

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Barnett, Hawkes, Janio, Pidgeon, Wells and Kennedy

PART ONE

15. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS (COPY ATTACHED).

15A. Declaration of Substitutes

15.1 Councillor Amy Kennedy declared that she was attending the meeting as Substitute Member for Councillor Bill Randall.

15B. Declarations of Interest

15.2 There were none.

15C. Declarations of Party Whip

15.3 There were none.

15D. Exclusion of Press and Public

15.4 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.

15.5 **RESOLVED** – that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

16.1 The minutes from the previous meeting of 26 June 2008 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

16.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2008 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

17. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

17.1 The Chairman wished to congratulate the council for successfully attaining a grant of one million pounds to convert Vernon Gardens into adapted accommodation for people with disabilities.

18. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

18.1 There were none.

19. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

19.1 There were none

20. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

20.1 There were none.

**21. ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(ASCHOSC) 2008/2009 WORK PROGRAMME**

21.1 Members considered a report on the progress of the ASCHOSC work programme. The Work Programme working group comprised Councillors Meadows, Wrighton and Smart (substitute for Councillor Barnett).

21.2 **RESOLVED** – the work programme was agreed.

22. MEMBER TRAINING SESSION: AN INTRODUCTION TO SELF-DIRECTED CARE

22.1 Denise D'Souza, Director of Community Care, and Brigid Day, Interim Head of Adult Social Care (Operations), gave a presentation on the subject of self-directed care and answered members' questions.

22.2 In response to a question regarding whether checks were carried out on recipients of direct payments to ascertain that the money was being spent properly, members were informed that there was an allocated Finance Officer for this purpose. There was a clear audit trail including recipients having a bank account solely for direct payments; the council regularly monitors the account statements and carries out case reviews. From over 200 recipients of direct payments, there had only been one instance of money not being spent correctly.

22.3 In response to a question regarding the ongoing provision of more traditional care services, members were advised that traditional care services were still available.

- 22.4 A member queried how carers would be supported. Officers advised that the Local Authority had a responsibility to carry out carer assessments. Carers were able to receive direct payments and there were a number of respite options.
- 22.5 A member queried whether there could be inconsistencies in payments made to different residents in different cities. Officers clarified that Brighton & Hove City Council was part of an Efficiency Delivery Group and that funding streams were prescribed. It was noted that members should be mindful of resource allocation as some local unit costs might be higher due to cost of living, so care should be taken when making comparisons.
- 22.6 In response to a request from members for copies of case studies, officers were happy to circulate case studies and signpost members to other documents for further information.
- 22.7 The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation and responses to the questions.

23. HOUSING STRATEGY- STUDENT HOUSING IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE

- 23.1 The Committee considered a report on the proposed Housing Strategy for students. Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing, answered members' questions.
- 23.2 It was explained that the rising number of students in the city and their need for accommodation was having an adverse effect on the availability of family housing, leading to growing pressure on housing in certain areas of the city. There was an impact on community infrastructure as a result. It was recommended that an ad hoc Panel be formed to consider the issues in depth.
- 23.3 Members welcomed the proposed strategy as timely, but did not think it was appropriate to wait for several years for a Supplementary Planning Document to be formed. Reference was made to the work that Nottingham and Salford Councils had carried out in similar situations.
- 23.4 Members were concerned about the effect of demographic changes, for example in terms of school admissions. This could lead to a school failing or ultimately being closed, reducing the number of families who would then move into the area.
- 23.5 Members commented that this was an increasing problem in Elm Grove and Hanover, although students were generally seen as a positive asset to the community, with isolated problems caused by some households. A Residents' Group has been formed in Elm Grove to voice the community's feelings; it was felt that an ad hoc Panel could be very useful.
- 23.6 A Member suggested that the free market and the forthcoming recession could resolve the issue without the council's involvement. Officers responded that there had been some impact on small buy-to-let agencies. Officers also advised that there were some practical measures that could be considered including an area based planning approach or planning conditions regarding the use of conservatories.

23.7 Members agreed that the ad hoc Panel should be formed, with Councillors Meadows, Wrighton and Janio as Panel Members.

23.8 **RESOLVED** – that this report be noted and that the ad hoc Panel be established.

24. HOUSING ADAPTATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY (VERBAL UPDATE)

24.1 The Committee received a verbal update from Joy Hollister, Director of Adult Social Care and Housing, prior to a full written report that will come to the November ASCHOSC.

24.2 The Committee heard that there was a direct link to the Self-directed Care strategy already discussed. There is a need to improve the time taken to adapt people's homes to allow them to stay at home. At present minor adaptations take six weeks on average; the target time is four weeks or less. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are monitoring the council's performance.

Access Point went live in May, which has been successful in signposting people to the right adaptations but has had a negative impact on waiting times.

24.3 In response to a question regarding private sector housing adaptations and recouping the cost, officers said that grants could be given to private sector housing applicants where eligible. If the property were re-sold within a certain time period, the local authority would be able to re-claim the grant.

24.4 **RESOLVED** – that the verbal update be noted.

25. 'RATIONALISATION' OF REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD (RSL) OWNED SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK

25.1 The Committee considered a report on the rationalisation of RSL owned housing stock. Sarah Potter, Housing Development Manager, presented the report and answered members' questions.

25.2 Members noted that smaller RSLs may not have the same level of commitment to an area or be willing to engage so much with the Local Authority as the larger RSLs. Officers commented that it was probably the case that the RSLs attended meetings in other local authorities where they held more stock. Officers suggested the council could be more proactive in sharing the work done at the Social Landlords' Forum and Brighton & Hove Housing Partnership with the smaller RSLs.

25.3 In answer to a query whether local RSLs had local offices, officers confirmed that this was the case. The larger RSLs regularly engaged with the council through the Social Landlords' Forum & Brighton & Hove Housing Partnership.

25.4 It was noted that it would be beneficial to have a further overview of the process at a later date.

25.5 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and that further information be provided to the ASCHOSC at a later date.

26. HOUSING GREEN PAPER: UPDATE (VERBAL REPORT)

26.1 The Committee received a verbal update from Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing, who responded to questions.

26.2 The Committee heard about two key pieces of work to improve investment opportunities: long term procurement and the opportunity for a Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV), raising money for regeneration and reinvestment. The Committee heard that there would be no freehold transfer and no involvement of Housing Associations with the LDV; it would involve the leasehold transfer of up to 499 temporary accommodation properties. There will be a number of tenants' consultation events.

26.3 In response to a query regarding the location of other LDVs, members heard that there were fourteen LDV pilots nationally, each of which was different, depending on the business objectives.

26.4 In response to a query about the effect on Right to Buy, members heard that the proposed LDV did not affect secure tenants and therefore Right to Buy was not a factor.

26.5 In response to a query about consultation, members were advised that the consultation had followed the structured tenants' participation route. There was to be an article in the forthcoming 'Homing In' magazine with an open invitation for tenants to come to a number of events. There would also be members' briefings.

26.6 It was requested that a follow up report be brought to the next ASCHOSC.

26.7 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and an update to be provided to the November 2008 ASCHOSC.

27. ADDRESSING BUDGET OVERSPENDS

27.1 The Committee considered a report from Denise D'Souza, Director of Community Care, and Brigid Day, Interim Head of Adult Social Care (Operations), outlining the proposals to reduce the current overspend. The budget is needs-led; demand can be very different from what was anticipated, particularly in Physical Disability services. This can lead to placements in high-cost accommodation and result in an overspend.

27.2 In response to a query regarding the unusually high numbers of residents with MS and with Motor Neurone Disease in the city, members heard that the PCT were researching this to establish whether there had been an increase in numbers.

27.3 In response to a query about item A14 in the report, officers clarified that it referred to an office where living equipment was stored.

27.4 In response to a query about whether any further funds could be sought from Central Government, members heard that central funding was being reduced and an increase was unlikely.

- 27.5 In response to a query regarding how the remainder of the overspend will be met, officers advised that they were in the early stages of reporting, but it was felt achievable to meet the entire overspend.
- 27.6 It was requested that an update be provided in January 2009.
- 27.7 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and an update be provided to the January 2009 ASCHOSC.
- 28. PERFORMANCE OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING DIRECTORATE:
ADULT SOCIAL CARE**
- 28.1 Philip Letchfield, Interim Head of Adult Social Care and Performance and Development, presented a performance report and responded to questions.
- 28.2 In response to a question about why it was predicted that the target would not be met on NI 132, members heard that whilst this target was well established in older peoples services, having been part of the old Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) set, it was new for services working with people aged 18 -64 and assessments for these users could be more complex. However the current forecast shows that we are close to achieving the target and that through developments such as the Single Access Point it is expected that the target will be achieved by year end.
- 28.3 In response to a query about why PAF indicators were still being counted with no requirement to do so, the Commission for Social Care Inspection are currently consulting on the performance framework for Adult Social Care. In the interim most councils will continue to collect the PAF data on a voluntary basis as this may form part of the final performance framework. Systems are in place to collect the data so the task is not too onerous.
- 28.4 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.
- 29. PERFORMANCE OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING DIRECTORATE:
HOUSING MANAGEMENT**
- 29.1 Nick Hibberd, Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and Housing, presented a performance report and responded to questions.
- 29.2 Members heard that there was performance improvement, following joint working with officers and contractors to improve void times.
- 29.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.
- 30. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO CABINET OR THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBER
MEETING**
- 30.1 There were none.

31. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

31.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of