

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

10.00am 22 MAY 2012

ROOM 126, KING'S HOUSE

MINUTES

Present: Hazelgrove (Chair), Bojczuk (Secretary), Brown, Eyles, Morley, Steer, Terry, Tonks (Vice Chair) Vincent, Wakeling.

Also in attendance: Councillor Geoffrey Bowden

PART ONE

46. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

46.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Councillor Geoffrey Bowden and Kat Pearce of Age UK. Sally McMahon, Head of Library Services had given her apologies.

47. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING 17 APRIL 2012 AND MATTERS ARISING

47.1 At 36.2 the cost of a by-election did not seem to be justified on this occasion. All references to Age UK, Age Concern or Help the Aged should read 'Age UK B&H.' At 38.11, Park and Ride was now being investigated. OPC would ask for more information on accidents to older people at 38.14, if possible to be presented to 19 June public meeting. At 39.9, Mike Best had included the buses website address giving access to the cheapest bus fares.

47.2 The OPC website would include a link to 'Grey Matters' (minute 41.1). It had received acclaim from Hants and Gwent and Members were encouraged to provide updates to Mike Bojczuk for inclusion. At 42.1, medical cards would be taken to People's Day and advice sought on the benefits of the scheme. At 43.10 Francis Tonks had declared an interest in planning proposals for the Ice Rink.

47.3 Minutes would be provided for signing by the Chair.

48. LIBRARY SERVICES IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

48.1 Chair of Economic Development and Culture Committee, Councillor Bowden, outlined the Libraries Service. The Head of Libraries had given her apologies and would be asked to provide written information instead (**ACTION MvB**).

48.2 Councillor Geoffrey Bowden pointed out that unlike many local authorities, Brighton & Hove had been able to keep open all public libraries; this had not been easy. The Council was considering various ways of retaining all 14 libraries when there was continuing squeeze on

budgets and other priorities such as education and care services. They were important 'hubs' - access points for communities, fulfilling key social needs such as access to the internet for people without computers, information for those looking for work and homework clubs etc. The Jubilee Library was a prime example of a successful library venue for community events.

48.3 Other issues for 2012 – 2013 budget setting decisions had included: the talking book service; (the Council was in discussion with RNIB) and the mobile library (a budget shortfall meant that the running costs of a new mobile library now could not be found; there had been no interest from third parties)

Councillor Bowden was looking to promote the use of the Council's Library home delivery service. The Council had an active Volunteer Strategy. Volunteers were 'pivotal' to this service, that offered sometimes essential contact for those including the isolated elderly. The service would be added to the OPC website. **(ACTION MB)**

48.4 The new library in Woodingdean would be some 2 ½ times larger than the existing building that had been 'temporary for many years. The new Library for Brighton University in Circus Street was planned to be accessible to the public as well as students. Proposals included dance rehearsal space.

48.5 The new Keep research and local history facility at Woollards Field was due for completion in May 2013 ready for public opening in October. The Keep would bring together archives from East Sussex County Council, Brighton University and the History Centre. A presentation to OPC was scheduled for 21 August but potentially, a site visit could be arranged instead on this date. The OPC welcomed this if practicable. **(ACTION MvB/Cllr GB)**

48.6 Answering questions, in particular about those wishing to research local history but unable to travel far, Councillor Bowden said the digitisation programme would enable resources to be accessed via other library services. In the case of duplicate items, one would be kept at Jubilee Library, the other at the Keep. Transport including bus services, and other access issues were being actively considered.

48.7 Use of the existing History room at Brighton Museum would be consulted on; there were many items currently in store that could use new display space.

48.9 There was a comment that the Willett Collection was in need of restoration and members asked for more information. **(ACTION MvB)**

48.10 Asked about plans for Hove Library and Museum and the film archives in particular also any perceptible trends in library usage eg in relation to the economy; the officers would be asked to provide written information. **(ACTION MvB)**

48.11 Free wi-fi available at all public libraries had been delayed until October because the Olympics were at present taking up providers' time. Free wi-fi at The Keep was questioned.

48.12 OPC said some people with impaired mobility could not easily access Jubilee Library by bus and discussed whether community transport or smaller buses could have a role.

49. AGE-FRIENDLY CITY

49.1 OPC Secretary Mike Bojczuk outlined his investigations about the advantages and the process of Brighton & Hove applying for WHO Age Friendly City status, the aim being to make the local environment and services better and better used by older people. The idea was being well-received. It would mean OPC making a commitment to work actively in co-operation with partners. He was arranging an initial meeting next week to look at the 'vision', the decision-making process and key stakeholders.

49.2 OPC Chair Jack Hazelgrove said OPC had a key role to play here. OPC Vice Chair Francis Tonks expressed support and noted a major Brighton University research project on aging and mobility that he was interested in.

49.3 OPC members asked about the benefits of applying, the Council process for a go-ahead and pointed out that resources would be needed, and expectations ought not be raised too high. After discussion it was agreed to pursue the initiative and contribute ideas.

49.4 RESOLVED that OPC support the initiative of applying for WHO Age-Friendly City Status. **(ACTION MB, MvB, all)**

50. FINANCE UPDATE

50. Members agreed that Peter Terry would be Treasurer and thanked him for agreeing to do this.

51. NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

51.1 The Head of Scrutiny Tom Hook outlined the new Council Committee structure that had now replaced the Cabinet system. Each Committee would be monitored for issues and decisions affecting older people, by an OPC Member as follows:

- HS, CV, MB – Adult Care & Health
- PM – Economic Development and Culture
- MB, JE – Housing
- FT – Environment & Sustainability
- JH - Policy and Resources – including Neighbourhood Councils Pilot
- JE, PT - Transport
- JW – Planning. Janet as OPC rep, had already been welcomed at Planning Committee
- CV – Licensing
- VB - Audit and Standards
- CV - Overview and Scrutiny
- JH, MB - Health and Wellbeing O&S

51.2 Democratic Services would be asked to add the above to the electronic despatch list including website links, diary dates etc. In view of potential 'digital exclusion' the cost implications of paper copies for those without a computer would be looked at **(ACTION MvB)**

52. CONSULTATIONS AND SURVEYS

52.1 OPC Chair Jack Hazelgrove had contributed into the Lewes Road consultation in his 'Bus Watch' role. It was difficult to reach a consensus on this matter, for a general OPC reply, so each OPC member was encouraged to put their own views on the consultation portal attributed as individual OPC Members, before the 25 May deadline for reply.

52.2 Colin Vincent circulated his reply to the Local Account consultation and was reassured that retaining an 'exceptional circumstances' clause regarding those falling into 'moderate' and 'low' eligibility criteria did remain in the final version of the document. He reported that it was not easy for a non-specialist to reply to the consultation as it appeared to be written by professionals for professionals. This would be fed back to the ASC and consultation portal officers **(ACTION MvB)**

52.3 Sport and Physical Activity consultation would be replied to by MB **(ACTION MB)**

52.4 The scrutiny officer reported that a number of OPC replies had been made to consultation portal surveys – these were valuable input into decision-making processes from older people's perspectives and were well worth pursuing actively. **(ACTION:All)**

53. OPC CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

53.1 Since Colin Carden was standing down as OPC Member, OPC would usually hold a by-election. However the cost of several thousand pounds involved was disproportionately high at this time. Subject to OPC agreement it was intended to co-opt instead, therefore proposed changes to the OPC Constitution regarding membership and co-option were being proposed. After discussion and a vote this was unanimously agreed.

53.2 Separately a proposal to give co-opted Members of OPC full speaking and voting rights was voted upon and unanimously agreed.

53.3 RESOLVED That the Head of Scrutiny be asked to make the necessary changes to OPC constitution as agreed above. **(ACTION TH, MvB)**

54. LETTERS TO THE PRESS

54.1 JW was working on a letter to the Press re: housing. Other OPC Members were encouraged to write to the Press. Help was available from the scrutiny team if needed.**(ACTION: All)**

55. OPC WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

55. OPC Work plan included the next public meeting, 19 June at 10am in Jubilee Library. Stuart Wright of ESFRS would make a presentation on fire safety for older people, followed by discussion. Community Safety would be the second main topic, though a Police rep may not be available due to an existing event. Road safety for older people, following from the data provided at this meeting, was potentially the third topic; Crossing the road at Churchill Square could be a road safety issue. Publicity would be key; each Member would be given 10 fliers to

distribute eg in charity shops, libraries, via website, supermarkets local venues. Age UK B&H, and Pensioner Forum would also have leaflets to circulate. **(ACTION MvB, All)**

55.2 17 July OPC meeting had been cancelled to focus on 14 July People's Day. OPC were keen to accept an invitation to join a democracy debate and question time with the Youth Council 11-15 – 12.15 in the Pavilion Theatre. Building intergenerational understanding was an important aim. OPC Chair and Vice Chair were not available at this time; the scrutiny officer would find out more details and seek an older person potentially to Chair/co-Chair this debate. **(ACTION: MvB, all)**

55.3 21 August OPC was currently scheduled to hear about The Keep and a site visit instead, or as well, would be investigated.

55.4 Possible keynote speakers at 18 September public OPC meeting would be considered at the June OPC meeting. **(ACTION: MvB)** Suggestions were:

- Drugs and Alcohol and Older People
- Changes to the health service, and potential implication for older people locally.
- Sheltered housing

56. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

56.1 All OPC Members gave an update on their recent activities, These included; Link; AGE Friendly City; Hangleton & Knoll 50+ group – a good model for elsewhere in the City; Planning; an unusual unsettling intrusion to an elderly lady's home by a person purporting to be a loft insulation rep which did not seem to involve criminal activity; medical cards; public toilets; Lewes Road consultation event; grey matters radio, future of London Road former Co-op building; The Pensioner, People's Day; disabled access at the football stadium; a new people carrier for Older disabled people bought from funding-raising by local Press.

56.2 These individual topics would form a section with quotes, in the OPC Annual report 2011-2012. **(ACTION; to be coordinated)**

56.3 The OPC phone rota was due to be updated and VB kindly agreed to do this. **(ACTION: VB)**

56.4 Councillor Bowden asked that Home Care Services be added to OPC work plan. **(ACTION: MvB)** All were invited to 9 June Kemp Town Carnival, which he Chaired. **(ACTION: all)**

The meeting concluded at 1.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of