

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

5.00PM – 21 APRIL 2008

### HOVE TOWN HALL

#### MINUTES

Present: Councillor Young (Chairman); Councillors Alford, Allen, Davis, Duncan, Harmer-Strange, Janio, Simpson, Smart, Steedman and Watkins.

#### PART ONE

#### ACTION

#### 74. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 74A. Declarations of Substitutes

74.1 Councillor Smart declared that he was attending the meeting as Substitute Member for Councillor Barnett.

##### 74B. Declarations of Interest

74.2 During discussion on item 82, Councillor Simpson advised that although she did not have a personal or prejudicial interest in the item, she felt the committee should be aware that she was an employee of Age Concern.

74.3 During discussion on item 85, Councillor Harmer-Strange advised that although he did not have a personal or prejudicial interest in the item, he felt the committee should be aware of his private sector housing interests.

##### 74C. Exclusion of Press and Public

74.3 The Committee 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 Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

74.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

## 75. MINUTES

75.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 76. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

76.1 The Chairman welcomed all to the final meeting of this Committee and thanked the Members, Lead Councillors, departmental and support officers who had participated in meetings during the year. She also gave an update on the Dual Diagnosis Review, as a Member of the Panel.

## 77. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

77.1 There were none.

## 78. INTRODUCTION TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING

78.1 Councillor K Norman gave an introduction to the work of Adult Social Care. He said the service had retained a 3-star rating in its latest inspection; there had been steady improvement plus high levels of satisfaction from service users. There was no complacency however; improvements had to continue for example in the personalisation of services. Learning Disabilities Services was a key priority. Councillor Norman thanked all the staff and in particular those working with service users.

78.2 Councillor Mears started by thanking staff in the Housing divisions, tenants and cross-party Members. She said meeting the Decent Homes Standard would be challenging. She noted considerable progress in the learning disabilities service, and was pleased that Housing Strategy had achieved the highest rating – 4 out of 4 - of all Unitary Authorities in the South East.

78.3 She said a recent meeting of tenants was very lively and well-attended. She looked forward to the challenges ahead. Answering a question on adult social care and housing scrutiny, she said the new constitution would be reviewed.

78.4 **RESOLVED:** - that the report be noted

**79. PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3, 2007/2008: EXTRACT FROM REPORT TO 3 MARCH POLICY & RESOURCES**

- 79.1 The Performance Analyst introduced the Quarter 3 Performance Report of the Director of Strategy & Governance. (See minute book)
- 79.2 He said performance against the indicators were broadly on track and since the report was compiled there had been improvements, for example on BV201 – adults and older people receiving direct payments. He pointed out that BV 64 – private sector vacant dwellings returned to occupation or demolished was, as agreed by the Government of the South East, rewardable via the Local Area Agreement.
- 79.3 This was the final report on Best Value Performance Indicators. The new performance framework, to include the National Indicator set was currently being developed.
- 79.4 Answering questions, the Head of Adult Social Care and Performance and Development described BV 195 and 196, acceptable waiting times for new older clients, and said there had been a great improvement. Slower assessment times in the past had been caused by the volume of adults' safeguarding work which took priority and by the year end 86% of clients had received services within the acceptable time (4 weeks).
- 79.5 The Head of Housing Needs answered questions on homelessness and homelessness prevention.
- 79.6 **RESOLVED:** - that the report be noted.

**80. ADULT SOCIAL CARE: PERFORMANCE REPORT**

- 80.1 The Head of Adult Social Care and Performance and Development presented the report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing on the outcomes emerging from Commission for Social Care Inspections review of performance in Adult Social Care for the year 2006-07. (See minute book)
- 80.2 He noted that some local authorities had lost their 3-star rating and the fact that 3-star had been achieved by this authority for a second time was a good reflection on the hard work of front-line staff. Performance against delayed transfers of care had improved greatly in recent years and the reduced number of admissions to residential/nursing care was also encouraging. Closer partnership working between the council, voluntary sector and NHS was particularly helpful. There were still areas for improvement.

80.3 Asked about data collection within integrated services the Head of Adult Social Care and Performance and Development said this was a technical issue nationally. Though integrated working was doing well, performance information at present has to be input separately to both NHS and Council's Social Care databases, which was onerous. A project to improve data quality was expected to be completed later this year. The Committee asked for a future update to scrutiny. **PL/MvB**

80.4 He also answered questions on partnership working, the assessment of performance, adult safeguarding incidents and direct payments.

80.5 The Assistant Director of Housing outlined the various ways the Council was trying to help individuals and families to move away from institutions, by expanding the choice of houses and services. He also answered a question on waiting times and processes for structural alterations.

80.6 **RESOLVED:** - that the report be noted and an update be provided to a future scrutiny meeting. **PL/MvB**

## **81. ADULT SOCIAL CARE: COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

81.1 The Head of Adult Social Care and Performance and Development gave a summary and key themes of Adult Social Care complaints 2007 – 2008. (See minute book)

81.2 **RESOLVED:** - that the summary be noted.

## **82. ADULT SOCIAL CARE: TRANSFORMATION AGENDA**

82.1 The Director of Community Care (Adult Social Care) gave a presentation and answered questions on the Council's Transformation Agenda. (See minute book)

82.2 **RESOLVED:** that the presentation be noted

## **83. HOUSING MANAGEMENT: OVERVIEW**

83.1 OSOC received a presentation by the Investment Manager on the Procurement Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account Stock. (See Minute Book.)

83.2 The Investment Manager outlined the procurement process and strategy options. He and the Assistant Director, Housing Management, replied to questions on the involvement of tenants in the procurement process, service failures, the linking of responsive and planned maintenance and the management

and monitoring of contracts.

**83.3 RESOLVED:** - that the presentation be noted.

**84. HOUSING MANAGEMENT: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

84.1 The Policy Performance and Community development manager presented a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing concerning performance management. The report had also been to the four Area Panels and Housing Management Sub-Committee. (See Minute Book). He said a new forum for tenants, a Citywide Assembly was to be established.

84.2 **RESOLVED:** - that the report be noted.

**85. HOUSING STRATEGY: OVERVIEW**

85.1 The Housing Needs Manager gave an overview presentation on the Housing Strategy pointing out that in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2007, the service achieved 4 out of 4, the highest strategic housing rating in the South East. (See Minute Book)

85.2 Asked about the YMCA, he outlined the role of the Association for young people, homeless and rough sleepers in Brighton and Hove.

85.3 **RESOLVED:** - that the report be noted.

**86. HOUSING STRATEGY STATISTICAL BULLETIN**

86.1 OSOC noted the latest Housing Strategy Statistical Bulletin.(See minute Book)

**87. HOUSING STRATEGY AND HOUSING MANAGEMENT COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS**

87.1 The Standards and Complaints Manager presented a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance providing details of complaints about Housing dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure received from April 2007 to the end of December 2007. (See minute Book)

87.2 He said complaints about repairs and maintenance had been gradually reducing. Any complaints service relies on receiving information from the public and it was important to ensure the service was open and easily accessible.

87.3 A template was being developed to give a more detailed analysis of the sources and causes of complaints.

87.4 **RESOLVED:** - that the report be noted

## 88. CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME ANNUAL REVIEW

88.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance & Resources providing an update on the progress of the council's Carbon Management Programme. (See minute book)

88.2 The Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy said the reduction in Council's carbon dioxide emissions (ref report para 4.4.2) was achieved largely through staff awareness and change in behaviour rather than by technology.

88.3 Better energy management was needed. A number of initiatives were being developed and the Council had also joined the Carbon Trading Counties 'dummy' scheme. The national performance framework from April 2009 would include assessment of emissions from local authorities for the first time. The Housing Stock data (para 4.2.1) was now available.

88.4 Members commented on overheated council buildings and equipment left on out of hours. There was a query about the responsibility for inspecting schools' energy performance and how to assess feasibility of individual projects. More information on the Council's total emissions was asked for.

88.5 **RESOLVED:** - that officers be asked to provide OSOC Members with an estimate of the total carbon dioxide emissions by the Council as a proportion of the city as a whole.

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## 89. CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

89.1 The Head of Corporate Communications introduced himself to the committee. He explained in his new role he was allowing 100 days to assess current communications activities and operations. He would then plan stronger processes, taking into account best practice information and targets for example from the Local Government Association, Improvement and Development Agency and Best Value Performance Indicators.

89.2 Asked about City News Policy the Head of Corporate Communications said he would be working on a set of protocols for press releases and all council publications, including City News. Quotes attributed to the Lead Councillor or Cabinet Member would be issued in press items under the new protocol; this is supported under the Local Government Act and the Code of Practice on local government publicity.

89.3 Some Members felt that City News should profile all Ward

Councillors.

## **90. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION**

- 90.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance outlining the proposed arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny under the council's new Constitution. (See minute book.)
- 90.2 Some Members were disappointed that two suggestions for new scrutiny arrangements as put forward by informal meetings of OSOC in January and February, had not been included in the proposals.
- 90.3 Some felt that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission should simply be an Overview and Scrutiny Committee; its proposed role would introduce undue delay in taking forward scrutiny recommendations from the other O&S Committees and co-ordination could instead be carried out by informal meetings of Chairmen and officers.
- 90.4 In addition, noting that this meeting of OSOC which happened to be focussing on both Adult Social Care and Housing had already been in progress for nearly three and a half hours, some Members felt that Adult Social Care and Housing should not be combined in the same Scrutiny Committee to allow enough time for consideration of key issues.
- 90.5 It was agreed to write to the Chief Executive.
- 90.6 **RESOLVED:** - That the Committee write to the Chief Executive with concerns as minuted above.

## **91. AUDIT PANEL – 31 MARCH 2008**

- 91.1 The Committee noted the summary of proceedings of the meeting of the Audit Panel held on 31 March 2008.

## **92. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 1 APRIL 2008**

- 92.1 The Committee noted the draft minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 April 2008.

## **93. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL**

- 93.1 **RESOLVED -**

The meeting concluded at 20.25pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

2008





