



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Tuesday, 17 January 2012 (AM)

-: Present :-

Councillor Thomas (J) (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Bent, Darling (Vice-Chair), Kingscote, Parrott, Pentney, Pountney and James
(In place of Butt)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Davies, Ellery, Cowell, Lewis, Pritchard, Tyerman and Hytche)

482 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Penny Burnside (Co-optee).

In accordance with the wishes of the Conservative group, the membership of the Board was amended to include Councillor James instead of Councillor Butt.

483 Adult Social Care

The agenda item was introduced by the Executive Lead for Adult Social Care and Older People along with Chief Executive of Torbay Care Trust. The Executive Lead for Adults Social Care and Older People outlined to the Board the difficult climate and challenges faced with putting forward this year's budget proposals. The proposals have been compiled with a view of protecting the most vulnerable. The Board heard how a reduction in premises, as well as in the volume of services have contributed to the budget proposals which are outlined in the papers, as distributed at Council in December 2011.

In response to questioning the Board heard of Torbay Care Trust confidence in achieving the budget for the coming financial year is greater this year than last year. The Board heard of the challenges and difficulties faced in setting the budget against a background of reductions in government funding and a changing demographic profile within the Bay.

The Board were advised by the Chief Executive of Torbay Care Trust of a number of contingencies which would need to be looked at if the Care Trust was unable to balance the budget. Income generation lines proposed within the report were in line with Council policy. The Board heard how, at present, the Care Trust has a fully committed budget for the coming financial year.

In response to questioning the Board were advised of development items / cost pressures some of which are still in negotiation at the moment.

In response to questioning the Board were advised that there are areas which are grant funded and grants provided are subject to the same scrutiny as the rest of the budget.

The Board were advised that the level of recovery of income is subject to assessment. Details of this are outlined in the budget report issued in December 2011.

In response to questioning the Board heard how the majority of saving proposals had already been implemented / achieved but there were a few that have not. Two areas which had not yet been implemented or achieved involved a restructure of disability day care services and a proposed reduction in community alarms.

The Board heard how the proposals are an extension to the 2011/12 budget and centred on reducing the volume of care packages. In response to questioning the Board heard how consultation processes in relation to the proposals have been undertaken, or in some cases where budget proposals have not yet been implemented the consultation will take place in due course. In response to questioning the Board heard how both NHS Act 2006 Section 242 duties and the NHS Act 2006 Section 244 duties have been met. The Board heard how some of the decisions in relation to consultation fell to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The Board were advised of some of the additional options for additional savings in the event of underachievement of proposals which included management of vacancies and in house support services. The Board heard how £500,000 savings had already been achieved in reducing non-front line services to include HR and training. The Board heard how the Trust employs around 1800 members of staff and that redeployment opportunities were relatively high when staff are displaced. The Board heard how care must be taken not to make short term changes which end up resulting in larger longer term problems.

In response to questioning the Board heard how the proposals outlined within the documentation were discussed at a number of various boards (such as group meetings and the Senior Leadership Board) including officers and members of the voluntary sector, service users and members of the public. Proposals and ideas were put forward / explored during these discussions in an attempt to try and minimise reductions or cuts. The Board were assured that no reductions had been made without thought and consideration of who the cut or reduction may impact upon and how.

In response to questioning the Board heard how the pressures faced by the Care Trust were not all new however the climate was different now in relation to the reduction in public sector funding.

In response to questioning the Board heard of a pro-active approach to referrals where alternative options for support and care were explored including whether there are members of family who can provide or would be best placed to support, whether an individual has the right access to benefits (as per their entitlement). The

Board heard of the work of the FAB team, who listen to the needs of the individual, which often does not involve access to public funded services more signposting to information, it was acknowledged that more work could possibly be done in this area.

In response to questioning the Board heard of the minefield of pressures faced when setting the budget proposals which were described. The Board were advised that the Annual Strategic Assessment (ASA) is in draft format until approved by full council.

The Board questioned whether an earlier Health Overview and Scrutiny meeting needed to be arranged in view of the public consultation and debate and decision on whether the proposals constituted a substantial variation. It was noted that the HOSC should meet earlier than March.

The Board questioned the reduction in client numbers and were advised of reducing pattern of usage of residential care settings, in addition to this central government changes also looked promising with regards to developments in stroke rehabilitation. The Board heard how the demand for day care services had begun to fall away and that it was now felt service users preferred to look alternative ways on this to ensure individual needs and value for money are achieved.

The Board questioned whether a longer term financial planning approach would prove useful, if adopted or recommended in budget setting process. In response to this the Board heard this approach to budget setting had in some circumstances already been adopted.

In response to questioning the Board heard how a potential closure of care home was likely to be put forward to full council for debate and decision, but the Care Trust were not in a position to further comment on this at the present time.

Resolved:

- 1) The board raised their concerns with the Mayor on the service achieving the budget.

484 Supporting People

The Executive Lead for Adult Social Care and Older People introduced the item to the meeting, highlighting the pressures and challenges faced with setting the budget proposals for this service. The Board heard how the service focuses on early intervention which works to reduce the risk of eviction, homelessness, promotes access to benefits whilst looking to reduce substance and alcohol misuse through preventative measures. The Board heard how the service is a commissioner of these services for the local areas.

In response to questioning the Board heard how savings required from 1st April 2012 would involve smarter contract management and procurement and that these

proposals in detail, along with others were outlined within the report originally issued in December.

The Board heard the risks of not being able to implement the savings as required from 1st April 2012. The contingencies in place centred on many contracts expiring in the coming year with others having flexibility with regards to their end dates. In response to questioning the Board heard the service is not generally an income generation led service so the targets for income generation do not apply.

In response to questioning no development items or cost pressures needed to be highlighted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board. However, work needs to continue on re-ablement and reducing levels accessing accommodation led services as this could cause a greater cost pressure.

In response to questioning the Board were advised of the implementation costs as outlined within the budget report documentation, circulated in December. The Board also heard of plans to implement more join working with partners such as Devon.

In response to questioning the Board heard how £268,000 on domestic abuse refuge but the Board were asked to look at this in the context of other work across the authority on reducing domestic violence such as the work by IDVCA and Family Intervention Project. In response to questioning the Board heard how around £1 million is currently spent on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse.

In response to questioning the Board heard how the service has not experienced a decrease in service users and that the current client base consists of nearly 2000 individuals and in terms of the cuts made across the Authority the service had made around £500,000 worth of budget proposal savings.

The Board questioned details behind the PLUSS contract, following recent press around the closure of local premises. The Board were advised that this contract area had only recently moved over to supporting people function but that work was taking place with the current provider (PLUS) to re-procure this.

The board requested further information from Supporting People regarding the breakdown of their budget and further information relating to the outcomes of PLUS Service Users.

485 Harbours

The Board heard how the harbours budget setting process generally takes place earlier on in the year. The Board heard the process of how the Harbour budget working party works through the budget proposals to include user and public consultation. The Board heard how the Harbour operates independently from the Authority. The Board heard how given the variable nature of their income it is difficult for the Harbour Committee to set targets for income.

In response to questioning the Board heard how delicate discussions had taken place with Harbour users to negotiate costs and fees. The Board heard how a

possible increase could be reviewed in the future The Board heard how some of this work is documented in the Harbour Accounts Principles, 2009.

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