

RESPONSE TO REVIEW HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Recommendation 1

The Council's IT and Adult Services Managers should continue to build on developing relationships with the system provider to ensure that the Council makes full use of the balance of £300,000 in the Business Development Fund to enable the system to interface with other Council and partner information systems.

Response: agreed. The Directors of Business Services and IT and Adult Support Services have committed to promoting a constructive relationship with the system provider to ensure the productive use of the Business Development Fund. Since the completion of the report, the Director of Business Services and IT has held a meeting with the supplier to clarify expectations and to continue to develop the relationship, and further meetings are planned. The use of the Business Development Fund has been agreed following discussions at the Adult Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Integration Board and negotiations with the system provider. The Adult ICT Integration Board will oversee the implementation of the agreed work, and a project management approach will be adopted for significant activities so that progress can be monitored effectively.

Recommendation 2

The Council should encourage the system provider to proactively engage in discussions with the National Health Service (NHS) and local authorities to ensure best fit of the integration between social care and the NHS systems. Early intelligence about the potential cost of this integration should be gathered.

Response: agreed. As provider of adult social care systems for almost 50% of Local Authorities, the system provider needs to be encouraged to play an active role in discussions with the NHS about the system requirements to support integration. The Directors of Business Services and IT and Adult Support Services will ensure that the expectation of this proactive approach is clearly articulated to the system provider and will engage them in future discussions with local NHS colleagues through the Adult ICT Integration Board.

Recommendation 3

Future proposals for establishing Business Development Funds be examined carefully and, if agreed, subject to high-level monitoring and review throughout their lifetime.

Response: agreed: The Director of Business Services and IT recommends that appropriate provision should be made for the ongoing development of information systems. In general, the establishment of specific arrangements such as the Business Development Fund should not be necessary. However, if Business Development Funds were to be considered as part of future contractual arrangements, they would have to be examined very carefully and the lead Director

would need to ensure appropriate rigorous monitoring throughout the duration of the arrangement.

Recommendation 4

The independent consultant employed by the Council to provide strategic advice and guidance also researches other Councils' experience of this product.

Response: agreed. The Client and Partnership Manager (Business Services and IT) as developed a specification for the independent consultancy, and this has been agreed by the Adult ICT Integration Board. This specification and the briefing provided by the Client and Partnership Manager included research of other Council's experience of the product. The consultants have also been briefed by the Director of Adult Support Services to identify what arrangements are in place in the small number of Councils where older people's services are integrated.

Recommendation 5

The Council pursues its three-pronged approach whilst proactively investigating the market in social care information systems and ensures that robust contract arrangements are in place in readiness for the current contract expiring.

Response: agreed. The Council is already committed to the 3 pronged approach, as described by the Director of Business Services and IT and this approach will continue to be overseen by the Adult ICT Integration Board. Due to the complexities of the market in social care information systems, and the emerging changes and trends, specialist advice will be required from time to time. The consultancy work referred to in paragraph 3.8 will provide such advice and is an example of the proactive approach being adopted. Robust contract management must be in place at all times. Specialist resources in the Directorate of Business Services and IT will continue to ensure that business system owners in Adult Support Services are supported in discharging these responsibilities.

Recommendation 6

IT Managers work with Adult Social Care teams to continue to improve data quality and that the Business System owners ensure that actions identified as part of the forthcoming Internal Audit of data quality are implemented.

Response: agreed. The Director of Business Services and IT has met with the lead auditor and understands that an initial draft of findings will be available by the end of March 2008. The main focus of this work is understood to relate to the usage of the system rather than to technical aspects. Specialist resources in the Directorate of Business Services and IT will continue to support Adult Support Services and the Adult Social Care teams to improve data quality, implement the recommendations of the data quality audit and make best use of the Social Care Information System.

Recommendation 7

The Adult ICT Board formally collects system user feedback and uses it to influence the work on system improvements.

Response: agreed (with clarification). Paragraph 3.13 of the Scrutiny Report refers to the User Forum provided by the supplier of the Social Care Information System where local authorities can suggest improvements to the system. The Director of Business Services and IT and the Director of Adult Support Services will work together to ensure representation at the User Forum. The Adult ICT Integration Board will request quarterly feedback from the system provider on the content of feedback through the User Forum and the action taken by the system provider to introduce system improvements in response to this feedback.

Recommendation 7 itself refers to user feedback. Through the work of the Adult ICT Integration Board, feedback from local users will be fed into discussions with the system provider and will be used to inform local changes/enhancements that can be made to the system.

Recommendation 8

That the Director of Business Services and IT and the Director of Adult Support Services are requested to report progress on the three-pronged approach and implementation of the recommendations from this investigation to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee in six months time.

Response: agreed. The Director of Business Services and IT and the Director of Adult Support Services will provide a progress report in six months time.