

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

**4.00PM 18 JUNE 2009**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Barnett, Older, Pidgeon, Smart and Taylor

**PART ONE**

**1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**1A. Declarations of Substitutes**

1.1 Councillor Averil Older was substitute for Councillor Geoff Wells.

Councillor David Smart was substitute for Councillor Tony Janio.

**1B. Declarations of Interest**

1.2 There were none.

**1C. Declarations of Party Whip**

1.3 There were none.

**1D. Exclusion of Press and Public**

1.4 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.

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

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 2.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Chairman said that the recommendations from the studentification ad hoc panel had now been referred to the Strategic Housing Partnership. The Chairman had asked the Head of Overview & Scrutiny to get an update for the Committee.

The Dementia Select Committee had held its first meeting on 12 June 2009. This was very timely because the city had recently been short-listed to be a demonstrator site for dementia. Brighton and Hove would receive extra funding if the bid were successful.

**4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- 4.1 There were no public questions.

**5. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS & NOTICES OF MOTION**

- 5.1 There were no letters or Notices of Motion from Councillors.

**6. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SESSION ON SHORT-TERM SERVICES REVIEW**

- 6a The Director of Community Care presented a member development session on the Short Term Service Review and responded to members' questions.

- 6b Members heard that planning permission had been agreed for a 100-bed site at William Moon Lodge, the Linkway, Brighton which offers potential for the city to meet some of the requirements in relation to joint provision and demand.

- 6c Members asked whether, when a patient was placed in a hospital outside the city, consideration was given to the distance that family members would have to travel to visit them. The Director of Community Care explained that all stroke rehabilitation beds had been moved to Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath, though work was carried out to enable patients to move back to the city so that they could finish their rehabilitation at the best location for them.

- 6d Members commented that, when the decision had been made to move the beds from Brighton General Hospital to Newhaven Downs, they had been assured that this would be a temporary move. Members expressed concerns if this were no longer the case as this would have an impact on the patient and their families. The Director of Community Care said that work was under way to look at options for the move.

- 6e Members asked about the Nevill Hospital site as several had heard rumours that it would be closing. Could it be possible to use the building as a rehabilitation centre, with some modernisation; The Director of Community Care said that the hospital was currently used for patients with mental health issues; she was aware that there were discussions about the future use of the site.

- 6f The Strategic Commissioner for Mental Health for the PCT, spoke to the Committee. The Strategic Commissioner explained that a colleague had previously attended a Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting to speak about the provision of mental health beds, and that they had discussed a range of options. One of those options was to move people with functional mental health to Millview hospital. However it was recognised that Millview was unsuitable for people with dementia, due to the nature of the other patients in the hospital, so there would need to be discussions about what would happen to those patients, if this option were taken further. The Strategic Commissioner clarified that all of the options needed to be scrutinised within the PCT initially, and were not yet at the stage for public consultation. The PCT was working with colleagues at the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust on the full range of options, aiming to have these completed by the end of July 2009. The Committee agreed that they would like to invite the PCT to the next ASCHOSC meeting to talk about the plans for the site.
- 6g Members asked about whether any planning was underway for what would happen in the event of a heat wave, in a similar way to the planning that was underway for winter conditions. The Director of Community Care explained that planning was taking place for heat waves, for winter and for swine flu. It was essential to identify vulnerable service users and ensure that they had the correct facilities; this was work that the independent sector was also carrying out. There was a set of shared criteria to assess the most vulnerable residents, ensuring that those most in need would be seen first.
- 6h **AGREED:** that the PCT be invited to the next ASCHOSC meeting to talk about the plans for the Nevill hospital site.

(At the Committee meeting, Item 12 was heard next, as Councillor Caulfield was able to attend the meeting earlier than anticipated.)

## **7. HOUSING ADAPTATIONS**

- 7a The Head of Housing Strategy and Development presented a report on housing adaptations in the city and responded to Members' questions. Members heard that there were a number of key issues to be taken into account, including the rising demand for adaptations, the need to make the best use of resources, and the drive to improve customer service by reducing waiting times.
- 7b Members commented that they had noticed that Occupational Therapists (OT) were able to attend households much more quickly than in previous years and that in some cases adaptations were happening within months, which was a noticeable improvement. The Head of Housing Strategy and Development said that there were many more ways for residents to access the adaptations service. There were currently 88 people waiting for an OT assessment, with approximately 30 more being added each month.

Members said that it would be useful to know how many people had been waiting for what period of time. The Head of Housing Strategy and Development agreed that this would be useful information and said that he would look into providing it.

- 7c Members asked whether adaptations were checked after installation. The Head of Housing Strategy and Development said that this was standard practice for council properties but there were different arrangements for private residents. In these circumstances, the council had more of an arms-length approach. The contract for work was between the resident and the contractor, with the resident responsible for taking up any complaints with the contractor directly.
- 7d In response to a query around whether there was a central register of adapted properties, members heard that the Adult Social Care and Housing department was working towards gathering information on the council-owned properties that had adaptations, and that these were categorised into different mobility categories. It was more problematic to gather the information about private properties however, particularly for those households who had arranged for work to be carried out themselves rather than requesting assistance from the council.
- 7e In response to a query about whether the contract for adaptations would be included within the new Repairs and maintenance ten-year contract, the Head of Housing Strategy and Development explained that the department utilised its own specialist contractor services at present, but that it would need to look at whether it was more beneficial to continue this or to include the work within a larger contract. Any money that could be saved could then be used to assist more people with their adaptations needs. Members said that the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have a role in monitoring the ongoing demand for adaptations in the city.
- 7f **RESOLVED-** (i) that the Committee's comments be noted, and (ii) that the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors the ongoing demand for adaptations in the city.

## **8. EXTRA CARE HOUSING AND CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

- 8a The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, presented a report on Extra Care Housing and Choice Based Lettings and responded to Members' questions, explaining that the report had already been agreed by both the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.
- 8b In response to a query about whether owner-occupiers could access Extra Care Housing, Members heard that anyone was able to apply to have an Adult Social Care assessment. If this indicated that Extra Care Housing would be suitable for an individual, the team would explore various options with them, including considering whether purchasing an Extra Care Housing unit would be a suitable option.
- 8c Members sought clarification on the numbers of residents in New Larchwood who had previously lived in Patching Lodge (referring to point 1.4 of the report). The Assistant Director explained that out of the 34 tenants in Patching Lodge, five people had moved into the newly developed Patching Lodge.
- 8d Members were concerned that wider advertising of Extra Care Housing might lead to highly increased expectations and demand for the service that could not be met. The Assistant Director said that the intention was to monitor the demand closely as current

levels were not precisely known. The decision to advertise Extra Care Housing more widely also had the benefit of giving customers more information about the range of housing options available; evidence showed that there was little awareness of Extra Care Housing amongst city residents.

- 8e Members raised concerns about vulnerable tenants who might not be using their bids regularly. The Assistant Director confirmed that support was given to vulnerable tenants to help them with bidding. In Rother District, there was an automatic bidding process for everyone who was registered for Extra Care Housing; this could be explored further in Brighton & Hove.
- 8f After a vote, Members agreed a proposal to modify the wording of recommendation 2.1. The newly worded recommendation read: *'To note that all housing types are required to be allocated through Choice Base Lettings'*.
- 8g **RESOLVED** - that the reworded recommendation at 8f above be agreed.

## 9. REPORT ON THE CARERS' STRATEGY

- 9.1 The Joint Commissioner for Carers' Services spoke to the report and addressed Members' questions and comments.
- 9.2 Members queried the publicity for carers' services and opportunities; some carers did not know about the support that was on offer to them. The Joint Commissioner said that it was an ongoing challenge to ensure that information was made available to those who needed it. A proposal has been submitted to the Department of Health for funding to pilot Carers' Advisors, based in three hospitals, to signpost carers to the various services that were provided. The council had not yet heard whether the bid had been successful.
- 9.3 Members heard that a Link Worker had been employed by the Carers' Centre to work with GP practices to identify named workers in practices who can signpost carers towards a range of carer's services in the city. The Link Worker is aiming to have fifteen 'Links' in place this year.
- 9.4 Members queried what the next steps were for the document. The Joint Commissioner explained that the strategy was currently available for consultation both on the council's website and on the Primary Care Trust's website. In addition, over 3,000 surveys had been sent out to carers, requesting responses by early August 2009.

The strategy was scheduled to go to the Joint Commissioning Board for ratification in November 2009. Following this, a multi-agency carers' group would oversee implementation of the work programme.

- 9.5 **RESOLVED** – that the Committee's comments on the strategy be noted.

## 10. OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY SERVICES REVIEW

- 10.1 The Committee received a presentation from the General Manager, Older People Services, the Team Manager from Tower House Day Centre and the Performance and

Development Officer. The officers also replied to Members' questions on the service review.

- 10.2 Members said that they were glad to see that local communities were being used as centres for older people. The General Manager said that services needed to be much more joined up, and to use the facilities that were already there.
- 10.3 Members asked whether 3.2, point 4 had been costed and if not, whether they could have clarification on this; they did not wish to endorse the closure of a facility if alternative provision had not been costed. This was agreed.

The General Manager explained that this was intended to be an update paper; the team would have more detailed figures in September. It had become clear from the early stages of the review that there was a need to re-provide some services. Combined services were currently delivered in the communal living rooms in sheltered accommodation schemes. However, residents in the sheltered schemes did not like losing their communal living rooms; it was important to respect their wishes and re-provide the services.

Members asked for more information about the consultation that was taking place on the changes in the service. The General Manager said that the team had already begun to move out with the discussions about alternative service provision due to the dissatisfaction expressed by residents.

- 10.4 Members asked for clarification of point 4.5.4 and the effect on the day centres in the east of Brighton. The General Manager confirmed that no closures were being proposed, but that the intention was for the schemes to work more closely together.
- 10.5 **RESOLVED-** (i) that the recommendations be agreed; (ii) that the information requested at 10.3 be provided to Overview and Scrutiny, and (iii) that the minutes from this meeting be submitted to the relevant Cabinet Members for their attention.

## **11. DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORKING AGE/ ADULTS' MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR 2010-2013**

- 11.1 The NHS Brighton & Hove Strategic Commissioner for Working Age Mental Health and Substance Misuse presented a report on the proposed Working Age Mental Health Commissioning Strategy and responded to Members' queries. The Strategic Commissioner explained that the report was being presented at the Adult Social Care and Housing Committee for information, and that decisions would be made through the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny.
- 11.2 The Committee heard that annually, £27, 000, 000 was spent on Working Age Mental Health Services locally so it was a significant service demand. 3,000 people in the city had serious mental health issues, with 30, 000 people having mild to moderate mental health issues at any one time, and 44, 000 who were self-medicating with alcohol.

In Brighton and Hove, £212 per head was currently spent on Working Age Mental Health Services, compared with an average of £163 in other local authority areas.

The Mental Health Services were assessed as 'weak' two years ago so the proposed Strategy was intended in part to be a stock-take of the Services' current position. Work on the strategy will bring in patients, carers, GPs and other stakeholders to take part in the consultation; the Strategy should be inclusive of all members of the community.

11.3 Members asked about member involvement with developing the strategy. They heard that there was councillor input at various stages of the process. The Strategic Commissioner confirmed that the PCT was keen for the process to be inclusive and would like to engage with any groups that were interested to be involved. In addition, it was likely that the strategy would be influenced by the Dual Diagnosis scrutiny report that had been produced; this would be a key driver for the strategy and showed that member involvement was already having an impact.

11.4 Members asked about the training that GPs received with regard to care standards for mild/ moderate depression and other mental health. The Committee heard that GPs were specifically trained on psychiatric wards as part of their medical training.

Locally the prescription of SSRI drugs had risen by 10% over the last quarter, compared with figures for the same quarter last year. The exact reasons for this were unknown, though anecdotally it was thought to be linked to the recession and related anxiety issues. The Strategic Commissioner did not foresee that this would lead to any significant long-term problems, the SSRIs were not harmful.

11.5 **RESOLVED** – the recommendations were agreed.

## **12. COUNCILLOR MARIA CAULFIELD, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING**

(This item was heard prior to item 7 at the Committee meeting.)

12a Councillor Caulfield gave a presentation on her priorities as Cabinet Member for Housing and responded to Members' questions and comments.

12b Councillor Caulfield confirmed that, with regard to the new 10-year procurement contract, there would be three Clerks of the Works employed, in order to check contractors' performance.

12c In response to queries about the progress of the Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV), Councillor Caulfield said that the directorate was in discussions with central government to address issues that had been raised and that further work was being carried out to value the properties. The initial batch of properties had been identified and work was underway to identify the next set of properties. Councillor Caulfield confirmed that, under the proposed scheme, the local authority would keep the freehold of the properties, letting them out on a long-term lease of 125 years.

Members asked whether the LDV could be used creatively, to look for alternative solutions to the housing shortage, for example, by building more homes. Councillor Caulfield said that there were examples of some local authorities buying properties and using them for social housing.

12d Members supported the proposals to allow residents in sheltered blocks to have priority for moving within the block.

**13. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET OR THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER MEETING**

13.1 The Minutes of this committee meeting to go forward to Cabinet members.

**14. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL**

14.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of