

# Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Promote Strong, Safe and Healthy Communities

5 June 2002

## White Paper – Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Report of Head of Overview and Scrutiny

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#### Purpose of Report

1. To report a recent seminar about the Council's proposals in respect of Learning Disability Services in response to a Government White Paper.

#### Background

2. A seminar took place on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002 to explain the implications of the Government's White Paper – Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The seminar was jointly presented by Duncan Callum, Teresa Brown and Ian Bennett from the Social Services Department.

3. This is the first White Paper on Learning Disability for thirty years and sets out an ambitious and challenging programme for improving services. The proposals are based on four key principles:-

Civil Rights  
Independence  
Choice  
Inclusion

4. Valuing People takes a lifelong approach beginning with an integrated approach to services for disabled children and their families and then providing new opportunities for a full and purposeful adult life. The proposals are intended to result in cross-cutting improvements in Education, Social Services, Health, Employment, Housing and support for people with learning disabilities and their families and carers.
5. In particular, there are a number of objectives and targets which are set out below:-
  - Improve transition from children to adult services
  - Develop effective partnership working
  - Close all long stay hospitals by 2004
  - Increase choice over accommodation
  - Increase help to carers
  - Modernise day services
  - Enable better access to employment
  - Improve training for staff.

6. This will be a challenging agenda for change. Local Authorities are required to establish partnership boards to ensure a multi-agency approach and all new services have to be designed around 'person centred planning'.
7. The current provision of services for those with learning disabilities was explained together with some examples of initiatives currently in operation for those with learning disabilities.
8. It was clear that the status quo was not an option. The main issues about the changes which would need to be made were:-
  - A plan in response had to be submitted to the Department of Health in January 2003
  - Funding from the Learning Disability Development Fund was available
  - Person centred plans had to be in place by 2003 for all school leavers
  - Proposals for change need to take into account increase in demand
  - The Supported Employment Service would need to expand
  - There would always be a need for 'building based' services.
9. A video produced by the Social Services Department featuring people with Learning Disabilities provided a very helpful insight into the current services provided by the Authority.
10. A number of important issues were raised by Members. The need to learn the lessons of the recent mental health changes and ensure that services were in place before changes took place was emphasised. New Members who had not had direct experience of the Council's Disability Services were encouraged to visit the various initiatives. The role of the County Council as employer should be given serious consideration in respect of people with learning disabilities. Also, the need to support front line staff and ensure that they had appropriate career development structures was mentioned. It was also pointed out the importance of respite care and its accessibility

### **Recommendation**

11. You are recommended to note the changes which will need to be made in Council services. Further involvement from non-Executive Members will be built into the development of the Council's response to this White Paper.

### **Background Papers**

Presentation to Members on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2002

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