

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 24 JUNE 2010

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Meadows (Chairman); Wrighton (Deputy Chairman), Allen, Janio, Kemble, Barnett and Harmer-Strange

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1A Declaration of Substitutes

- 1.1 Councillor Dawn Barnett announced that she was attending as a substitute for Councillor Averil Older.

Councillor Steve Harmer-Strange announced that he was attending as a substitute for Councillor Brian Pidgeon.

Councillor Alex Phillips sent her apologies; she was unable to attend due to a clash with another committee.

1B Declarations of Interest

- 1.2 Councillor Harmer-Strange declared a non-prejudicial interest in item 7 – Training Session; Rents as a member of the Board of Seaside Homes.

1C Declarations of Party Whip

- 1.3 There were none

1D Exclusion of Press and Public

- 1.4 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.

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

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 **RESOLVED** - that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2010 be approved as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 There were none.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

4.1 There were none

5. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

5.1 There were none.

6. NOTICES OF MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

6.1 There were none.

7. TRAINING SESSION: RENTS

7.1 Sue Chapman, Head of Financial Services, presented a training session on rent setting for local authority and registered social landlord (RSL) properties and responded to members' questions.

7.2 In response to a query regarding whether the property value in the calculation was updated periodically, members heard that this was not the case as the formula had been designed to use the original 1999 valuation. The only exception to this was in the case of local authorities who had had properties in poor condition in 1999, and who had failed the Decent Homes Standard. If the local authority had renovated its properties, they had been able to apply for a revaluation.

7.3 In relation to a question about the discrepancy between RSL rents and local authority property rents, the committee heard that it was generally the case that RSL rents were higher than local authority rents. Currently RSL rents for one bedroomed properties were approximately 13% higher than local authority rents whilst RSL rents for two bedroomed properties were approximately 20% higher. The Government's system was designed so that the differing rents would converge at a future point; this was being managed in stepped rent increases each year.

7.4 Members asked whether it would be possible for the council to negotiate with RSLs about their rent levels. They heard that this was not possible and that it was the case that local authority rents were moving up towards the level of RSL rents, rather than RSL rents decreasing towards local authority rent levels.

- 7.5 Members also heard that both local authorities and RSLs had the option to charge new tenants rent at the highest available level. However if local authorities did so, this would negatively impact the level of subsidy received so there was a disincentive to do so. For RSLs, this was not the case, and they were able to keep any rent charged. Brighton and Hove City Council had chosen not to charge new tenants a higher rent level at this time.
- 7.6 Members expressed concern about how Housing Benefit levels might be affected by announcements in the new budget. They requested a training session be scheduled on Housing Benefits and how this affected affordability of properties in the city.
- 7.7 Members thanked Ms Chapman for her informative presentation.

8. TRANSFERS OF CARE FROM HOSPITAL

- 8.1 This item was introduced by Denise D'Souza, Acting Director, Adult Social Care and Health, and Jane Simmons, Head of Commissioning, and Partnerships. PCT colleagues had been unable to attend this committee meeting but would be willing to come to a future session to discuss the topic if Members wished.
- 8.2 The committee heard that in previous years, there had been a significant problem with delayed transfers of care in the city, with a number of people having to wait over 100 days to be transferred out of hospital. However work had been carried out to address this and delayed transfer time was now reduced to a level of between 13 and 20 days.

There was now a proposal to reduce the numbers of delayed transfers of care even further to fewer than eight people per week. It was unrealistic to assume that there could be a situation with no delays at all but it was important to work to reduce them as far as possible.

Members asked for recent figures for delayed transfers of care from hospital to be circulated; this was agreed.

- 8.3 Members asked questions on a number of issues including the pressures on the social work teams at the hospital, care packages, assessing care needs, making the decision to discharge someone from hospital, weekend discharge arrangements and coordination with health colleagues.
- 8.4 In response to a query about pharmacy delays, members heard that this was still an issue and it was not uncommon to have several hours' delay for medicine to be issued. This impacted on the time taken to discharge patients from hospital and meant that the bed may be unavailable for other patients' use. In Brighton and Hove, patients were moved to discharge lounges in such situations, so that drugs could be issued to the patients and the bed freed up for another patient.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED – to note the report.**

**9. HEALTH INEQUALITIES - REFERRAL FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMISSION**

9.1 This item was introduced by Martin Reid, Head of Housing Strategy and Development and Andy Staniford, Housing Strategy Manager.

9.2 Members heard that there was substantial evidence to show that poor quality housing affected peoples' health but that there was little evidence to show that improved quality housing led to improved health. This was a nationally recognised discrepancy and work was being done in various cities to gather data.

A Housing and Health Inequalities Group had been established in Brighton and Hove to look at the topic, involving officers from Housing, Adult Social Care and from Health.

9.3 Members heard about a number of initiatives that had been introduced locally and cost benefits analyses that had been carried out. These included:

- A cost benefit analysis of the Supporting People programme had been carried out; nationally, this showed that for every £1 spent on Supporting People, £2 was saved in other public spending costs. In Brighton and Hove, this saving was increased to £3.24 for every £1 spent.
- National research suggests that in a city the size of Brighton, slips and falls around the home and excess cold are expected to cost the NHS around £8m per annum (in addition to the impact on the quality of life of those affected) with the cost of works to remedy these issues being estimated at around £2m. Additionally, the cost to the NHS is estimated to represent only around 40% of the cost to society from these issues. Further research is being planned to determine if this national model reflects the reality in Brighton & Hove.
- Members heard about a 'repairs on prescription' service that was being piloted, linking the PCT and Private Sector Housing to deal with poor quality housing issues that affected residents' health.
- Age Concern was trialling a scheme researching involvement with health services over an extended period of time, to assess whether investment in home improvements had a positive effect on someone's health service take-up. The council was also looking at a similar toolkit to be used by hostel residents, drug and alcohol clients, and rough sleepers.

9.4 PCT commissioners were very keen to be involved with the health inequality work, recognising that it was important to try and tackle issues before they became problems for the city.

9.5 Members asked questions about the funding for various programmes, recognising that the Supporting People budget was no longer being ring fenced. They heard that various funding strategies were being considered, including a new loan system and the possibility of working with energy companies.

- 9.6 Members were interested to hear more about the Housing and Health Inequalities Group, and asked for a report to come to the Committee in six months time.

Members also expressed an interest in linking more with LSP groups covering housing and adult social care; it was agreed that representatives would be invited to future Committee meetings.

9.7 RESOLVED – that members

(i) noted the contents of the Audit Commission Health Inequalities report, and

(ii) determined what additional action to be taken in monitoring the implementation of the plan.

10. LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REGARDING POSSIBLE CO-OPTION OF A BRIGHTON & HOVE LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (LINK) MEMBER

- 10.1 Members discussed the possible co-option of a Brighton and Hove LINK member to ASCHOSC as a non-voting co-optee.

- 10.2 Members heard that the LINK remit had been recently extended to cover Adult Social Care and that they had a legal right to sit on the Committee under the Local Government Involvement in Health Act. It was felt that a LINK representative could provide a valuable link between agencies and that the Committee would benefit from having the group represented.

- 10.3 **RESOLVED – that a LINK representative be invited to join the Committee as a non-voting co-optee.**

11. ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING WORK PROGRAMME

- 11.1 The work programme was noted.

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

- 12.1 There were none.

13. ITEMS TO GO FORWARD TO COUNCIL

- 13.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 5.50pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of