

ADULT AND COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2010

Present:

Councillor Judi Ellis (Chairman)
Councillor Roger Charsley (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Reg Adams, Ruth Bennett, Peter Fookes,
William Huntington-Thresher, Diana MacMull,
Charles Rideout and Diane Smith

Dr Angela Bhan, Angela Clayton-Turner, Richard Lane,
Leslie Marks, Keith Marshall, Lynne Powrie and Gill Rose

Also Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur and Councillor Catherine
Rideout

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Diana MacMull and Mrs Leslie Marks.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of Item 9a, Councillor William Huntington-Thresher declared a personal interest as a member of the Board of Broomleigh.

In respect of Item 11, Mr Keith Marshall declared a personal interest as a Blue Badge user.

19 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

Mr and Mrs Mott attending the meeting to ask three questions and these are attached as **Appendix A**.

20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22nd JUNE 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes from the meeting held on 22nd June 2010 be agreed.

21 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report LDCS10130

The Committee considered a report providing an update on recommendations from previous meetings.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dimond for his detailed response to the Committee's question relating to locked wards at Green Parks House.

The Chairman also reported that the Executive and Resources PDS Committee would be establishing a Working Group to review the use of Information Technology with regard to reducing the cost of Council services. The Chairman reported that she was part of the working group, as she believed Adult and Community Services used I.T more than many other services and felt it was useful to therefore engage with the work of the group.

Mrs Leslie Marks provided an update on the Mobility Forum which had held its first meeting earlier in the month.

RESOLVED that the progress on matters arising from previous meetings be noted.

22 PRESENTATION FROM AGE CONCERN BROMLEY: CARE BROKERAGE

Mrs Maureen Falloon, Chief Executive Age Concern Bromley, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to Members (attached at **Appendix B**) providing an update on the Age Concern Support Planning and Brokerage service for older people. The Committee also viewed a DVD which had been produced in partnership with London Councils to promote the service.

The Committee explored a number of issues following the presentation, including equality of access to the service particularly people from minority ethnic groups and men. Mrs Falloon confirmed that the service received a proportionate number of referrals from ethnic minority groups. Mrs Falloon acknowledged that men were less likely to seek help compared to women but Mrs Falloon highlighted that the service would also accept referrals from relatives which meant that the support team was able to engage with older males. The Committee was also told that referrals were accepted from General Practitioners and Age Concern had received very positive feedback from GPs.

The Committee also considered the current waiting times for the service and the capacity of the team. Mrs Falloon explained that when the service was first established it was agreed that a care manager from the local authority would be seconded for a time limited period to deal with the initial levels of demand. The secondment period had now ended but the service was still receiving the same level of demand.

The Director gave assurances that he would look into restoring the secondment. Following a question, Mrs Falloon explained that a team of individuals delivered this service including one full time (35 hours) Support Planner and volunteers to assist people once their support plan had been agreed. Age Concern Bromley had a strong network of 423 volunteers who supported people through support planning. .

The Director ACS reported that Bromley was committed to enabling people with care needs through support planning and brokerage and if savings could be demonstrated this would assist with future investment in the support planning and brokerage model.

The Portfolio Holder also identified that there were other services where the model developed for support planning and brokerage could be implemented to provide support to services users in other areas. The Portfolio Holder thanked Age Concern Bromley for the successful way that they had run the service and this was endorsed by the Committee.

23 QUESTIONS TO THE ADULT AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions to the Portfolio Holder were received.

24 PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The Committee noted decisions taken by the Portfolio Holder since the last meeting held on 22nd June 2010.

25 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Portfolio Holder provided the Committee with an update of the events and functions he had attended since the last meeting. These included:

- The launch of Disability Week in the Glades;
- Bromley Stars where a participant in the Job Carve scheme received a well deserved special commendation as most promising new employee;
- A briefing to new Members as part of the Induction process;
- The opening of Orpington High Street with the shared spaces, a model that would be used in other areas of the Borough;
- The opening of Biggin Hill Swimming Pool and Library by Prince Edward. The library and swimming pool had special disability access;
- A reception of Volunteer Workers;
- The Safeguarding Adults Conference.

**A) REVIEW OF ALLOCATIONS POLICY & HOUSING REGISTER
BANDING
Report ACS10046**

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing an update on the scope and progress made to date in respect of the review of the Housing Allocations Policy, together with key findings resulting from the preparatory consultation exercises undertaken across internal and external partners and a range of service users. The report also outlined the proposed revisions to the Policy needed to fulfil the latest statutory guidance in respect of housing allocations and ensuring the operation of a fit for purpose allocations scheme as well as proposals to change the Banding of applicants.

The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers for the clarity that it had brought to Members. Members noted that it was very important for residents to have clarity about how the Housing Allocations Policy and Housing Register Banding worked.

A Member suggested that some of the eligibility criteria should be reviewed in order to manage the expectations of service users. The Member suggested that the age limit for two children of the same gender sharing the same room should be increased to 18 years as this was not unreasonable. Officers confirmed that the Housing Benefit standard had been adopted when compiling the report but an alternative option was to adopt bedroom standards. Officers highlighted to the Committee that a questionnaire would be distributed with the policy for consultation and Members were encouraged to record any suggestions in the questionnaire.

The Committee considered the issue of under occupation in older age groups and Officers outlined the practical support that was provided to residents to help them identify more suitable accommodation. This included support in locating accommodation of a more suitable size and help with the costs of moving.

Members also considered the issue of letting plans and the appropriateness of accommodation, especially the appropriateness of high rise accommodation for families with young children. Officers explained that in many cases this was a lifestyle choice and that residents had to balance their priorities against the types of properties that were available.

The Chairman requested that Members of the Committee be consulted about whether they would like to attend a further presentation about the housing Allocations Policy and the proposals for change detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio holder be recommended to note the report.

B) ACS BUDGET MONITORING 2010/2011
Report ACS10042

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report providing the budget monitoring position for the first two months of 2010/2011 for the Adult and Community Portfolio, based on expenditure and activity levels 31st May 2010.

The Interim Head of ACS Finance provided an overview of the report and highlighted that a £514,000 was currently forecast for the Adult and Community Portfolio.

The Director ACS reported that the department had been making short term adjustments to managing the Portfolio finances for the current year..

The Portfolio Holder stressed the need to challenge the levels of expectation of service users that were going through the process of transition for children's services as it was inevitable that there would be a change in the level of service that individuals received. The Portfolio Holder explained that the process of transition would have to be gradual but that it was essential for service users to gain an understanding of the change in the level of support from the Local Authority. The Portfolio Holder also highlighted to the Committee that the amount of LAA funding received by the Local Authority had been halved and this emphasised the need given the current economic climate to seriously consider the finances of the Department and the way that services were delivered.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note that a projected overspend of £514,000 is forecast for the Adult and Community Portfolio as at 31st May 2010.

26 BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD 2009/10
ANNUAL REPORT
Report ACS10045

The Committee considered a report providing an overview of the main issues raised from the 2009/10 Annual report of the Bromley Adult Safeguarding Board (BASB). The Annual Report outlined the work of the Board including oversight of the joint action to safeguard adults.

A Member questioned who had undertaken the independent review of safeguarding services. The Assistant Director (Strategy and Performance) explained that the review had been undertaken by a Government Office for London Associate who had extensive experience of safeguarding issues. The Local Authority had received a very positive response from the review.

Officers explained to the Committee how best practice was shared with other Boroughs and how the service was continually benchmarked with other Local Authorities. A network had also been developed amongst the Safeguarding

Adults Managers and through this network knowledge and information was shared.

The Chairman thanked Officers for the time and work that had been invested in producing the annual report.

RESOLVED that the Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board 2009/10 Annual Report be noted.

27 BLUE BADGE UPDATE
Report ACS10047

The Committee considered a report setting out the current arrangements for issuing discretionary Blue Badges. The Assistant Director (Commissioning and Partnerships) explained to the Committee that the eligibility criteria were very specific surrounding the level of disability. There were a number of factors that were taken into account and qualified Occupational Therapists carried out the assessments for Blue Badges. The Local Authority employed 1.5 Occupational Therapists who undertook work on assessments for Blue Badges, Freedom Passes and Taxi Cards. Applicants were normally advised that the waiting time for badges, for individuals who qualified, was 8 – 10 weeks. Reminders were sent out to badge holders when the badges were coming up for expiry and people were reminded that they may have to arrange an assessment.

Following a question from a Member, the Assistant Director (Commissioning and Partnerships) confirmed that additional Occupation Therapists had been employed to clear a peak in demand that had recently developed. The Committee was informed that the PCT was funding the additional costs of the locum therapists.

The Committee considered the financial value of a Blue Badge and Members considered ways in which abuse of the blue badges could be minimised. Officers confirmed that parking attendants had the authority to check the identity of a blue badge holder.

The Committee also considered whether the Local Authority should continue to provide free parking in Council owned car parks for blue badge holders. The Director ACS stressed that the issue of charging for parking in Council owned car parks was down to the discretion of the Local Authority and charging was something that the Council could consider. The Chairman suggested that the issue be referred to Environmental Services for review.

A Co-opted Member raised the issue of parking for people with advanced dementia. People suffering from this condition may have problems with special awareness which would mean that getting in and out of a car was difficult. The Chairman suggested that as the criteria for blue badges was very specific, supermarkets should be approached in order to secure larger parking spaces for a range of people with more limited mobility. The Chairman also raised the issue of hospital car parking for people attending

hospitals for various treatments. The Committee agreed that it would be difficult for patients to use public transport following various treatments and as a result of the changes in health services it was likely that patients would have to travel further for treatment.

The Chairman asked that Officers provide a further update to the Committee in six months.

RESOLVED that the current arrangements for the issue of discretionary Blue Badges be noted.

**28 REFERENCE REPORT FROM AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE:
TRANSITION TEAM
Report LDSC10103**

At its meeting on 23rd March 2010, the Audit Sub-Committee received an update regarding a review of the Transition Team and a number of recommendations, including one priority one recommendation, which had been made. Members expressed concern over the findings of the audit and the issues which had been raised and questioned whether the issues could be related to the operation of the Carefirst Management Information System and felt that, overall, the findings of the audit should be referred to the Adult and Community Services PDS Committee for consideration.

The Director ACS reported that the problems identified by the Audit Sub-Committee had been addressed and resolved.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**29 UPDATE FROM CO-OPTED MEMBERS
Report LDSC10131**

At its meeting on 22nd June 2010, the Adult and Community PDS Committee asked its Co-opted Members to provide a brief outline of the organisations that they represent and the ways in which the work of the PDS Committee was reported back to the Local Authority's partners.

RESOLVED that the updates provided by the Co-opted Members of the Adult and Community Services PDS Committee be noted.

**30 WORK PROGRAMME
Report LDSC10136**

The Committee reviewed its Work Programme for 2010/2011. The Chairman requested that in September the Committee review a report outlining the issues raised in the Government's Health White Paper. The Chairman also requested that it be considered at the beginning of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Committee's Work Programme for 2010/2011 be noted.

31 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

32 REFERENCE REPORT FROM AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE: DIRECT PAYMENTS

The Committee considered and supported the recommendations in the report.

The Meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman