

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 9 SEPTEMBER 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Phillips and Pidgeon

Co-opted Members: Steve Lawless, LINK

PART ONE

14. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

14A Declaration of Substitutes

14.1 There were none.

14B Declarations of Interest

14.2 There were none

14C Declarations of Party Whip

14.3 There were none

14D Exclusion of Press and Public

14.4 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was 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 section 100I (1) of the said Act.

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

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

15.1 RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2010 be approved as a correct record.

16. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

16 Chairman's Communications

16.1 The Chairman welcomed new members Councillor Alex Phillips and the Local Involvement Network representative, Steve Lawless, to the Committee.

16.2 The Chairman also told the Committee that the first panel meeting for the new scrutiny review panel looking at services for adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions had been held. The panel had been very lucky to have a presentation from Professor Jeremy Turk, from the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. The next meeting was scheduled for 24 September 2010.

17. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

17.1 There were none.

18. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS & NOTICES OF MOTION

18.1 There were none.

19. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT SESSION ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE & THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

19.1 Denise D'Souza, Acting Director of Adult Social Care, presented a training session on adult social care and the voluntary sector and responded to members' questions.

19.2 In response to a query regarding the role of the Partnership Board in identifying service gaps, the committee heard that the Board provided a helpful challenge in terms of personalisation. Ms D'Souza said that she was keen on exploring the social capital model to support city initiatives; a paper was going to the next Partnership Board regarding the model.

19.3 In response to a query about the likely budget for next year's work, the committee heard that it was not possible at this stage to commit to a figure. The budget was made up of a number of budgets including Mental Health grants, carers; grants and AIDS support grants which were all being reviewed. However it was fully recognised that it was equally important to carry out low level, early stage prevention work in order to avoid problems escalating and becoming more resource intensive.

Ms D'Souza offered to come to the committee in six months to talk about the budget. This was welcomed.

19.4 In response to a query about local decision making on budgets, members heard that a number of commissioning plans went to the PCT; some were consulted on with third

sector organisations. There was a real opportunity for third sector groups to look at the options for future work and innovative ways of working. The Compact included a framework for third sector commissioning which was adhered to. Ms D'Souza offered to share a list of the third sector organisations with which Adult Social Care was currently involved with the Committee. This was welcomed.

19.5 There was a query about the involvement of social enterprises; what checks were made to ensure that they were not profit making. Members were assured that all social enterprises would be fully investigated before being used; this would include looking at references etc.

19.6 In response to a query about the difference between Intelligent Commissioning and the way in which Adult Social Care currently commissioned services, the committee heard that Intelligent Commissioning pilots involved a wide range of partners to look at the total pathway. It was a very different approach to commissioning.

The pilots had been designed to test the Intelligent Commissioning process; a report would be taken to the Partnership Service Board shortly to hear about their progress and lessons learnt.

Intelligent Commissioning involves working with partner organisations including third sector and other statutory partners. In Brighton and Hove, within Adult Social Care the 'back office' functions had already been minimised as far as possible so it was necessary to look at how to work in a smarter proportionate way..

19.7 Ms D'Souza was thanked for her presentation and the information that she had provided.

20. PERSONALISATION AND PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST - A CVSF PERSPECTIVE

20.1 Geraldine des Moulins gave feedback on behalf of the CVSF. Ms des Moulins said that although it was the case that disabled people had taken a lead on personalisation, this was the whole CVSF's perspective.

20.2 Comments included:

- it was felt that there was an over-focus on council processes, although the Resource Allocation System was necessary
- there had been plans to have a Big Conversation in the city, but this had not happened and it was not known why
- there was no sense of what was happening
- the third sector needed help with business planning & transformation funding so they could prepare for personalisation.
- it was felt that the third sector had not had the steer that they had needed
- the brokerage service had not been very successful
- what was the council's plan for personalisation?
- what was the role of the Personalisation Programme Board?
- the council's personalisation section had grown quite large
- the sector was glad to see the return of work planning/ mapping

- some myth-busting was needed
- good news stories were needed

20.3 Ms des Moulins said that there was a Future Funding Day including a personalisation workshop on 23 November 2010; members were welcome to attend.

20.4 Ms des Moulins responded to questions from the committee.

20.5 Members asked if there were any reasons that the CVSF felt the structure was wrong. Ms des Moulins said there had not been many clear steers coming from the council and that a lot of the problems seemed to concern communication and the cascading of information.

Ms D'Souza said that there had been a change of personnel within the council; this had impacted on the role of the Partnership Board. Ms D'Souza was going to look at this as well as the role of the workforce outside of the council.

20.6 Members asked about service users' perspectives and any problems that they might be experiencing. The Committee was told that a major problem locally was that it was proving hard to find Personal Assistants due to the cost of living in the city and the low wages that people were able to pay.

The CVSF has a supported bank accounting service and would carry out the payroll function for service users.

Steve Lawless gave some information about the LINK's role in consultation and advocacy. There was a difference between brokerage and advocacy.

20.7 Ms des Moulins said that, when personalisation works for the service user, it works very well. It does help to transform lives, although it needed to be remembered that it was not suitable for everyone. When evaluating Intelligent Commissioning pilots, it was important to note the added value that the third sector brought. If less money came to the sector, there would be fewer services.

20.8 The Committee thanked Ms des Moulins for her report, it was very important information. The Committee needed to keep up to date with personalisation so it would be useful to have an update report in six months. Could a referral be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission about working with the third sector?

20.9 **RESOLVED** – (a) that a report come back to Committee in six months and (b) that a referral be made to OSC about working with the third sector.

21. PROPOSALS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE REDESIGN & THE IMPACT ON CITY SERVICES

21.1 Ms D'Souza presented the report on behalf of the PCT as they had been unable to attend the meeting. The committee heard that HOSC was looking at this subject in detail; this presentation was mainly for the purposes of information.

- 21.2 Members asked about the timing of the plans; would the supported housing elements be in place in time. Ms D'Souza said that a number of the elements were already in place. It was key to have the list of subjects at 3.3 in the report in place.
- 21.3 Members asked whether there had been any problems in the joint funding arrangements. They heard that there was a pooled budget that did have a slight overspend.
- 21.4 **RESOLVED** - members noted the report

22. IN-YEAR GRANT REDUCTIONS - ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING

- 22.1 Jugal Sharma, Assistant Director of Housing, presented the report and answered questions from the Committee. Mr Sharma said that the £164.000 reduction represented 1-2% of the total supporting people grant for the city. Members heard that an equality impact assessment had been undertaken before making the reductions.
- 22.2 Members asked whether the council could add its voice to the calls asking for the Supporting People grant to remain ringfenced. Any loss of funding would impact on the most vulnerable residents in the city. The committee was told that Councillor Maria Caulfield was very keen to see the Supporting People programme stay intact; representations had been made to central Government.
- 22.3 Members asked where the underspend had come from? They heard that a service closure had taken place as a third sector hostel had had a serious fire and so the council funding was returned. Another third sector provider had returned funding as they had been unable to fill accommodation places that had been funded by the council.

Central Government expected the service to be mainstreamed in the long-term and the department was making provision for how to meet the underspend in future years.

- 22.4 There seemed to be a contradiction between points 3.2 and 3.3; were posts at risk? Mr Sharma said that 'consultation' was a formal process that had to be followed but it had found that there would be no impact on jobs or on front line services.
- 22.5 **RESOLVED** - to refer the report to the Scrutiny Review Panel, noting the Committee's concerns as to how the funding will be met next year. It was agreed that the relevant minutes from this committee would be forwarded to the Panel.

23. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2009/10

- 23.1 Karin Divall presented the report to the Committee and answered questions. Highlights from the Safeguarding report included a 50% increase in safeguarding alerts to Adult Social Care; 1288 were investigated by Adult Social Care. Most referrals were made from other public sector partners. The focus for the year ahead was about how to make the service more accessible for members of the public.
- 23.2 Members asked why there had been a 50% increase in alerts. They heard that the increases had been across the board, and not in one service area in particular. Adult

Social Care had been working with Health to increase awareness of the safeguarding procedure; this was likely to have resulted in the increase in alerts.

In addition, the introduction of Access Point was likely to have led to more alerts being made as there was a central point to contact, with known systems.

- 23.3 Members asked about the resource implications for the increased level of alerts. Ms Divall said that it was about looking at a proportionate response to an alert; in many cases it could be managed at Access Point, which would then free up social workers to deal with more involved cases. Similarly, many Level One alerts could be dealt with in-house where appropriate. In addition, the department had invested in a new role to work proactively to improve safeguarding in residential homes; one person would be employed to lead this service improvement.
- 23.4 Members suggested whether it would be possible to introduce a Circle of Support system for older people, as happened in Learning Disability Services already. Ms Divall said that this would be hugely resource intensive as there were 37 000 older people in the city, although not all of them would require intervention. The team was trying to raise public awareness of abuse and the roles of neighbours and communities.
- 23.5 Members asked whether the level of 25.8% of referrals being unsubstantiated was too high or too low. Ms Divall said that the CQC's recent inspection commented on the level. The council was doing some work to look at the data to try and understand why this was the case.
- 23.6 The CQC had recognised that Brighton and Hove was performing well, how did this compare with other authorities? Ms Divall said that the council currently sat comfortably in comparison to other authorities but they were not complacent. An action plan was being drawn up to take plans forward, including the work regarding the unsubstantiated allegations and trying to pre-empt level 4 investigations.
- 23.7 The Chair of the Committee asked for the Committee's thanks to be passed on to the staff for their hard work and recognition by CQC.
- 23.8 **RESOLVED** - to pass the relevant minutes of the committee to Ms Divall for the attention of the Safeguarding Board.
- 24. UPDATE ON THE DEMENTIA SCRUTINY PANEL**
- 24.1 Councillor Wrighton spoke as a member of the panel and introduced the report to the committee. She thanked Giles Rossington, Senior Scrutiny Officer, for his hard work. The report had been endorsed by the Commission and the majority of the recommendations were going to the Partnership Group and JCB in November. The panel could report back on implementation in the New Year (add to work plan)
- 24.2 Councillor Pidgeon commented that the report had been very well received at OSC.
- 24.3 **RESOLVED** - to note the report and the recommendations

25. SUGGESTED SCRUTINY REVIEW PANELS FOR 2010/11

- 25.1 Tom Hook, Head of Scrutiny, presented a report outlining the suggested scrutiny review panels for Adult Social Care & Housing for the forthcoming year. Mr Hook explained that it was recommended that the Private Sector Housing item be the first choice; it had come from a Notice of Motion at council and had cross party support. He said that other suggested topics had been the subject of recent work locally or changes in national legislation; it would be prudent for the committee to keep a watching brief on these items.
- 25.2 The committee members discussed the suggested items, focussing on the private sector housing suggestion.

Regarding the private sector housing suggestion, comments included:

there were some concerns over the suggestion; what would the benefits be to reviewing this item, the council had very little jurisdiction in private sector lettings. Mr Hook said that it was for the panel to decide its own remit but if it had been decided to look at the private sector housing issue, it might be useful to look at good practice etc.

Members commented that it might be useful to look at the affordability of living in the city before focussing on private sector agents. There were already a number of incentives in place for landlords to be reputable and provide a quality service. Could the scrutiny panel cover both topics together?

There had been media coverage about the levels of charges made by letting agents; in Brighton and Hove a high number of people used letting agents. Could this be an opportunity for the council to lobby on behalf of those affected?

Ms D'Souza commented that an issue that was just arising was vulnerable people living in private rented accommodation and waiting for repairs etc. There tended to be a very poor level of service. Members agreed to look at the quality of service for the most vulnerable people in the city.

Members agreed to take the private letting agent suggestion forward, encompassing the various issues raised.

- 25.3 **RESOLVED** - that the Adult Social Care & Housing Committee take forward the Private Sector Letting Agency scrutiny panel suggestion.

26. CURRENT ASCHOSC WORKPLAN

- 26.1 Slight changes were made to the agenda for November's committee as there was a duplicated item.

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

- 27.1 There were none.

28. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

28.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 6.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of