

Questions - for PR&G Committee Meeting on the 9th February

Fairness Commission Recommendations & Older People

The Older People's Council proposed that Brighton & Hove apply for Age Friendly City status with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and this was agreed by all parties when proposed by the Chair of the OPC at a full Council meeting in July 2012 and passed unanimously.

Since then the Fairness Commission recommended that BHCC consider the gaps identified by residents in relation to the Age Friendly City criteria and the development of a revised action plan by April 2017. They also recommended as part of a broader ambition, that Brighton & Hove should aim to become fully accessible city by 2020. This would include accessibility in the widest sense ranging from those with dementia to those who have no access to digital information.

Please can you inform us how these recommendations are being implemented and what resources are being allocated to ensure full accessibility of Brighton & Hove by 2020?

Lynne Shields

Tower House

When the decision was taken by the PR&G Committee to close Tower House commitments were given at the time that Councillors wished it to remain a community asset. The OPC were approached by a faith organisation, St Vincent de Paul, who wished to have the opportunity to run Tower House as a day centre for older people. Whilst there have been some discussions with Council officers, no decision has been made about the future of Tower House. We would like to know why, when a voluntary sector organisation has come forward with plans and some resources to put into the project no progress has been made. Please can we be given an assurance that every effort will be made for Tower House to continue as a community asset for older people in Brighton & Hove and can the public be given an update on discussions with the interested voluntary sector provider?

John Cook

Adult Social Care, Dementia & Mental Health facilities

There are huge budget cuts being proposed for adult social care of £4.741 million over the next four years. It is difficult to understand how BHCC will be able to fulfil its requirements as defined under the Care Act. This point is acknowledged in the Equality Impact Assessment which identifies the increased risk of legal challenge as a result of the cuts in service funding. Brighton & Hove now have 3,500 people diagnosed with dementia and it is now the largest cause of death. Everyone acknowledges that this number is likely to rise in future years. The budget proposes cuts to Ireland Lodge, a residential facility supporting individuals over 50 predominantly with dementia is inexplicable. The CQC report into this facility rated this service as Good and patients and families clearly value the service. There is also a proposed cut to Wayfield Avenue of £61,500 and this facility already had a cut of £100,000 in 2016/17. Also proposed is to consider closing the Day Centre as part of a service review. These facilities service some of our most vulnerable members of the community and we had understood that these are the very people that would be protected in this climate. Please can you explain how cutting finances to these facilities can possibly be acceptable given that BHCC is raising a 3% precept for adult social care services?

Colin Vincent

Community Transport

There is a proposal to cut £82,000 which represents a massive 65% of BHCC funding and is likely to undermine the Easylink shopping service. A survey of users of this service, the vast majority women, showed that the majority of users were over 70 years old with long term health needs. The loss of this service will increase social isolation yet no Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for this funding cut. The Equality Act 2010 requires that public authorities have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and they need to make sure that they have adequate evidence to enable them to understand the potential effects of their decisions on different people covered by the duty. They are required to do this before the decision is taken, not after the event. Please can you explain why this was not undertaken and why a valued service by older women in this city has been subject to such a swingeing cut with no prior consideration of its impact on these users?

Nick Goslet

