

THE EXECUTIVE

29 APRIL 2003

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES LBBD

MANAGING MEMBERS AND M.P. ENQUIRIES IN SOCIAL SERVICES	FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report seeks Members approval to pilot a new protocol in respect of Member and MP enquiries.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>A protocol has been produced which outlines the processes to be followed in relation to Member and M.P. enquiries within Social Services. The protocol seeks to provide a clear framework under which such enquiries will be dealt with, including clear timescales and responsibilities.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree to the piloting of the new monitoring system for Member and M.P. enquiries in Social Services for six months. If this is successful, then consideration will be given to applying the system across the Council.</p> <p><u>Reasons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To introduce improved efficiency and accountability in relation to Member and MP enquires.• To clarify exchange of personal information issues for Members, officers and service users.	
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1. Background

- 1.1 In Social Services Member and M.P. enquiries have been dealt with through a range of routes. Members, officers and service users have sometimes had difficulties in the current arrangements with confidentiality. The Data Protection Act and the "Caldicott" arrangements for the NHS and Social Care (the latter of which sets clear standards of managing confidential information) are now in place and it is timely to review this in order to support good practise and ensure there is clarity for all concerned.

- 1.2 Within the document, a clear and straightforward process for seeking consent to share information is proposed.
- 1.3 Members and MP enquiries need to be dealt with within the timescales prescribed within the attached document.
- 1.4 A monitoring process using a database will be set up managed by Directors and Heads of Service, thus ensuring appropriate follow-up measures are in place.
- 1.5 The new arrangements are compliant with legislative requirements under the Data Protection Act and with Caldicott.
- 1.6 Clear guidance notes will be sent to Members and staff outlining the new arrangements.
- 1.7 We are writing to the two local Members of Parliament to seek their engagement with the pilot.

Background Papers

Protocol for Monitoring Members' / M.P. enquires attached as Appendix A.