

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

10.00am 13 DECEMBER 2011

ROOM 126, KING'S HOUSE

MINUTES

Present: Hazelgrove (Chair)

Also in attendance: Tonks (Vice Chair), Bojczuk (Secretary), Carden (Treasurer), Eyles, Steer, Terry, Vincent.

PART ONE

1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 Val Brown had sent her apologies.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 15 NOVEMBER 2011

- 2.1 The minutes of the 15 November 2011 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 15 NOVEMBER MEETING

- 3.1 Colin Vincent was working with Philip Letchfield on the Local Account during the consultation period and putting forward the OPC's views.
- 3.2 Colin Vincent had contacted the Single Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Manager about further information on the closure of St. Patricks. Members were informed that Brighton Housing and Riverside Shelter Park (private housing company) would be providing alternative provision for these vulnerable groups.

4. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - BILL RANDALL

- 4.1 The Leader of the Council - Councillor Bill Randall advised Members of the following:
 - (1) **Personalisation budget** - This gave people the freedom to decide how to spend their social care budget in order to meet their specific needs and desired outcomes. Examples were cooking with friends, going to Bingo or the cinema. There were concerns as to how individuals would cope with managing their own budgets. It was understood that the new system was working well. There had been a decrease in the number of people attending Day Centres. It was noted that Brighton & Hove had not

changed the criteria for accessing services, (whilst other authorities had made changes to this).

- (2) **Publication of the Council's budget** – the budget had been published 2 months early. Consultation was taking part on the closure of some of the public toilets. The budget was dealing with various challenges. It was noted that there was a housing crisis. Street homelessness had increased by 15% due to tenants not being able to afford private rented housing. There was work being carried out on utilising former family homes for student accommodation and supporting improvements to council housing. An addition of £200k had been identified to the housing budget to support these changes.
- (3) The Council were looking at various offers on Fuel Policy which would help insulate homes better and reduce costs.
- (4) The authority wanted to protect the most vulnerable and had increased spending on youth services. The Council had 420 children under the authority's care. These children came from complex family backgrounds with costly support services. The Council were working to ensure these services had efficient outcomes.
- (5) The Council was also looking at the welfare of older people.
- (6) There were new approaches to working with partners such as the Police. Both organisations would be working closer together to combine budgets.
- (7) The Preston Barracks Regeneration Scheme was moving forward. The grant for the Lewes Road development had been successful and there were plans to improve bus and road access.
- (8) The council were also looking at satellite areas such as Partridge House in supporting these places during these challenging times.

4.2 Questions were raised:

- (1) On the budget as the distribution of the Pensioner magazine had been cut back by the Council. Councillor salaries were inquired upon. Members were told how there was no increase to Councillor salaries, unlike other councils. The Leader and the Chief Executive had taken a voluntary reduction in salary and Councillors were paying to go to events as previously they would attend these for free. Money from the Council Budget was allocated towards pay increases for the lowest paid staff.
- (3) On improving communication links with different elderly groups through the collective use of databases and e-mailing information out to get older people to sign up to events that they maybe of interest to them. Members noted that that there were several elderly schemes which were all different within the residential Wards, but these were not joined up. The use of smart phones had improved communication, through digital media eg. webcasting, tweeting and texting. It was important to utilise databases. It was important to ensure that conventional means of communication were also used.

- (4) On a potential Traveller site, Members were informed that the Council wanted to ensure that everyone in our city was treated fairly and that some people within this community were vulnerable. There would be an announcement on the Traveller Strategy.
- (5) On the closure of public toilets- Members were asked to take part in the consultation. Retailers like supermarkets were providing more public toilets. The city had a high substance misuse problem which had led to the reduction in public toilet opening hours. The Eastern Road Partnership had raised the issue of the lack of public toilets in their area too. It was understood that there was redevelopment work going on at the corner of St. Mary's Church which may open up a public toilet in that area.

**5. IMPROVED WORKING FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE'S OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL
A REPORT BY LAURA MURPHY, CFPS EXPERT ADVISOR**

5.1 Laura Murphy (The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Expert Advisor presented a report and presentation slides on ideas for developing the OPC. These included:

1. Putting itself forward as the most recognised point of contact for older people. Look at the OPC's position strategically to ensure it's sustainability. Do this by ensuring:
 - that the OPC is active in pursuing issues
 - works effectively
 - puts recommendations to the Cabinet Member
2. The OPC could be a body to support the Council with its work perhaps through consultations, but it also needed to work separately.
3. Work with Ward Councillors to support and alert them of older people's concerns. To work with current partners and systems.
4. Evidence has shown that by identifying 2-3 key issues and carrying out in-depth pieces of work the OPC could make a difference, which could raise their profile.
5. Important to determine what the OPC was going to look at .eg. closure of public toilets, adult alcohol abuse, campaign for a Health and Wellbeing Board OPC representative (like the Youth Council). Once a topic is identified co-ordinate with other groups/partnerships.
6. Use Grey Matters Radio to publicise and other media. Work with the University and partners to bring information together.
7. An example is Street visit campaign- publicise this by asking residents to put up posters in their window if they'd like a visit from an OPC member. This campaign could be co-ordinated with a press release.
8. Utilise the private meetings to work on projects to produce outcomes.

5.2 Members thanked the Advisor for the report and presentation and agreed to discuss the recommendations at their next meeting.

6. ROUGH SLEEPERS BRIEFING NOTE FOR OLDER PEOPLES COUNCIL

6.1 Colin Vincent would continue to find out more information on the alternative services for homeless people.

7. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS, THE CHAIR, SECRETARY AND TREASURER

7.1 Francis Tonks:

- Attended the LiNK meeting with partners and raised the issue of the closure of St. Patricks. There was discussion on the consultation of the Traveller Strategy and violence against women. The Home Office figures reported 3 million women had violence against them and 5-10k suffered domestic violence. The Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) members of the Community Forum felt that they were unfairly represented. Some of the statistics were doubted.
- Letters published in the Argus against the proposed budget cuts for Meals on Wheels and the closure of some of the public toilets.

7.2 Harry Steer:

- Would feedback about a potential co-optee for the OPC.

7.3 Colin Vincent:

- Attended a Health, public meeting organised by Pensioner Action.
- Attended a meeting on Care Home Contracts which provided information for carers visiting Care Homes.
- Attended the Palliative Care Project with partners.
- Took part in the Local Account consultation on behalf of the OPC with Philip Letchfield.
- Would investigate further on the alternatives to the closure of St Patricks.

7.4 Colin Carden:

- Had been contacted by the Communities and Equalities team in relation to neighbourhood councils. The information needed to be forwarded to the Chair for his response.

7.5 Peter Terry

- Attended the Eastern Road Partnership meeting where there where a speaker presented information on Drug and Alcohol Abuse within older people.

7.6 Mike Bojczuk:

- The Crisis in Care- House of Commons White Paper due in April proposed for providing care. It would be useful to find out what the issues could be in relation to the proposals.
- Facilitated the meeting for the Palliative Care Project, King's College, London. A draft response had been sent.
- Letter published in the Argus on housing proposals and ensuring future plans also included housing for the older people.

- Requested it would be useful to have links to all council services and link to the OPC website so users could access information such as fuel efficiency, active for life etc...

7.7 Jack Hazelgrove:

- Renew links on intergenerational work and favoured a further meeting with the Youth Council
- A PHD student needed an older person to film for a Dementia project. Colin Carden volunteered.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 The work programme was agreed for the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of