agenda.
- There was a common understanding of the need for improved partnership working and also broad support for the move towards personalised care. Therefore the real remaining challenge was how these services would be funded.

Anne McDonald informed the Board that the Commission for Social Care Inspection was undertaking a review of eligibility criteria for Ivan Lewis and had called for evidence. This is focused around the question of how the system can be changed to meet the requirements of personalised services. She felt that the LGA should encourage local authorities to respond and would raise this at the Summit on 10 March.

#### Action

The notes from this discussion would be circulated at the Summit on 10 March. The call for evidence for the CSCI review of eligibility would also be mentioned on 10 March. AM

## **2. 'Must Knows' for Lead Members for Adults' Services**

Jess O'Brien and Mona Sehgal from the IDeA presented the 'must

knows'. They asked for feedback from the Board, explaining that these questions would become a core part of the IDeA's work with Lead Members. The 'must knows' will be a web-based resource. The final version would be launched in May, but would be regularly updated and new 'must knows' could be added in light of future developments.

Members commented as follows:

- It was recognised that this resource should assist members with their work-life balance, by encouraging them to focus on the priority areas and in clarifying the relationship between their leadership role and the management role of officers. Jess offered to see if this could be made any clearer in the 'must knows'.
- This resource would be particularly useful for new portfolio holders and in training future lead members. Mona explained that the resource was aimed at all lead members (new and existing) and that as a web-based tool, it could be accessed by any member who would find it useful.
- The scrutiny 'must know' is particularly important and may need further explanation. It is important for lead members to establish a good working relationship with the chair of their scrutiny committee and effective pre-decision scrutiny can support policy development and avoid unnecessary confrontation. Mona explained that the 'must knows' aimed to signpost to further resources rather than overload with information, but that further information or explanation could be added where members felt it was needed.
- It was suggested that some information on the relationship with the regulator (CSCI) would be useful.

If Board members have any further comments after the meeting, they can email Jess at: [Jessica.obrien@idea.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.obrien@idea.gov.uk).

### **3. Equity Release**

Anne McDonald introduced this report, explaining that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation was setting up a task force to further explore the options for equity release. They were keen for the LGA to act as a partner in this work, as they envisage local authorities playing a key role in supporting older people through the process of equity release. The LGA therefore had the option of becoming actively involved in this project or of choosing instead to maintain a "watching brief" on the project.

The Chair commented that the Board's Group Leaders had discussed this issue and did not feel that it would be appropriate for the LGA to endorse equity release schemes. While it may be a good solution for certain individuals or circumstances, there was evidence of problems

associated with equity release schemes and so members did not wish to publicly support equity release as a general approach.

#### Action

The LGA will maintain a “watching brief” on the JRF’s work on equity release schemes. TH

#### **4. Sector Skills Agreement - Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy**

Vic Citarella introduced the report. He explained that this was part of a process overseen by the Sector Skills Development Agency, which was undertaken across 25 different sectors. It was a weighty process involving a needs assessment, consultation exercise and gap analysis which led eventually to the drafting of a 3 year action plan and series of bilateral agreements. The process was important as it would determine the funding deployed by the Learning and Skills Council, Skills for Care and within Local Government to train the social care workforce.

Vic explained that officers felt that it would be best to undertake this work across the local government family (with LGE and IDeA) and to take the time to unpick all the detailed elements of the proposed agreement. It did initially appear as a good direction of travel, but there were certain key issues that needed to be clarified (set out in paragraph 9 of the report).

Members were concerned that this focused only on the top-end of the workforce (managers, social workers etc.), which represent a small proportion of the adult social care workforce. It therefore didn’t address the real issue of skilling-up the wider workforce to be fit for the future. There would also be particular training issues for home carers resulting from the personalisation agenda. Members felt that the separation of skills development for children’s and adults workforce was not always helpful.

While Skills for Care were playing an important role, several members were concerned that they might not be addressing issues such as delivery, accountability and outcomes in full. Members were keen to have a more in-depth discussion with Skills for Care and suggested inviting a representative to a future Board meeting. This then led to a wider discussion about the need to critically assess relationships with bodies such as Skills for Care. The Chair commented that this was a more general issue for the LGA around its endorsement of non-accountable organisations.

#### Actions

Vic Citarella will take these comments back to Skills for Care and invite VC

the Chair to attend the May meeting of the Board.

**5. Dementia Services Locally: Presentation on Good Practice Example in the Isle of Wight (Cllr Dawn Cousins and Sarah Mitchell)**

Members received a presentation from Cllr Dawn Cousins and Sarah Mitchell, Director of Community Services, titled 'Our Roadmap to Delivery: Older Persons Commissioning'. This presentation can be accessed at [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk).

Sarah highlighted the following elements of their approach:

- It is important to start by looking at older people's services as a whole and then fit dementia services within that, rather than treating it as an entirely separate issue.
- The key element of their approach is to be very focused on specific, local need. They have undertaken work to analyse each local area ward by ward according to the dispersal of older residents as against the services currently provided: supported accommodation, day care etc. They have also used an assessment of health inequalities to determine target wards.
- By changing their approach and focusing on actual need through very localised and integrated commissioning, they had successfully improved services within budgetary constraints.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions around the following issues:

- Pockets of deprivation were often hidden at a sub-ward level. How had the Isle of Wight identified and addressed need in these small areas? The response was that they had established pathfinder projects in areas with particular problems and are now exploring what works best.
- How had they used the planning process to ensure that needs were met? Sarah explained that adult services would comment (along with other relevant directorates) on planning applications for residential homes and would state whether or not they had identified a need for that kind of facility in the particular area. This would then be considered when reaching a decision on the application.
- A member added that Councillors could all influence this process through policies developed through the Local Development Framework.
- How had the significant political risk associated with making these changes been managed? Cllr Dawn Cousins commented that shortages could not just be blamed on a lack of resources. In the past there had often been high expenditure with little attention to levels of need or the quality of service provision. Through gathering

detailed information and modelling, they had been able to provide evidence of where there was need and so target services. This information had also improved the effectiveness of their work with the PCT and voluntary organisations. The final outcome of improved services and actual cost reduction had demonstrated the success of the approach.

## 6. Other Business Report

Members received an update on other Board Business not reported elsewhere on the Agenda.

### ***Healthy Communities Programme***

Members asked for more information of the role of the Coastal Issues Special Interest Group in relation to health. Mona Sehgal explained that they were working on the health issues that are specific to coastal areas, particularly specific demographic issues, including the ageing population.

#### Action

The Chair offered to speak to Cllr Roger Thomas about this work and also to clarify the remit of the Coastal Issues SIG. DR/PO

### ***LGA Health Commission***

Anne McDonald drew members' attention to an article from the Guardian that was tabled at the meeting. This discussed a white paper on community empowerment to be announced by Hazel Blears which aims to improve the accountability of public bodies such as PCTs.

The Chair stated that the Board Group Leaders would be writing to all the Lead Members and to District Council Leaders to encourage them to respond to the Health Commission. It was important that evidence of local authority perspectives was received. This would also be mentioned at the Adult Social Care Summit on 10 March. DR/PO

### ***Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)***

There was a concern that some authorities were not clear about the commissioning arrangements for host organisations.

It was also suggested that due to the new relationships that this would establish, there may be a need for some councils to modify their constitutions in order to set-up LINKs. The LGA should provide some information to councils on this issue.

#### Action

These points would be included in a newsletter to be sent out soon. AM

### ***European local government conference about gender equality***

Cllr Mary Aspinall and Cllr Zoe Patrick reported back on the conference that they had both attended. They suggested that further councils should be encouraged to sign up to the charter as it was not prescriptive and would help councils to meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty.

***Meetings Attended by Members since the last meeting***

Members reported back on the meetings attended since the last Board meeting:

- Cllr Mike Coulston informed members that he had been appointed the theme representative on the board of the SEIEP.
- Cllr Gareth Barnard commented that *Research in Practice* was a useful organisation offering access to independent research and he recommended authorities to sign up to it.
- Cllr Reg McLaughlin asked for a report to the Board on the 'Last Chances' Report. It needed to be implemented by 2010 and there were still concerns about where funding would come from.

**7. Notes of meeting held on 16 January 2008**

These were agreed, with a correction to the titles of the members.

**8. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 14 May 2008, 11.30am in LGH**