

Report



meeting

COUNTY COUNCIL

date

18 May 2006

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Social Services, since my last report to Council.

2. Key issues and activities

2.1 Good Practice in Services for Older People

The Healthcare Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Audit Commission jointly undertook a review to assess services used by older people. During this review the commissions identified many examples of good work by providers of services for older people. They have produced a report which presents these examples of good practice.

I am delighted to see that Nottinghamshire has been mentioned in the report on three occasions for its work with older people's services.

The 'shop in a box' concept, which ensures essential grocery and household provisions are available in rural areas, integrated transport services and the senior peer mentoring scheme have featured strongly in the report.

It is a tribute to the staff working on these projects and the good collaboration between at least 30 partner agencies, who have worked hard to set up these services and initiatives.

2.2 Adult Care Project

The decision by the County Council on 6th April 2006 to move to a new structure for the County Council signalled the 'beginning of the end' of the Social Services Department as we currently know it. From next year there will be two new departments in its place – the *Adult Social Care and Health Department* and a *Children and Young Persons Department*.

The work of the Adult Care Project has been focused on making sure that staff and other stakeholders are fully aware and informed of the changes that are being planned and have the opportunity to comment on them.

A new structure for the adults department is proposed, with a clearer strategic focus on older people and physical disability. It will also be a department that is well suited to taking forward the vision for adult care set out in the recent White Paper. A Members' study group chaired by Councillor Carroll will be meeting with the project team over the coming months to consider the implications of the White Paper and how its proposals can be properly implemented in Nottinghamshire.

2.3 'Working Well' Project

A partnership agreement with Northamptonshire County Council called 'Working Well' is now being undertaken by the Supported Employment Ready4Work team, as part of an awarded Objective 3 European Social Funding Contract.

The aim of the 'Working Well' programme is to deliver appropriate activities to engage 200 long-term (12 months or more) Incapacity Benefit recipients throughout Nottinghamshire through individually tailored provision to enable them to re-engage or enter the labour market. The programme is designed to:

- provide tailored support that enables disabled people to develop their full potential
- develop and improve job skills and employability, including the ability to work with others and sustain a job
- encourage personal development and promote independence for disabled people.

The partnership agreement will operate from 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2008 and will be funded in total by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (acting through Job Centre Plus) and Northamptonshire County Council.

The new programme is intended to bridge the gap identified by the Ready4Work team where disabled people are either unable, unsure or not yet ready to work 16 hours (Workstep programme criteria). This service can begin to move clients closer to the world of work at a pace that meets their need and is of their choice.

It is anticipated that where appropriate and necessary, some clients who are able and want to work 16 hours or more after completing the 'Working Well' programme may then move onto the Workstep programme for further ongoing support. This development is a significant shift in the provision of the service as it creates a single pathway to work up to 37 hours with support.

2.4 Nottinghamshire's Supporting People programme

A meeting was held recently between members of Nottinghamshire's Supporting People Partnership and the programme's government lead, the Local Government Minister, Phil Woolas, which fed into national consultation regarding the programme. Subsequently, the County Council's Supporting People Team has been asked to undertake work to evaluate the value for money delivered by the Supporting People programme as part of national work to inform the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Nottinghamshire is one of four authorities chosen by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to pilot this work and was selected due to confidence that the Team's reviews of Supporting People services had properly addressed value for money issues and that accurate and comprehensive information regarding this work would be available.

The findings from the four pilot sites will be reported directly to Ministers and will be supplemented by broader assessments of a number of other authorities.

2.5 NVQ and PQ Awards Ceremony

On the 5th and 6th April 2006, achievers of NVQs and Post Qualifying awards in the Social Services Department were presented with the certificates at two ceremonies. The first took place at Notts County Football Club and the second at Newstead Miners Welfare.

Out of 548 achievers who were invited to the two events, 220 attended and received their certificates on the day. Certificates will be sent to those achievers who were unable to attend.

2.6 Ceretas Awards

The InfoCare Project was short-listed for another national award which recognises excellence in Home Care, this time hosted by Ceretas, (formerly known as BADCO, the British Association for Domiciliary Care Officers).

Nottinghamshire County Council was one of four local councils shortlisted for the Innovator Award, and came runner up at the Award Ceremony held at the Marriot Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London on 6th May 2006.

2.7 Sherwood Pines Horticultural Unit

This new unit at Edwinstowe was opened on 10th April 2006. The unit will be delivering work experience to service users who will be transferring from the Workshop Unit, and other service users from north of the county. The unit will be growing trees and wild flowers which are native to the area.

We have entered into a partnership with the Sherwood Forest Trust and a grant has been accessed through Building Better Communities (BBC). We

have been successful in securing £30,000 to date and £20,000 from Sherwood Forest Trust.

Our tree nursery at Skegby has been shortlisted for an award which is called "Go Native", by an organisation called Flora Locale. The award also takes account of our proposals for Sherwood Pines. Judging will take place at Skegby on 10th May 2006.

**COUNCILLOR DICK ANTHONY
CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES**

(Comm/cc30)