



Report of the Director of Adult Social Services

Executive Board

Date: 11 June 2008

Subject: Deputation to Council: the Access Committee for Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

All Wards

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary.

The meeting of Council on 9th April 2008 received a deputation from the Access Committee for Leeds. Their presentation concerned the needs of disabled people and older people, who continue to face challenges to their dignity and self-respect in leading independent lives, because of discrimination and a shortfall in services that can adequately meet their needs. Whilst acknowledging that there is a strong track-record of the City Council working closely with disabled people, with many examples of 'benchmark services' meeting their service and support needs, the presentation highlights that demographic trends will inevitably place further strain on the system. The Deputation welcomed the formation of an Independent Disability Council and looked forward to both elected members and officers working closely with this organisation to open a dialogue on the 'realities of how we properly finance the Adult and Family Care Services'. This report provides background information and comments on the key points raised by the Access Committee in their presentation to Council. Members of the Executive Board are asked to note the contents.

1 Purpose of this Report.

- 1.1 At the meeting of Council on the 9th April it was agreed by Members to refer the contents of the Deputation by the Access Committee for Leeds for consideration by the Executive Board. This report provides background information and comments on the key issues raised.

2 Background.

The Access Committee for Leeds is an independent voluntary organisation founded by and comprising of disabled people. The organisation seeks to raise awareness of the needs of

disabled people, particularly in respect of the legislation, which tackles disability discrimination, including access to public buildings, transport, retail and leisure facilities. The Access Committee receives funding from a number of different sources, including regular income from training provided to a range of public and private sector organisations. Leeds City Council provides rent free, a small office facility based at Mariners Resource Centre.

In the presentation to Council reference was made to the development of a Leeds based Independent Disability Council (IDC). Over the last twelve months officers from Leeds City Council have been working with a number of groups representing disabled people in the city to address a concern that they were not adequately engaged in issues concerning their lives. Concerns ranged from problems regarding how disabled people were involved in consultation and whether some mechanisms for involving disabled people were sufficiently independent or transparent. A previous attempt to form an Independent Council of Disabled people in 2002, did not progress beyond the drafting of a constitution.

Officers representing Adult Social Care and the Corporate Equality Team have met with an informal steering group of disabled people, representing a number of the organisations of disabled people in the city, including the Alliance of Users and Carers, the Access Committee for Leeds and groups of sensory impaired people. These discussions have led to a group of disabled people forming the Leeds Independent Disability Council, adopting a constitution and starting work on building a membership base. Some practical support and assistance with covering the costs of meetings has been offered and the Independent Disability Council is working on its developing an initial programme of activities.

- 2.4 From the City Council perspective the Independent Disability Council will provide an independent forum for consulting and involving disabled people in a wide range of policy, planning and service delivery issues. Besides bringing disabled people together and providing leadership in that respect, the IDC also avoids the necessity and confusion associated with consulting across a wide number of organisations and groups. Such a development is not unique to Leeds. Many areas already have similar and well-established forum, and opportunities are being sought to learn from the experience of these groups.
- 2.5 The second theme in the presentation made by the Deputation concerns access to services by disabled and older people. Attention is drawn to the 'means testing process' which can act as a deterrent to those who feel that it denies them dignity and self-respect, whilst for others quality of life is denied because of a 'rationing' of resources. However, the presentation goes on to acknowledge that demographic change and in particular the progress made in the city in reducing mortality rates, will add to these pressures, as people live longer but with the prospect of added years of disability. The Access Committee for Leeds is asking for an honest and open debate about 'the realities of how we properly finance the Adult and Family Care Services.'

3 Commentary:

- 3.1 The issues raised by the deputation are clearly not unique to Leeds, which the presentation appears to acknowledge. The Government at the time of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007 announced their intention to prepare a Green Paper into the future funding of long term care needs, when it anticipated that a response to the Wanless Review into funding long term care will be made. Sir Derrick Wanless in his review recommended a partnership model of financing long term care between the state and the individual. Individuals will make a contribution but all people are entitled to receive at least some state support.
- 3.2 The Wanless Review recommended a partnership model of financing between state and individual. Individuals still make a contribution but all people are entitled to at least some state support. The Commission for Social Care Inspection in its third annual report to Parliament published in January 2008 drew attention to the divide between those people who were eligible to receive a community care service, who they judged are receiving a better experience of services than ever before and those whose needs do not meet eligibility criteria.

- 3.3 The Wanless Review examined in some detail the financial implications of growing numbers of older and disabled people and the unit costs of care exceeding the annual inflation index by a projected 1.5% per annum. The Review concluded that demographic pressures alone will increase funding requirements by 10% in real terms (without inflation) by 2010 and by 100% in real terms by 2026.
- 3.4 Last month (12 May 2008) the Department of Health launched its national debate on the future of care and support. This will be a six-month consultation during which the government will hold a series of regional events seeking the views of the public and stakeholders over care and support. The government's intention is to create a new system that:
- Promotes independence, choice and control for people using the care system;
 - Ensures everyone can receive the high quality care and support they need, and that government support should be targeted at those most in need;
 - Is affordable for the government, individuals and families in the long term.
- The government says that the reform is about finding a new way to help people stay active, care for family members, retain maximum dignity and respect, and have the best possible quality of life.
- 3.5 The Access Committee for Leeds in calling for a dialogue about these issues, is inviting the Council to demonstrate 'leadership and action' on behalf of older and disabled people. The partnership, which has led to the formation of the Independent Disability Council, is one example of the progress, and there are further building blocks in the work programmes to extend choice and control through the personalisation of social care services and greater independence through the Independent Living PFI programme.
- 3.6 All these examples demonstrate the pivotal role that the involvement of disabled people plays in the planning and delivery of services. The significant challenge in meeting future long term care needs will require strengthened partnerships and involvement of disabled people, in arriving at funding solutions and new models of care to meet heightened demand and expectation. The Access Committee for Leeds is inviting the City Council to work with disabled people to jointly find solutions. Similarly the Council is committed to engaging with disabled people to address their issues and seek improvements to their quality of life.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Executive Board is asked:
- (a) To note the contents of this report.
 - (b) To support and encourage elected members and officers to work with the Independent Disability Council on a broad range of issues concerning disabled people.
 - (c) To support and encourage the widest possible participation in the debate on the future of social care, which is being undertaken by the government over coming months.
 - (d) To confirm that the City Council is committed to consultation and engagement with disabled people, in particular in addressing the major challenges to independent living arising from demographic change and the increasing costs of personal care.