

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

10.15am 19 MARCH 2013

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MINUTES

Present: Jack Hazelgrove (Chair), Francis Tonks, Mike Bojczuk, Val Brown, John Eyles, Harry Steer and Colin Vincent

Co-opted Members: Marion Couldery, Penny Morley and Janet Wakeling

Others Present: Councillors Geoffrey Bowden and Rob Jarrett, Sue Howley (Pensioner Action)

PART ONE

116. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Jack Hazelgrove, welcomed council members and attendees to the public meeting including Paula Murray recently appointed Assistant Chief Executive.

Apologies: Kat Pearce, Age UK Brighton & Hove. Isla Robertson, Pensioners Association and Marion Couldery, OPC

117. DISCUSSION ON THE CITY'S EMERGING CULTURAL STRATEGY

117.1 Paula Murray (Commissioner for Culture and Assistant Chief Executive) identified the main reasons why it was important for the city to refresh its cultural strategy.

117.2 The current strategy was out of date; it had some good content but needed to be updated. There had been major changes both locally and nationally in terms of funding and some major developments locally that needed to be reflected in a new document. For example there were major plans for Circus Street (dance centre), Brighton Dome working more closely with Brighton Pavilion and expansion at Brighton University.

117.3 The financial climate was also something that needed to be now reflected in an updated strategy. There had been cuts to public funding for cultural activities and there could be more to come.

117.4 There were also a range of new priorities in the city which needed to be incorporated; the WHO Age-Friendly City application raising the agenda for older people in Brighton & Hove for example, employment, drug use, alcohol-related harm, children and young people, vulnerable families and particular health issues such as obesity and mental health.

117.5 An estimated 10 -11% of jobs and 20% of businesses in the city relate to culture. The special importance of culture – why people come to Brighton & Hove and stay here - helped the local economy to thrive as part of the overall tourism industry that brought in around £730 million a year to the city.

117.6 Other strategies linked with Culture - the Seafront Strategy and Sports Facilities Strategy were currently being consulted on.

117.7 The Commissioner Culture said the overarching ambition of the strategy was to 'make people's lives better' or 'improve life for everyone'. The strategy would be structured under just three major themes of jobs, engagement and wellbeing. She asked OPC to suggest where there were gaps, where 'things weren't happening,' and how to create opportunities for participation or volunteering and make the most of the social capital of older people.

117.8 OPC members saw the strategy as a means to help combat social isolation that many older people in the city face. It was pointed out that many older people would like to volunteer if the opportunity arose to do so; that would benefit the health of the older person and the community as a whole. Greeters were generally older people with life experience who had particular skills and knowledge, including specialisms such as archaeology.

117.9 Members commented that Brighton was viewed as mainly a city for young people and warned against the perception that older people – around 47,000 City residents over 60 years of age – could be excluded from activities. As older people's personal budgets are being squeezed, many are priced out of entertainment such as theatres. Discounts and concessions for activities for older people would be helpful

117.10 Schemes such as the Duke of York's 'Silver Screen' were successful and council members suggested it would be of mutual benefit if other venues could introduce similar schemes aimed at older people. The 'grey pound' could extend the City's summer tourist season into October and beyond and buildings with spare capacity could be taken up eg for more daytime community activities.

117.11 Concerns among the members included the reduction in sports facilities or programmes for older people with the example of the recent closure of some bowls clubs given. The example of free swimming for all over 60s was also given as an example of good practice in other local authority areas. In addition, older people may tend to live on the outskirts of the city; limited mobility and transport to venues could be barriers to attending events in the city centre. Signage for venues – such as the Old Market, could be improved.

117.12 Members commented on the success of former twinning programmes with European towns; exchange visits gave older people opportunities for trips abroad that they would otherwise not embark on. It was felt that there was scope for closer working with the EU and internationally, for example following the London Olympic games.

117.13 It was noted that the OPC had not worked with Europe since an initial visit to Denmark when the OPC was first formed. There were still opportunities for applications for Interreg funding.

117.14 Members discussed the role and audience of 'Grey Matters' radio broadcasts and the importance of creating a verbal archive of older peoples' memories.

117.15 Councillor Bowden commented that The Keep had resources to record verbal history and needed people to come forward with their memories. More needed to be done to harness the energy and enthusiasm of older people, who had a special role to play in volunteering eg in museums, libraries and the visitor economy, he said. Councillor Bowden agreed that attending matinee performances would be more cost-effective for people on a fixed pension and felt that some venues would be willing to try new ways to attract older visitors.

117.16 Councillor Rob Jarrett said he would like to be involved in a 'Grey Matters' broadcast and would look to spread the word. Similarly he said, an ageing population was a rich source of interviews and programmes on Local TV.

117.17 The Chair Jack Hazelgrove was pleased with a most animated discussion on the cultural strategy and invited the speaker to a future meeting, as the strategy developed.

118. FUTURE FUNDING FOR OLDER PEOPLES' ACTIVITIES

118.1 A presentation was given by Jane MacDonald, Commissioning Manager for Adult Social Care on a new way of contracting services, such as day services, befriending services and neighbourhood support.

118.2 The new 'prospectus' model had been used in other areas such as Birmingham, the Isle of Wight and East Sussex. It is a different way to contract services in that that it draws into the procurement process a value on the provision of wider social benefits to the community in which the business operates. In evaluating bids, equal weighting is given to cost, quality and social capital (such as volunteering opportunities, apprenticeships, placements for students.)

118.3 The aim of the provision of services is to meet three key criteria; Supporting people to be as independent as possible, Reducing social isolation and Help people to remain healthy and well for as long as possible.

118.4 The new procedure enables engagement between the local authority and service providers as to the outcomes needed. It enables creativity and innovation, in particular through linking up organisations, including with the for-profit and council-provided sectors. This leads to better use (or 'layering') of services, buildings and facilities including transport, that at present have 'spare' capacity.

118.5 Examples include day centres, lunch clubs and care homes that arrange activities for older people, sharing of minibus transport.

118.6 Three geographical areas of the City will each be allocated in the region of £120,000 for services, there would be a further sum of almost £100,000 for a citywide co-ordination service to ensure activities are provided where they are needed.

118.7 OPC members raised points on demographics and where vulnerable elderly people live, and the means of communicating with them.

118.8 It had to be recognised that some older people wish to remain firmly independent, so it was felt that the presentation of this new approach needed modifying, to be encouraging and positive along the lines that 'services are available for everyone who needs them and would like them.'

118.9 Councillor Jarrett said suggestions from OPC were welcome up to mid-April. Work with organisations and service users was on-going with an 'open mind' to help inform the bidding process. Three-year contracts starting in April 2014 would be awarded this autumn.

118.10 OPC would like to be kept informed of developments as they happen.

119. OPC MINUTES AND ROUND-UP

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2013 were agreed

The Chair had written to Peter Terry thanking him and wishing him well.

Councillor Geoffrey Bowden said OPC now has more access with a seat at planning committee, where there is an issue of interest to older people eg disabled parking bays, lifts.

John Eyles volunteered to take a special interest in the combined Transport and Environment Committee.

Harry Steer volunteered to take up again his former role as OPC treasurer.

A nursing home application at Court Farm has been refused on issues of safe access. There was concern that more nursing homes are needed in the city.

Francis Tonks had attended meetings with Link, Pensioner Action, Age UK Brighton & Hove and Community Safety Forum.

Mike Bojczuk attended a meeting of the Forum on Ageing. OPC have been offered a stand at the city summit 'Future Challenges for Adult Social Care' on 11 June. Colin Vincent and Janet Wakeling and other volunteers to help.

At the Age Friendly City user forum, a survey will be put together of what older people would like from services. Can be used at the Brighton Festival

John Eyles had attended a public access public meeting and is co-optee on the public toilet scrutiny panel.

Val Brown had attended a culture committee meeting.

Penny Morley raised concern over building of new student accommodation in a residential area.

The blog on OPC website needs updating.

120. OPC WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

The process of filling vacancies on OPC is to be agreed and written into the constitution.

Chief Executive Penny Thompson to be invited to speak at an OPC meeting.

23 April OPC meeting to invite a speaker from the European Parliament Information Office on engaging with the EU. Plus a session on the Biosphere consultation

21 May OPC meeting – Nick Hibberd to be invited as Head of City Regeneration
Plus Annie Alexander re Age Friendly City

18 June Public OPC meeting on Health issues and changes.

121. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 1.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of