

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00pm 26 JUNE 2008

HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Meadows (Chairman); Barnett, Mrs Cobb, Hyde, Janio, Marsh, Randall and Wrighton (Deputy Chairman)

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS (COPY ATTACHED)

1A. Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Denise Cobb declared that she was attending the meeting as Substitute Member for Councillor Geoff Wells.

Councillor Mo Marsh declared that she was attending the meeting as Substitute Member for Councillor Pat Hawkes.

Councillor Linda Hyde declared that she was attending the meeting as Substitute Member for Councillor Brian Pidgeon.

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 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).

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

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no minutes from previous meetings as this was the first meeting of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (ASCHOSC).

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman informed the Committee that Councillor Geoff Wells had replaced Councillor Ann Norman on the ASCHOSC.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1 The Committee considered a report setting out the ASCHOSC Terms of Reference (as per the Council's May 16 2008 Constitution).

4.2 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

6. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were none.

7. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

There were none.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND THE FORWARD PLAN

8.1 Members considered a report setting out how the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions was expected to function.

8.2 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

9. TOWARDS A WORK PROGRAMME

9.1 Members considered a report concerning the development of an ASCHOSC work programme.

9.2 It was proposed that a working group be formed to develop a draft ASCHOSC work programme. Councillors Barnett, Meadows and Wrighton were nominated to sit on the working group

- 9.3 **RESOLVED** – that a working group should be formed to develop an ASCHOSC work programme for agreement at the next Committee meeting (04 September 2008).

10. VALUE FOR MONEY REVIEW OF HOUSING

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report on the ongoing Value for Money (VfM) review of housing. The Assistant Director of Housing, Jugal Sharma, answered members' questions on this issue.
- 10.2 In response to a question regarding potential savings via new procurement arrangements, members were informed that the issue of procurement was being developed separately from the general VfM review, and could be brought to ASCHOSC as a discrete item. The revised business plan for housing procurement will be added to the Council's Forward Plan at a later date.
- 10.3 A member queried why the VfM review of housing had initially been posted but then subsequently withdrawn from the Council's Forward Plan. Officers were not able to provide a detailed response to this question at the meeting.
- 10.4 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

11. THE CITY WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report on the Citywide Housing Strategy. Andy Staniford, Housing Strategy Manager, and Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing, answered members' questions.
- 11.2 It was explained that key areas had their own dedicated strategies which fed into the main citywide housing strategy. These areas were: Black & Minority Ethnic (BME); Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Older Persons' strategies. The final citywide housing strategy would be agreed by Full Council and by the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 11.3 Some members expressed disappointment that there was not a separate strategy to deal with the issue of families, as they should be a key element in the planning of various housing strategies for the city. It was felt that this area might usefully feature on the ASCHOSC 2008/2009 work programme.
- 11.4 A member commented that he felt rather too much attention may have been accorded to the city's BME community (given their relatively low numbers), and too little to problems facing families where the numbers affected were much greater. Officers responded by noting that, although BME numbers in the city had historically been low, this had changed significantly in recent years. In addition, it was not necessarily the case that a relatively small community required less attention, as there was a real danger that small "non-vocal" communities could be overlooked unless an active effort was made to address their needs.

- 11.5 In answer to a question concerning the degree to which the issue of student housing had featured in planning the citywide strategy, members were told that there had been a good deal of effective joint working in this area, involving the city Universities and the Council's Planning Department. All concerned recognised the importance of this issue.
- 11.6 In response to a question concerning the older people's strategy, members were assured that there had been extensive involvement of service users, including representations about the strategy made at Residents' Meetings, Sheltered Housing Schemes and so on.
- 11.7 In answer to a query regarding people with disabilities, the Committee was informed that, although there was no discrete strategy for this group, they were a Council priority and a good deal of work had been undertaken to improve access to housing suitable for people with disabilities. This included ring-fencing adaptable new-build accommodation advertised on Choice-Based Lettings so that people with disabilities had a better chance of finding accommodation quickly.
- 11.8 Several members noted that they were in general strongly supportive of the high degree of public and stakeholder consultation relating to the development of this strategy. Officers responsible for shaping the strategy were also praised for ensuring that public views genuinely contributed to the development of the strategy rather than being *ex post facto*.
- 11.9 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

12. THE HOUSING GREEN PAPER OPTIONS STAGE 1

- 12.1 The Committee considered a report on the Housing Green Paper. Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Private Sector Housing, answered members' questions
- 12.2 In answer to a query concerning the value of employing consultants on this issue, the Committee was told that consultants were able to supply specialist advice not available "in-house".
- 12.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

13. THE SUSSEX PARTNERSHIP TRUST CONTRACT

- 13.1 The Committee considered a report on the Sussex Partnership Trust contract. Denise D'Souza, Director of Community Care, answered members' questions.
- 13.2 The Director of Community Care explained that the Council has contractual agreements with Sussex Partnership Trust under which the Trust provides a variety of services. (These are sometimes known as "section 75 agreements".) The Sussex Partnership Trust is in the process of applying for NHS Foundation

Trust status and, if the application is approved, there may be a need to renegotiate some of these section 75 contracts in light of the Trust's changed status.

- 13.3 In answer to a question concerning the quality of Sussex Partnership Trust services, the Committee was told that Brighton & Hove City Teaching Primary Care Trust had a Service Level Agreement with the Sussex Partnership Trust which specified the quality of provision required. This agreement would be considerably developed and further formalised under any new contractual arrangement.
- 13.4 It was noted that it was not currently entirely clear whether the responsibility for scrutiny of section 75 contracts lay with the ASCHOSC or with the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). Work will need to be done to reach an agreement on how to split responsibility for monitoring this important area of Council and local NHS Trust activity.
- 13.5 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

14. REVIEW OF LEARNING DISABILITY DAY SERVICES

14.1 The Committee considered a report on Learning Disability Day Services.

14.2 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

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

There were none.

16. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

There were none

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 Members took the opportunity to informally discuss areas which they felt might usefully inform the ASCHOSC Work Programme. Suggested topics included: private sector housing; the rationalisation of housing stock owned by Registered Social Landlords - RSLs (i.e. seeking to ensure that there are not an unmanageable number of RSLs operating in the city); and self-directed care.

The meeting concluded at 5.15pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of