

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 22 OCTOBER 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Barnett, Taylor and Cobb

Co-opted Members:

PART ONE

27. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

27A. Declarations of Substitutes

27.1 Councillor Denise Cobb announced that she was attending as substitute for Councillor Geoff Wells

27B. Declarations of Interest

27.2 There were none.

27C. Declarations of Party Whip

27.3 There were none.

27D. Exclusion of Press and Public

27.4 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

27.5 RESOLVED – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

28.1 RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

29. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

29.1 The Chair told members that the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing and the Director of Community Care were unable to attend this meeting because they were attending a national conference.

29.2 The Chair informed members that she anticipated that the council's Cabinet would be re-considering the recommendations of the ad hoc panel on students in the community at its November meeting.

29.3 The Chair announced that a working planning meeting was required to set the ASCHOSC agenda for coming months. This will be arranged in the near future.

30. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

30.1 There were none.

31. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS AND NOTICES OF MOTION

31.1 Councillor Christine Simpson presented her letter to the committee (see item in agenda). As well as the points made in her letter, Councillor Simpson raised an additional matter: whether changes to the way in which housing repairs are undertaken had been adequately communicated to the council's tenants?

31.2 Nick Hibberd, Assistant Director of Housing Management, and David Gray, Head of Repairs, answered members' queries. Mr Hibberd told members that, despite confusing reports in the local media, there had in fact been no change in policy. Contrary to media reports, there was also no crisis in terms of the repairs budget. Of the £31 million annual budget, some £11.4 million had been spent to date, with a further £5.7 million committed. This meant that approximately £13.9 million remained to be spent on in-year repair work., made up of £9 million capital and £4.9 million revenue.

31.3 Mr Hibberd stated that there had been some changes made to introduce improved budget management controls. These changes were made to improve the balance between responsive repairs and the capital programme, both to meet good practice recommended by the Audit Commission and to prepare the 3-year capital programme for the new Mears contract. In addition, the improved budget management controls will help to manage some budget pressures that have been identified in both the responsive repairs and voids budgets. This change has resulted in some non priority works being incorporated into the council's Planned Maintenance programme rather than being dealt with as responsive repairs, in line with best practice. However, all Health & Safety repairs and all works covered by Right To Repair continue to be carried out in accordance with the timescales detailed in the Tenant's Handbook.

- 31.4 Mr Gray told members that no Health & Safety repairs had been 'put off' until the next financial year, other than those non-priority repairs falling outside the council's Right To Repair obligations which had been assigned to the Planned Maintenance programme.
- 31.5 The Chair expressed concern that ward Councillors had not been appraised of changes to the repairs regime. Mr Hibberd apologised if Councillors had not received all the information they required, but reiterated that there had been no significant change of policy to communicate, but rather an inaccurate media report which had created unnecessary anxiety. Mr Hibberd offered to write to all Councillors setting out the true position with regard to repairs.
- 31.6 The Chair thanked Mr Hibberd for his offer, and members agreed that this issue should be considered for inclusion in the committee's work programme, but should not, at this time, be advanced via an ad hoc panel.

32. MEMBER TRAINING SESSION ON THE RESOURCE ALLOCATION SYSTEM

- 32.1 This item was introduced by Laura Scott Smith, Performance and Development Officer, and Gemma Lockwood, Performance and Development Officer.
- 32.2 Members asked questions on aspects of the resource allocation system (RAS) including the percentage of people expected to opt to manage their own care budgets; how clients are supported in applying to the RAS; and whether people opting not to manage their own budgets will receive fewer resources.
- 32.3 Ms Scott Smith and Ms Lockwood were thanked for their presentation.

33. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

- 33.1 Richard Ford, Commercial Director of the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT), and Jane Simmons, Head of Partnerships and Public Engagement at NHS Brighton & Hove (NHSBH), answered members' questions on plans to reconfigure mental health services for city residents.
- 33.2 Mr Ford told members that a major re-design of the mental health services provided across Sussex by SPFT was underway. This initiative is called "Better By Design", and involves SPFT working closely with the four Sussex Primary Care Trusts, including NHSBH. Better By Design is driven by the need to innovate in order to improve services and also by the need to achieve value for money, particularly given the current economic outlook.
- 33.3 Better By Design will look at every aspect of mental health services provided by SPFT:
- In terms of community services, the aim is to ensure that these services are effectively aligned with primary healthcare (e.g. GP surgeries); that the totality of mental health services are centred upon community care, rather than community services being 'bolted on' to a pre-existing mental health system (as is currently often the case); and that community services are able to deliver a Sussex-wide target of four weeks from presentation to assessment/treatment by Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs).

- In terms of day hospitals, the aim is to ensure that these services are responsive to user needs. (Currently, these facilities tend to be available Monday to Friday 9-5, whereas demand tends to be highest out of hours and at weekends.)
- In terms of specialist services, the aim is to develop Sussex capacity to deal with conditions such as eating disorders, substance misuse and personality disorders; to significantly increase the number of county in-patient beds for people with Learning Disabilities; and to significantly increase the capacity of county secure and forensic services. It will not be possible to duplicate these specialist services at locations across Sussex, so patients may have to travel to access these facilities (although many journeys will be shorter than they currently are, as significant numbers of Sussex residents currently receive specialist treatment outside the county).
- In terms of residential services (e.g. for people with young onset dementia or Korsakoff's syndrome), the aim is to encourage individualisation of care, giving clients and their families and carers more say in their own treatment.
- In terms of general in-patient services, the aim is to reduce county acute beds by 100 or so, as Sussex is, relatively speaking, over-supplied with mental health acute beds, and could do more to encourage treatment in the community. Both working age and older people's beds are expected to be reduced.

33.4 Members learnt that, as yet, there were no detailed plans to implement this initiative, as much of the work thus far had involved working out how to weigh matters such as cost, access and quality of service when making reconfiguration decisions, rather than on discussion of what the actual reconfiguration might look like on the ground.

33.5 Ms Simmons told members that there had already been considerable discussion with service users, carers etc. in relation to the Working Age Mental Health Strategy, and that the developed reconfiguration plans would go out to public consultation in due course.

33.5 Both Mr Ford and Ms Simmons offered to meet with members on either a formal or an informal basis to discuss their plans to develop city mental health services.

33.6 Mr Ford and Ms Simmons were thanked for their contribution.

34. SOCIAL CARE GREEN PAPER

34.1 Discussion of this item was postponed until a later meeting.

35. DECENT HOMES

35.1 This item was introduced by Nick Hibberd, Assistant Director, Housing Management. Mr Hibberd and Jugal Sharma, Assistant Director, Housing Strategy, answered members' questions.

35.2 Mr Hibberd told members that he was confident of reaching this year's target for bringing homes up to a decent standard.

- 35.3 In answer to questions regarding the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV), Mr Sharma told members that a board to manage and a company to host the LDV had been set up, negotiations with potential financiers were at an advanced stage and negotiations with the Department of Communities and Local Government were continuing. The council has developed a 'plan B' should its original LDV scheme not receive Government approval, and is confident that this scheme can be implemented.
- 35.4 In response to a question as to whether the LDV was still required given the good progress in meeting the Decent Homes standard, Mr Hibberd told the committee that the LDV was part of the strategy for meeting the shortfall in investment required to bring all the housing stock up to Decent Homes standard, and was therefore still needed.

36. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT

- 36.1 This item was introduced by Martin Farrelly, General Manager, Community Assessment, and Michelle Jenkins, Safeguarding Adults Manager.
- 36.2 Members noted that the report they had received was clearly a rough draft and was not of satisfactory quality; the material tabled should have been better presented and contextualised.
- 36.3 Mr Farrelly offered to try and get the figures presented in the Safeguarding report broken down by council ward.
- 36.4 Mr Farrelly and Ms Jenkins answered questions on matters including: the risks posed by direct payment, and the recourse available for people directly employing carers who fail to deliver according to their contracts.

36.5 RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

37. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET OR THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

- 37.1 There were none.

38. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

- 38.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of