

## **Local Authority Provided Adult Social Services Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

**Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Conference Room 1b, County Hall, Ruthin**

Meeting commenced at 8:30am

**Present:** Councillors Raymond Bartley, Richard Davies, Meirick Lloyd-Davies and Win Mullen-James

**Apologies:** Councillors David Simmons and Huw Williams

**Also present:** Nicola Stubbins (Director of Social Services); Phil Gilroy (Head of Adults and Business Services); Rhian Evans (Scrutiny Coordinator) and Karen A Evans (Democratic Services Officer).

### **1. Introduction**

Head of Adults and Business Services welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the Task and Finish Group was established as a result of Performance Scrutiny Committee's consideration of a recent report on member visits to in-house social care providers. Whilst the report was a positive one, questions were raised with respect to whether the Authority could continue to provide this type of service in future in the light of financial pressures and a national shift in emphasis from dependency services to services which promoted and assisted independent living.

### **2. Appointment of Chair**

Councillor Meirick Lloyd-Davies was appointed as the Group's Chair.

### **3. Terms of Reference**

The draft Terms of Reference for the Group had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting. These detailed the purpose and scope of the review to and the proposed timescales. Officers answered members' questions on the draft document and members agreed the terms of reference and scope of the review.

### **4. Objective of the review**

Background information outlining the context of the review (new legislation and reducing cost whilst improving quality and outcomes) had been circulated to the Group prior to the meeting. The document included information on the population profile for Denbighshire, unit costs and activity information relating to the Council's residential care, day care, extra care, community living schemes and work opportunities services as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Capital and maintenance costs of the Council's social care establishments were not covered in the document. Members were advised that the objective of the review was to explore the sustainability of the Council's delivery of adult social care services in future. Officers explained that the Council's statutory duties in the area of adult social care was to assess the individuals' care needs; delivery of services to

meet identified needs did not have to be undertaken by the Authority, they could be commissioned from the private sector or other from organisations. The unit costs for delivering care services in-house were higher than the private sector because local authority employers were bound by national pay and terms and conditions agreements. Transportation costs for people with learning disabilities to access work opportunities was also becoming unsustainable. Consequently a review of the services at this moment in time was appropriate, as the Council faced unprecedented revenue budget cuts for the foreseeable future and current and pending legislative changes focussed on reablement services to promote independence rather than institutional care or services that encouraged dependency.

It was emphasised that the ultimate aim of the review was to deliver services which met users' needs in a different way but without detriment to the users. Services need to become more outcome focussed and be able to prove that they were improving people's lives. By disinvesting in some services and investing in others the Council should be able to meet its statutory obligations whilst also delivering the corporate priorities of 'making sure that vulnerable people are protected and able to live as independently as possible' and modernising the Council'. Whatever adult social care would look like in future dignity and care had to be the basis on which it was built and wherever possible continuity of care should also form a central part of any future service.

Members were advised that there were now private providers in the market delivering the majority of social care services which the local authority currently provided.

## **5. Proposed Work Programme**

The proposed timescale and draft work programme for each meeting as listed in the terms of reference document was agreed.

## **6. Dates of future meetings**

The following dates and times were agreed for future meetings of the Group:

10 June 2014 at 2pm  
24 June 2014 at 2pm  
2 July 2014 at 2pm  
7 July 2014 at 9.30am  
16 July 2014 at 9.30am

With a possibility of giving a verbal report to Performance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 July, prior to the Adults and Business Services' Budget Workshop on 30 July 2014.

## **7. Confirmation of information required for the next meeting**

- Information on unit costs for each of the listed social care services at full occupancy
- Information on actual occupancy of the services over that last 3 years

- Information on the actual costs of comparable independent and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector services
- Information on Adult and Business Services' usage of agency staff and corresponding unit costs over that last 3 years
- Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill as Lead Member for Finance and Assets to be invited to attend as a witness for meeting 2
- Councillor Bobby Feeley as the Lead Member for Social Care (Adults and Children's Services) to be invited to attend as a witness for meeting 3
- Information on how the 'Dial-a-Ride' service is funded
- Information on residents use of comparable services delivered by other providers
- Information on the criteria and clauses for buying flats in Extra Care accommodation

Meeting concluded at 10:05am



## **Local Authority Provided Adult Social Services Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

**Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014, Conference Room 2, Caledfryn, Denbigh**

Meeting commenced at 2pm

**Present:** Councillors Richard Davies, Meirick Lloyd-Davies (Chair), Win Mullen-James and Huw Williams.

**Also present:** Phil Gilroy (Head of Adult and Business Services); Rhian Evans (Scrutiny Coordinator) and Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill (Lead Member for Finance and Assets)

**1. Apologies:** Councillors Raymond Bartley, David Simmons and Nicola Stubbins (Director of Social Services).

### **2. Notes of meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the discussion

### **3. Discussion on unit costs and occupancy rate for Adult Social Care Services in Denbighshire over the last three years in comparison to independent/third sector unit costs for delivering similar services**

Prior to the meeting details of the unit costs for the Council's residential care, extra care, community living schemes and day care services had been circulated, along with the occupancy rates at each establishment for the past three years. Comparative information had also been provided on costs for residential care in the private sector and on domiciliary charges levied by the local authority and those charged by the private sector for similar services. In addition information on the charges for private nursing care, both nursing and Elderly Mentally Infirm (EMI) services were provided – the local authority did not provide any nursing care nor EMI care in-house. It was explained that charges relating to the provision of nursing care could not include full nursing costs (FNC) which was an element of the cost which was met by the Health Board. Figures were also provided for Learning Disabilities residential care, which could cost up to £1,000 per week for individuals with complex needs. With respect to domiciliary care the Welsh Government (WG) had capped these charges at a maximum of £55 per week for 2014/15, a rise of £5. Therefore the local authority was charged with providing or commissioning these services on an individual's need basis, however it was not permitted to levy more than £55 on the service user.

In response to members' questions with regards to the quality of care provided by external providers and private residential/nursing homes, officers advised that contracts between the Council and the independent providers stipulated the type and quality of care expected, be it domiciliary care or residential/nursing care. Contracts specified the contract monitoring arrangements and officers from the Authority could call in unannounced to undertake visits to satisfy themselves that

the contract requirements were being met. Similar to local authority provision, private residential and nursing homes and domiciliary agencies were also subject to CSSIW inspections.

Figures provided on resident numbers at each of the three residential homes run by the Council indicated that the homes were not full to capacity at present. They had not been full to capacity during the last three years, although both Dolwen and Awelon had seen an increase in the number of residents during 2013/14. On the contrary the Extra Care schemes seemed extremely popular with all three full to capacity for the last three years. The Community Living Schemes for people with learning disabilities were also proving popular and had been full to capacity for the last three years. The information provided indicated that the cost for the local authority for providing extra care was more than double the cost in the independent sector. Staffing costs (including on-costs) was the main reason for this disparity.

The Day Care Centres at Hafan Deg and Llys Nant had both been operating well under capacity for the last two years, and with the service now being provided solely at Hafan Deg the numbers attending were still only 14, although the centre had room for 30 people.

The WG was quite clear about its expectations for social care in the future. It expected fewer people to be residing in residential care with more people supported to live as independently as possible either in their own homes or in schemes similar to Extra Care, where support was available if required. In future the WG's expectation was that care packages should be flexible and tailored to achieve individuals' desired social care outcomes based on regular assessments. Individuals who could not be supported in this way would more likely to be in need of nursing care than residential care in the future.

Members were advised by the Head of Adult and Business Services that a separate working group was looking in detail at future provision of Work Opportunities services for people with learning disabilities. This working group, which was chaired by a representative from the voluntary sector, was looking at a number of options including social enterprises, and included 2 Councillors in its membership.

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets provided figures for residential care in comparison to extra care costs. At present providing residential care cost the Council around five times more than extra care provision. Members were reminded that in the Authority's corporate plan councillors had given a commitment to increase the number of extra care facilities in the County by 2017.

Group members also raised concerns with respect to the potential capital maintenance costs that may face the Authority in future due to the ageing buildings within which the residential services were currently being provided.

In response to members' concerns that future non-availability of local authority provided social and residential care had the potential to drive up the charges in

the private sector, the Head of Adult and Business Services advised that evidence from England suggested that market forces actually drove down the cost of private provision.

Members concluded that whatever option was chosen for future provision of adult social care services quality should not be compromised. The ultimate outcome of the Group's work should be the provision of cost effective high quality social care for Denbighshire residents which met their individual needs.

#### **4. Confirmation of information required for the next meeting**

Following consideration of the information provided to it the Group requested that the following information be provided for its next meeting.

- information on the quality of the Council's provision in all of the areas under consideration;
- information the quality of comparable services in the private/third sector;
- information on the number of present in-house residential care residents who would be suitable for transfer to extra care accommodation;
- details of the contract specifications which could be included in future contracts for the delivery of domiciliary, extra care, residential, day care and work opportunities services from independent providers (including contract management, quality assurance and monitoring arrangements, stipulations to mitigate extortionate increases in charges and contingency arrangements if the provider ceased to trade);
- details of the number of local authority staff in each service that could potentially be affected if services were to transfer over to independent providers (including the numbers that could potentially be subject to transfer to independent providers under TUPE arrangements) and the numbers who could potentially leave their current services through natural wastage;
- information on the projected capital maintenance costs on each of the social care establishments which form part of this review for the next ten years; and
- that the Lead Member for Social Care (Adult and Children's Services) be invited to attend the next meeting for the discussion on the quality of social care services

#### **5. Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting will be held in Conference Room 2. County Hall, Ruthin at 2pm on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014 with subsequent meetings scheduled for the following dates and times:

25 June 11am (rescheduled from 24 June 2014 at 2pm)  
2 July 2014 at 2pm  
7 July 2014 at 9.30am  
16 July 2014 at 9.30am

Meeting concluded at 3:15pm





## **Local Authority Provided Adult Social Services Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

**Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014, Conference Room 1b, County Hall, Ruthin**

Meeting commenced at 2pm

**Present:** Councillors Meirick Lloyd-Davies (Chair), Richard Davies, Raymond Bartley, Win Mullen-James.

**Also present:** Nicola Stubbins (Director of Social Services) and Rhian Evans (Scrutiny Coordinator).

**1. Apologies:** Councillor David Simmons, Councillor Bobby Feeley (Lead Member for Social Care – Adults and Children’s Services) and Phil Gilroy (Head of Adult and Business Services).

### **2. Notes of meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the discussion

### **3. Discussion on quality monitoring for Adult Social Care Services in both the public and independent sector in Denbighshire**

Prior to the meeting documentation relating to quality monitoring of in-house and external adult social care services had been circulated to members along with a document illustrating the ‘Profile of Staff and Residents in DCC Residential Care Homes’ and details of the estimated capital maintenance costs at the Authority’s three residential homes. The Director of Social Services gave an overview of the quality assurance process. It was explained that it was a statutory duty of the local authority to quality assure and monitor care establishments within which the Authority placed residents who required care. Quality assurance checks were undertaken by qualified Council officers and officers from the North Wales Commissioning Hub (NWCH). One of the Hub’s objectives was to develop a consistent approach to quality assurance work across North Wales. The Council was presently developing a quality assurance mechanism for domiciliary care services. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) had commented that Denbighshire’s staffing numbers for undertaking quality assurance work was low compared to other local authorities in North Wales and across Wales. The current review, dependent on its conclusions regarding potential future service delivery models, may free up staffing and financial resources to undertake more quality assurance and monitoring work.

Both residential and nursing care establishments were regulated by the CSSIW. Registration criteria included having a suitably qualified manager in charge. During the registration process CSSIW would determine how many residents the home could accommodate and provide guidance on room sizes, minimum staffing numbers and resident numbers etc. Council or Hub officers who currently visited care homes on other business would undertake contract monitoring work as a matter of course. Joint working with other services e.g.

Fire and Rescue Service and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) could also facilitate a higher number of monitoring visits being completed.

In response to members' questions on whether the same quality assurance processes were applied to learning disabilities accommodation, members were advised that they were as learning disabilities work was the original objective for establishing the NWCH. Members were also advised that Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) procedures were in place to safeguard adults using services. Members asked to see a copy of the latest POVA Annual Report. Residential or nursing homes would only be closed down following inspection after all possible avenues for improvement had been exhausted – residents would be re-homed if homes closed.

Members also requested information on the arrangements in place to assess or monitor the needs of residents who resided in what used to be classed as 'sheltered accommodation' if they were not already in receipt of a social care package. The Scrutiny Coordinator undertook to enquire on the Group's behalf with respect to this matter.

Members were assured that officers from the Social Services' Department always followed-up a resident's placement in a residential home with a visit to ensure they had settled-in and were happy with the care received. Subsequent visits would be made if necessary. Following each visit the Care Home Review Checklist form (form C1) would be completed as a matter of course. With respect to the frequency of care plan reviews for individuals it was confirmed that for new people to the service care plans should be reviewed every 4 to 6 weeks. Each case would be judged on its own merits with respect to the required frequency of reviews, but each individual's care and support plan should be reviewed on at least an annual basis. This aspect of the Service's work was reported in the Director of Social Services' Annual Report.

Members questioned whether the Assessment process for individuals who wanted to enter the Council's own residential care homes was appropriate, reference being made to recent applications known to members and which had been turned down. The Director of Social Services outlined the process followed and the role of the Assessment Panel. It was explained that the process did not assess an individual's suitability for a specific residential home, but for the most appropriate type of care e.g. residential or nursing care. Members requested that they be provided with more detailed information on the assessment process and the Assessment Panel.

It was clarified that the reason why such a high number of local authority residential care residents were below 50 years of age was because they usually had early onset of dementia, physical disabilities or mild learning disabilities. It was also confirmed that even if all local authority operated residential care homes in the County closed, there was sufficient capacity within the private sector in the area to accommodate current residents.

Extra care facilities were purposely designed and built to adapt to residents' changing care needs, thus avoiding them having to move from one type of

establishment to another as their care needs increased. However, due to financial constraints future extra care accommodation may not be as 'grand' as the ones already built.

Members were advised that whilst Council social care staff were aware of the local authority's funding constraints going forward, officers had not discussed any proposed changes to service delivery with them to date as the Task and Finish Group was not yet in a position to formulate recommendations with respect to future provision. Members emphasised that any recommendations would need to ensure that day care provision was also managed within future provision.

#### **4. Confirmation of information required for the next meeting**

Following consideration of the information provided to it the Group requested that the following information be provided for its next meeting:

- information on the assessment process for adult social care and the assessment panel and its membership
- an update on the position with respect to future development of Extra Care provision in the County
- the latest copy of the POVA Annual Report
- a visit to a social care establishment had been scheduled for the next meeting and members indicated that they would appreciate a visit to Nant y Môr Extra Care Complex in Prestatyn.

#### **5. Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting was scheduled for 7 July at 9.30am at an Extra Care facility, followed by 16 July at 9.30am in Caledfryn, Denbigh, with the final meeting taking place at County Hall, Ruthin at 9.30am on 25 July 2014 at 9.30am

The Chair apologised that he would be away for the next meeting on 7 July. Councillor Win Mullen-James was appointed to chair the Group's next meeting.

Meeting concluded at 3:30pm



## **Local Authority Provided Adult Social Services Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

**Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Conference Room 2, Caledfryn, Denbigh**

Meeting commenced at 9:30am

**Present:** Councillors Meirick Lloyd-Davies (Chair), Richard Davies, Raymond Bartley, Win Mullen-James.

**Also present:** Phil Gilroy (Head of Adults and Business Services) and Rhian Evans (Scrutiny Coordinator).

**1. Apologies:** Councillor David Simmons, and Nicola Stubbins (Director of Social Services).

### **2. Notes of meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the discussion

### **3. Vacant position on the Group**

It was decided that, as the Group's review of Adult Social Care provision in the county was nearing completion, it would not be practical at this late stage to appoint a replacement representative instead of Councillor Huw O Williams on the Group.

### **4. Development of an options appraisal for the future provision of services**

Prior to the meeting documentation relating to the protection of vulnerable adults had been circulated to Group members.

In compiling an options appraisal for future adult social care provision in the County, for presentation to county councillors at the Adult and Business Service's budget meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014, based on the information considered during the course of the Group's work members agreed that the following options should be presented.

#### Residential Care Homes for Older People

Three options with detailed costings to be put forward.

- i. continue as present with no changes to service provision (not cost effective and would require considerable financial investment to deal with capital maintenance backlog)
- ii. close all current provision and transfer residents to the private sector (potential to realise approximately £300K revenue savings and additional capital receipts from sale of land and property)
- iii. in partnership with developers and other care providers develop Extra Care facilities, either on current residential care sites or within close proximity, with a view to delivering individually tailored care packages which meet individual needs and support independent living.

The benefits of the third option being that the Extra Care approach helps to maintain independence for longer, more often than not until such time as nursing care is required, reducing the need for residential care. Although, it was emphasised that future Extra Care Schemes would not be as 'grand' as the ones already built. Nevertheless it was anticipated that by cutting down extras such as redundant floor space and procuring less expensive fixtures and fittings (but not the cheapest) Extra Care housing schemes could still be delivered in line with the aspiration in the Corporate Plan.

It was emphasised that if either the second or third option was chosen as the preferred option, prior to any closure or transfer of services provision required to be made for day care services, currently operating at these premises, to be commissioned/delivered elsewhere.

#### Extra Care Housing Domiciliary Care Services (not housing support)

Two options were agreed to be put forward for this service:

- i. keep and resource the present provision (at a premium of circa £350K in comparison to similar private provision)
- ii. tender for the provision of care from the private sector (initial savings would be minimal, but in future this approach had the potential to realise further savings of in excess of £350K upon the expiry of Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) protection for staff who transferred over to the private sector, as the care contracts could then be re-tendered in time).

#### Day and Work Opportunities for adults with disabilities

As a separate working group of members and officers was currently reviewing this service area it was decided not to draw up any options for future service delivery until such time as that Group's work had concluded.

#### Day Services for older people

It was decided to put forward two options for this service:

- i. continue to run the service as at present at a cost of approximately £150K per annum (compared to circa £76K in the private sector);
- ii. discuss with Extra Care providers the options for delivering day care services (including aspects of reablement) in Extra Care Housing Schemes

Again any alternative provision needed to be fully operational before any present day centre closed.

With respect to Hafan Deg in Rhyl, possible options for future use of the building needed to be discussed with Rhyl Town Council. Options could include transferring the ownership of the building to the Council for use as a community resource – as this particular building was in a good state of repair.

### Community Living Schemes

Councillor Raymond Bartley advised that the Day and Work Opportunities Working Group was looking at certain aspects of these schemes – in particular the bungalow used for craft activities etc. at Llanrhaeadr during weekdays.

With regards to the current 24 hour Community Living Schemes, of which there were only 3 still run by the Council, based on the costs paid by the Council for similar provision in the private sector the Council-run services cost an additional £27K. It was therefore decided that the following options should be presented to members for consideration as potential service delivery models:

- i. continue to provide the services in-house at an estimated £27K premium cost; or
- ii. outsource the provision of the service from the private sector following a tendering process

It was emphasised that the Council and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) would quality monitor and inspect the services provided by the private sector to ensure that they delivered the expected level of service and care required. The Council and the Commissioning Hub would quality assure and visit any residents they placed in the private sector as part of their contract management and monitoring practices, whilst the CSSIW had overall responsibility for inspecting all residential and nursing care homes.

All tender and contract documents for future provision would need to clearly specify contract management, quality assurance and contract monitoring arrangements. Quality of services and supervision of contracts would be a key requirement of any decision taken to change service delivery methods.

Members also requested that all staff affected by any potential service changes were kept fully briefed on the proposed changes on a regular basis.

Detailed costings of all options should include financial costs of reconfiguring services including redundancy costs etc.

## **5. Confirmation of information required for the next meeting**

The draft report outlining future options for Adult Social Care provision in Denbighshire, as per the above discussion.

## **6. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 9.30am on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014 in Cconference Room 1b, County Hall, Ruthin.

Councillor Raymond Bartley tendered his apologies for the next meeting.

Meeting concluded at 10:25am





## **Local Authority Provided Adult Social Services Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

**Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Conference Room 1b, County Hall, Ruthin**

Meeting commenced at 9:30am

**Present:** Councillors Meirick Lloyd-Davies (Chair) and Richard Davies.

**Also present:** Phil Gilroy (Head of Adults and Business Services) and Rhian Evans (Scrutiny Coordinator).

- 1. Apologies:** Councillor Raymond Bartley and Nicola Stubbins (Director of Social Services).
- 2. Notes of meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the discussion

- 3. Finalisation of the report for presentation to the Adult and Business Services Budget Workshop on 30<sup>th</sup> July**

A copy of the Options Appraisal for the Future Provision of Services, developed at the last meeting, had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting. At the meeting the Head of Adult and Business Services distributed a copy of a draft report he had prepared for presentation to a future Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting, on the outcomes of the Group's work. The report outlined the Group's remit and, based on the information it had examined, its preferred options for the future delivery of adult social care in Denbighshire. The Group discussed the draft report in detail and agreed that it did accurately reflect the conclusions of their deliberations.

The Head of Adults and Business Services confirmed that, with respect to the preferred option for **Residential Care**, none of the Council operated homes would close until all residents had been moved to suitable placements in the independent sector locally. It was confirmed that recent entrants into Dolwen, and their families, had been advised on entry that the home was not likely to be open long-term and that they would most likely have to move to another home in the not too distant future. Only a minority of current residents were likely to be suitable to be re-homed in Extra Care, the majority would most likely need nursing or elderly mental health (EMH) care. There was at present ample supply of independent residential care places available in the area, as this sector due to the impact of recent central government policies aimed at promoting independence seemed to be struggling to fill all empty places.

With respect to **Day Care** services the preferred option was to close the remaining day care centre, Hafan Deg in Rhyl, and look to transfer the structural asset to a third party to be operated as a community asset. The recommendation in respect of the day care services themselves would be to procure the services from the independent sector. Procurement of day care

services from the independent sector was also the preferred option for the delivery of domiciliary services in Extra Care housing schemes, following a tender exercise. Whilst the housing at the current schemes was the responsibility of housing associations, the domiciliary care was presently provided by the Council. In response to a question on the timeframe for going out to tender for domiciliary services the Head of Adults and Business Services advised that ideally there needed to be a six month lead in time from tender to service delivery. Therefore if the preferred option was approved the Council would be looking at inviting providers to tender around October 2014 with a view to providing the services from April 2015. If this was achieved it was anticipated that the Council could realise savings in the region of £300K for 2015/16, increasing to a conservative estimate of £800K from 2016/17 onwards.

Whilst jobs would be lost in the domiciliary services it was anticipated that a substantial number of staff would be transferred over to the independent providers successful under the tendering process in accordance with Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) arrangements. A consequence of the change in delivery method would be the need to grow the contract monitoring and inspection services within the Council to ensure that the standards of care were maintained and improved in the independent sector.

With respect to **Community Living Schemes** the Group concluded that the most appropriate approach would be to continue with the transfer of the remaining three schemes operated by the Council over to the independent sector on a scheme by scheme basis when the opportunity arose and the conditions were right. This would be in line with the approach taken during recent years.

Future provision of **Work Opportunities** schemes for people with learning disabilities was the subject of a review undertaken by a separate working group made up of members, officers and third sector representatives. Due to the complexities involved with the delivery of these services, which included transport arrangements, the conclusions of this review would not be available until the autumn.

Members enquired on alternative proposals for achieving the necessary savings if the above proposals were not acceptable to the Council's wider membership. The Head of Adults and Business Services advised that the only alternative which had the potential to realise the level of savings required, would be to increase the social care eligibility threshold. This would reduce the number of services and service-users. However, it was felt that this approach would not be acceptable to county councillors or to the general public; neither would it be conducive with the Council's duty to protect vulnerable people or with its Corporate Plan commitment to support vulnerable people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

Group members agreed that the conclusions detailed above be reported to Performance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014. The Committee's recommendations following consideration of the report would then

be reported to Cabinet and County Council as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.

Group members requested that the final report clearly outline the inspection and contract monitoring arrangements that would be in place for the new services. This would help reassure county councillors that the new service provision will be as a minimum as good as at present services, and would be aspiring for even higher standards to improve service-users life outcomes and experiences. There would also be a need to fully brief staff on the proposals' implications for them before the report was made public, and to devise a communication strategy to deal with the publication of the proposals.

**Actions to be taken prior to the report being submitted to Performance Scrutiny on 2<sup>nd</sup> October:**

- Head of Adult and Business Services to schedule a meeting(s) with all affected staff (and stakeholders) in September to explain the proposals to them, their implications for the residents and for employees, and to detail to all parties the support that will be available to them to prepare for the transition
- Consideration to be given to inviting the Chair of the Task and Finish Group or a member of the Group to attend the staff meetings with officers
- A communication strategy for dealing with the press and media interest in the proposals to be put in place ahead of the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Meeting concluded at 10:35am