

ADVICE STRATEGY

Central Bedfordshire

Planning Group Meeting

Friday 5th November 2010

Amphill CAB, Woburn Street, Amphill

NOTES OF MEETING

Present

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| Liz Cray | Central Bedfordshire Council – Communications Team (Adult Services) |
| Carl Davies | Disability Resource Centre |
| Jenny Hedges | Amphill / Biggleswade CAB |
| Diane Hoare | Voices for All (Advocacy Alliance) |
| Janet Ridge | Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity |
| Lola Williams | Central Bedfordshire Council – Transformation Team (Adult Services) |
| David Wood | Leighton Buzzard CAB |
| Len Simkins | Infotrain / BAF |
| Linda Wood | Infotrain / BAF |

1. Apologies

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| Nicola Avery | Central Bedfordshire Council – Libraries |
| Becky Kirby | Dunstable CAB |
| Liz Morgan | Disability Resource Centre |
| Giles Probert | Central Bedfordshire Council – Office of the Chief Executive |
| Irene Tindall | Age Concern Bedfordshire |

2. Update from last meeting (7th June 2010)

Len gave out a report which:

- Recapped on the issues discussed at the last meeting
- Gave an update on developments since the last meeting

There had been a long delay since the last meeting due to the previous funding stream (from Voluntary Works) ending. New funding has now been provided by Voluntary Works.

Len also reported that he had met with Giles Probert (Central Bedfordshire Council) who had given him a copy of the draft of the Universal Information and Advice Strategy produced for Adult Social Care. Lola and Liz gave an update on this. The main thrust of the Strategy related to providing effective information and improving access through the Council's website and leaflets. It will be important to bring the two strategies together in the near future.

3. Mapping

Questionnaires had been sent to BAF members in September to try to map local advice services.

There were 19 BAF members providing services in Central Bedfordshire but only 5 questionnaires had been returned. Linda will do some work to chase up agencies that had not sent back their questionnaire or where key details were missing.

Details from the mapping will be inserted in the development report on the Advice Strategy (p32 – 34).

Agencies were also being asked about gaps in services. The obvious gaps in Central Bedfordshire were discussed and agreed:

- Difficulty in accessing services was a big problem
- There is also a lack of advice at the specialist help level.

4. Developing an Advice Strategy

Len presented a revised version of the report. This document will now act as the report on developing the Strategy. The actual Strategy will be presented in a shorter document.

Different parts of the report were discussed in detail. The report was generally accepted although various amendments were suggested including:

- Deleting various typing errors with references to the “Borough”
- Adding an example from Central Bedfordshire in box (p 4)
- Adding the current local thematic partnership diagram (p 10). Janet gave an update on this. The new structure will not be known until early next year
- Adding advocacy services to the diagram on the different levels of advice (p 17).
- Adding Village Care Schemes as an example of community activity (p 30)
- Adding an example from Central Bedfordshire to show increasing demand for advice (p 36)
- Adding the Central Bedfordshire situation on housing advice (p 37)
- Emphasising the section on cuts to public funding as a key driver (p 41) and adding examples of specific threats to advice related services in Central Bedfordshire

Len will make the above amendments to the draft report.

5. Advice Strategy - Structure

Len presented a suggested draft structure for the Advice Strategy.

Following on from the discussions held in Bedford Borough earlier this week, Len had re-structured the vision and overall aim. There was some discussion on this and various other suggestions were made. Len will make these amendments and will send out a revised version, for agreement, next week.

There was also some discussion on Objectives 1 and 2. Len will make the suggested amendments to these sections.

Unfortunately, there was no time to discuss Objectives 3, 4 and 5. However, Len and Linda will do some further work on these objectives based on the guidance given for the other objectives.

Len will send out an amended version next week for comments.

6. Advice Strategy – next steps

As there had been a big gap between this meeting and the last meeting (due to the funding problems), a lot of today's meeting had been spent recapping and updating. It was agreed that another Planning Group meeting would therefore be needed fairly quickly to take things forward.

7. Next meeting

1.00pm on Friday 10th December at Ampthill CAB.

NB All the documents relating to the work on the Advice Strategy for Central Bedfordshire can be found on BAF's website at: www.bedsadviceforum.org.uk

Meeting facilitator - Len Simkins (Infotrain)

The Planning Group meeting was:

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