

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

10.15am 18 FEBRUARY 2014

ROOM 126, KING'S HOUSE

MINUTES

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

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

Others Present: Councillor Bowden

PART ONE

47. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

47.1 Apologies from Harry Steer and Jessica Sumner (Age UK, Brighton & Hove).

48. MINUTES

48.1 MC mentioned that she had just been made aware of the Hove Station Neighbourhood Area Forum and that it would be useful for the OPC to hear more about this.

48.2 **Action-** "Others present" to include Bea Gahagan (Age UK, Brighton & Hove).

48.3 **Action** -17 December 2013 minutes to be added onto the OPC website minutes.

49. BUDGET SCRUTINY

49.1 Giles Rossington (Acting Head of Scrutiny) sent his apologies and provided the brief in Appendix 1 – Budget Scrutiny 14/15:

49.2 PM reported that the Argus newspaper had asked what the OPC's view was on the budget. PM had reported that the OPC had met with the Leader of the Council and expressed concerns on the impact on Day Care Services. They were waiting for the revised budget. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) showed how there would be a £4 million shortfall for Adult Social Care. The EIA also reported that that more women were placed in older care than men.

49.3 Councillor Bowden informed OPC members that the Green Party were asking for a referendum to increase Council Tax by 4.5%, the Labour Party proposed a 2% increase and the Conservative Party 0%. With diminishing government funding the Green Party

wanted to give residents a vote. At the Policy & Resources Committee meeting the 1.99% Council tax increase was agreed and this would go forward to Full Council. The Green Party and Conservative Party will more than likely put forward their amendments to Full Council on the 27 February 2014.

- 49.4 There was a discussion about whether young people would be interested in voting for protecting services for the vulnerable and older people.
- 49.5 MC reported that the Council had a statutory responsibility to assess over 65 year olds for services; with increasing demands on services and diminishing funds there were vast concerns about how this would be delivered in the future.
- 49.6 JH informed members that the OPC were non-political party and it would be useful to put forward a statement to the press about the vast cuts to local government. Members agreed this.
- 49.7 Councillor Bowden updated members that there would be changes to the terms of commissioning for the Health & Wellbeing Board (HWB). Councillor Bowden suggested that the Board should have an OPC member to highlight how the impacts would affect older people.
- 49.8 Members felt that during the Budget process officers had made decisions on the budget prior to them presenting information to the OPC. Members felt they could have more impact if they were consulted with earlier in the budget process.
- 49.9 MC had concerns that the OPC were seen as reactive, which resulted in information being presented to them and the OPC commenting on this rather than shaping the decisions.

50. "PROJECTS" - ONGOING WORK

- 50.1 **Housing** – Martin Reid – Head of Housing Strategy and Development & Private Sector Housing had confirmed that he could attend the 18 March meeting. The purpose of this was to collate comments from the OPC to shape the new draft Citywide Housing Strategy.
- 50.2 PM produced a housing paper (see Appendix 2) which summarised the findings of the sheltered housing visit and also briefings from the Chair of Housing – Councillor Bill Randall and the Geoff Raw (Executive Director Environment Development & Housing).
- 50.3 This paper would be forwarded to Geoff Raw to input into the new draft for the Citywide Housing Strategy. The “Next steps” paper detailed how the OPC could continue this framework. Further housing visits could also be arranged with officers to keep abreast of housing matters. (PM reported that the Tenure information, within the report required updating before it was sent out).
- 50.4 Councillor Bowden suggested that this could be taken to the political parties who would be campaigning for the 2015 election to see if their manifesto’s could build in these housing items.

- 50.5 MC recommended that the paper could be used as a press release.
- 50.6 JW suggested visiting housing projects in Hove and Portslade with Peter Huntbach (Older Persons Housing Manager).
- 50.7 Councillor Bowden suggested that the OPC could use the criteria for Age Friendly City (AFC) to get all the political parties involved in delivering AFC status.
- 50.8 FT informed members of the colossal impact on tenants when the only lift broke down in a tower block and it took 2 months to repair. Councillor Bowden informed members that there was a multi-million pound new lift programme in place to prevent such situations happening again. JW confirmed that a people's forum in the Eye hospital brought up the breakdown of lifts as an issue too.
- 50.9 **Intergenerational meeting with the Youth Council** was arranged for 15 April; all OPC members would be attending. **Action-** Venue and agenda to be confirmed.
- 50.10 **AFC work-** PM had attended an event with different organisations eg. SICK festival, Silver Stories, which was a part of the AFC Communications Strategy.
- 50.11 VB informed members that the Brighton Women's Centre did not mention older people in their mission statement. The Centre should mention about working with older women and encouraging older women to use their services. A question was also asked whether the funding was received from Brighton & Hove City Council. **Action:** Find out how the Centre was funded.
- 50.12 **Ageing Better Lottery tender** – FT attended this with SH. The event was organised by Age UK and held at the Ebenezer Chapel. There was good involvement and innovative ways of information gathering.
- 50.13 **OPC Blog & Website** – MB gave an explanation of the OPC website and Blog and explained that users had requested a Blog. The Blog was meant for OPC members to put their comments under the particular Items. Subject matters included, Health, Community and City Planning. When inputting into the Blog members would need put their initials on to identify themselves and write the Blog as a member of the OPC rather than as an individual. The topics could be archived after a while. Users would need to log on and identify themselves to input into the Blog. OPC members would have rights to moderate the Blog and delete any comments from users.

Councillor Bowden advised to ask legal services to check the site out. **Action:** Arrange a meeting with Legal Services to do this.

Members were impressed with the changes to the website and agreed that the website should be simplified, the front page changed to include the OPC's mission statement and to include new tabs with the chosen subjects.

- 50.14 **Design for Older People** – MB updated that he had been in discussion with a Senior Lecturer about 4 second year Brighton University students who would be working on a project to design a product for older people. The students would need to meet the OPC at the beginning and during various stages of the project. It was suggested that this

design project could feed into the AFC criteria. The work would commence around September- October 2014. There were two topics:

- Using social media – how to stay in touch with family and friends- MC volunteered to help with this topic
- An illuminating path for the visually impaired – JW volunteered to assist with this topic.

50.15 **Grey Matters funding** – MB informed members that funding was £500 and there was a shortfall of £300. The Council position on future funding was that there was no decision taken on grants for 2014-2015. Age UK were partnership with OPC on funding Grey Matters. There were no statistics available on the numbers of listeners. Jack did a monthly broadcast. Costs covered the radio liability licence with Radio Reverb, studio hire costs and affiliation with the Arts Council. A recent visit to Somerset House confirmed that some of the residents did listen to Grey Matters. Members requested further information on the Grey Matters mission statement, annual accounts, and business plan. **Action** - Discuss at the next meeting.

51. OPC WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

51.1 Updates for the Work Programme :

- 18 March - Martin Reid (Head of Housing Strategy and Development & Private Sector Housing) will attend to collate comments for the new draft Citywide Housing Strategy.
- 22 April - Martin Randall (Head of Planning & Public Protection) to discuss Older People and Shoreham Harbour and also what Neighbourhood Plans were.

51.2 Information was requested about the venue on the 15 April. It was confirmed after the meeting, that the venue would be Brighton Town Hall, Rooms 2 & 3.

51.3 Members noted the work programme.

52. OPC MEMBERS WORK AREAS - WAYS OF WORKING

52.1 MB confirmed that this item was covered within Item 50 – “Projects” ongoing work.

53. MEMBER UPDATES

53.1 Members update:

- Hove Station Neighbourhood Planning Notice, to develop the plan to extend the area further to the east and west of the original plan.
- The OPC would receive feedback from the Women’s Centre at the next meeting.
- Members agreed to add a briefing on Neighbourhood Planning to Martin Randall’s (Head of Planning & Public Protection) presentation on the 22 April.
- There would be changes to the Health & Wellbeing Board. Councillor Bowden suggested that a member of the OPC should sit on this Board to ensure older people’s interests were taken into account.
- The final report for Budget Scrutiny Panel was heard at the 27 January 2014, Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

- Visited Somerset Day Centre, who may be affected by the Council's imminent budget savings.
- Transport meeting follow up for AFC.
- Next Pensioner magazine due out 11 March 2014.
- On the agenda for the next planning meeting was the application for the Royal York Hotel to be transformed to a youth hostel.
- The last Friday of every month the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) group for older people held a lunch and attendance was very good.
- Communities of the Level Forum (the Level Restoration Project) had asked FT to be the Chair.
- Future regular meetings to be set up for a Palliative Care Research Group, connected to the World Health Organisation.
- Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals (BSUH) were under huge pressures even though there had been mild weather.
- "Keep me posted" campaign had published the location of public toilets.
- Active for Life were promoting inexpensive taster sessions. Look on website for details.

54. BHCC COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - FUTURE DATES

54.1 The Council Committee timetable was distributed at the meeting.

55. SECRETARY UPDATE

55.1 Included in Item 53. Member update.

56. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

56.1 There was no other business.

57. APPENDIX 1

Budget Scrutiny 14/15

The basic parameters for 2014/15 budget scrutiny were agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) at its October 2013 meeting.

OSC decided that:

- The budget scrutiny panel should consist of one member from each of the political groups + one co-optee from Community Works (the panel could choose to agree further co-optees).
- The panel should hold three meetings in public – the first a high-level overview of strategic thinking with regard to the budget; the second and third more in-depth examinations of significant aspects of the budget plans.

- Panel members should agree the focus of meetings 2 and 3 following meeting 1 (OSC members suggested some possible areas of interest, including Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services)
- The panel should begin its work shortly after 05 Dec 13 (publication of the draft budget plans), and should present its report to OSC at its 27 Jan 14 meeting (meaning that the panel would need to agree a report by 20 Jan in order to meet OSC publication deadlines). Once the panel report was endorsed by OSC it would be referred to Budget Policy & Resources Committee (P&R) for consideration (13 Feb 2014).

The panel

Cllrs Gill Mitchell, Ollie Sykes and Dee Simson were nominated to the panel by their groups. Sally Polanski agreed to represent Community Works. (Sally was unable to make the first meeting date, and Jo Martindale subbed for her). Members agreed that Cllr Simson should chair.

The panel initially met with the CE and Leader of the council to get a strategic overview of budget planning. They then met with members and officers representing Children's Services, Public Health, Community Safety and Communities. Finally they met with members and officers representing Housing, Public Health and Adult Social Care.

Recommendations

The panel made a series of recommendations (see attached). In summary, members were particularly concerned about:

- Funding reductions to preventative services
- The cumulative impact of various savings on particularly vulnerable groups (esp. people with Learning Disabilities)
- The potential impacts on the Housing Revenue Account and the Direct Schools Grant of planned changes in funding arrangements
- The degree to which the council was actively planned to make more major structural changes when/if these become necessary

The panel report was presented to OSC on 27 Jan 14. It was endorsed by OSC and referred to P&R. A response is included in the Feb 13 budget papers.

Notes**Co-option**

OPC involvement as co-optee was mooted to OSC members in Oct 13 and subsequently to scrutiny panel members, but on both occasions declined. I can't speak for members, but I suspect that this was because: a) members thought it would be hard to co-opt the OPC without also offering places to other groups representing a particular constituency (e.g. Youth Council); b) members believed that the OPC had other means of presenting its views on the budget process.

It should be noted that the co-option of Community Works/CVSF is of several years' standing. It should also be noted that OSC members declined to repeat last year's co-option of the local

Chamber of Commerce. It's therefore clear, I think, that members wanted to minimise the number of co-optees on the scrutiny panel – rather than not wanting the OPC or any other specific group co-opted.

Deadlines

The timeframe for budget scrutiny is essentially circumscribed by the publication of draft budget papers (early Dec) and by Budget P&R (early Feb). There is little point in beginning the process earlier, as there would be no information to examine; and no capacity to influence P&R past the end of January, since P&R needs an absolute minimum of 14 days to respond to the scrutiny panel report.

This is a very challenging timeframe, and obviously not helped by having Christmas and New Year in the middle of it. In practical terms it means that members have very little time to agree a report or to liaise with partners or stakeholders. This is a major reason why we've been wary of co-optees – the more members on a panel then the more complex the process, and we've got very limited ability here to cope with anything other than an absolutely minimal level of complexity.

58. APPENDIX 2**HOUSING – A VIEW FROM BRIGHTON & HOVE OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL**

The Older Peoples Council (OPC) is particularly concerned to ensure that older people in Brighton & Hove can access high quality housing that meets their needs as they age. Nearly 18% of Brighton & Hove's population is over 60 and with projections for significant increases in the over 85 population in future years, it is clear that there needs to be a range of housing options provided for the future across both the public, social and private sectors. The City already has a higher than average number of people 85+ at 2.6%¹ with projections for this to increase by more than two thirds to 3.6% by 2035.

Current commitments to Older Peoples Housing

The Council is already committed in its Local Housing Investment Plan to ensure that older people are:-

- Able to access a mix of high quality housing suitable for their changing needs and aspirations
- Are supported to sustain their independence as members of the wider community
- Are able to access services and become involved in service development and decisions that affect them²

These aims are welcome but the OPC want to ensure that they are put into practice. We want to have input into any new developments that are undertaken and monitor how older people view their current housing provision.

Sheltered Housing

¹ Local Housing Investment Plan 2012-2015 Brighton & Hove City Council

² Local Housing Investment Plan 2012 -2015 Brighton & Hove City Council p38

Members of the Older Peoples Council visited a number of the Sheltered Housing schemes run by Brighton & Hove Council to meet with tenants in January 2014.³ Whilst any visit can only be a snapshot, discussions with tenants give an opportunity to explore a range of issues that affect tenants in sheltered housing.

Some of the issues that arose with older people in the schemes are outlined below with some relating to their own schemes and others to wider issues for older people within the City. These were as follows:-

- **Design of Buildings** – it is clear that there are changing needs for residents and for mobility scooters to be safely stored in buildings. This appears to be a factor not considered when some of the buildings were originally constructed. Future design of buildings needs to be undertaken with a wide range of consultation with current tenants to ensure that all aspects are considered. Lift access was also restricted in one block and not available on the top floor which had an obvious impact for those with restricted mobility. It was noted that studio flats were not favoured by women but single men were more likely to accept them. Overall, there is a debate whether very small accommodation (ie studio flats) is suitable for any older tenants. Also shared bathroom facilities needed phasing out and were not acceptable for older people.
- **Social Activities** – there are clear differences in schemes with some having a very active range of activities and participation from residents and others much quieter. The gender mix in projects also had a bearing on participation although this was varied. One project had health activities in the building but it was often older people not living in the scheme that participated. The amount of disability and the health of residents impacted on participation more than age in some cases.
- **Balanced Communities** – there is a debate to be had about the admission criteria to schemes at present and the likely future demand. Given the positive view of sheltered housing that many tenants have, there is a need to ensure that access and availability are widely known.
- **Links with communities** - One scheme has school children visiting on a regular basis and games of ping pong thereby integrating with the wider community. Another scheme had links with Brighton College and a donation had been made to the scheme for social activities. Art therapy courses were being explored and residents were keen to have wider connections. The resource centre had been providing support for social activities organised by the tenants and this was regarded as important. Tenants would self-organise but often needed support and assistance whether it is leaflets, IT or transport for trips.
- **Public Toilets** – There was a concern that Council offices had up to date information about public toilets both by location and opening hours. Residents had found that one Council office had directed them to a public toilet that was no longer open.

³ Schemes visited were Jasmine Court, Elwyn Jones Court, Leach Court and Lavender House by Val Brown, Colin Vincent, Janet Wakeling, Penny Morley, Harry Steer and Frances Tonks (OPC members) Peter Huntbach Older Persons Housing Manager arranged visits and accompanied OPC members.

Housing tenure for Older People

In 2001 the breakdown of tenure for older people in the City showed that owner occupation was 67.2%, social rented (sheltered & general) was 16.5%, private rented 8.6%, rent free (friends & family) 2.6%, communal (nursing & care home) was 4.8%.⁴ It was noted however that there was a big shift in tenure for those over 85 years with a large decrease in owner occupation going from 72.3% at 60 to 74 to only 49.4% by the age of 85. In addition the largest age group in nursing and care home was 85+ which was 1 in 5 of those in nursing and care homes. This demonstrates a clear demand for more communal accommodation as people age, with a rapid acceleration over 85 years. This is exactly the group which are expected to increase by two thirds to 3.6% of the population by 2035.

We are currently awaiting the age analysis from the 2011 census which will provide further information about housing tenure for older people and the shifts over the last ten years.

OPC Public Meeting

Subsequent to the visits to the Sheltered Housing schemes, the Older Peoples Council held a public meeting at the Jubilee Library on the 21st January 2013 with Housing and Older People as the topic. A wide ranging discussion took place and the minutes of the meeting will be available on the OPC website www.olderpeoplescouncil.org.

The Chair of Housing Bill Randall spoke identifying that the Council had 855 sheltered flats with only two, Sanders Court and Evelyn Court not self-contained but with the former being upgraded this year. A new extra care scheme Brookmead with 45 flats was being developed.

Geoff Raw, Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing also spoke outlining that there is a refresh of the Housing Strategy underway and outlined the social and economic context for housing in the city. There is push to integrate health and social care to deliver more integrated services and reduce costs. There are considerations re extra care or more life time homes. Housing has been allocated £1m for regeneration and is looking at options re rebuilding or remodelling.

Peter Huntbach, Older Persons Housing Manager, outlined that Brighton & Hove Council had 23 sheltered housing schemes and there was a need to consider what stock is required in the future. There are site based scheme managers in Brighton unlike many other places. This was what tenants wanted and the Council have continued to provide. Older people have complex needs but there is better awareness of preventable health issues. There is a wider age range of people than previously and that raised issues within schemes. People were co-ordinating between sheltered housing schemes and there was a need to look at each scheme to help create a sociable community.

Next Steps

- A review by the Chartered Institute of Housing was being undertaken and the OPC would have input into the interim report when it was available.

⁴ Older Peoples Housing Strategy 2009-2014. Brighton & Hove Council (HST) (2009) p17

- OPC input was invited into the draft housing strategy which is managed by the strategic housing partnership.
- A workshop would be arranged with housing officers and the OPC in the next six months to ensure early input
- The OPC have placed a map on the website www.olderpeoplescouncil.org showing where all sheltered housing and private care homes are located.
- Links with local schemes to be built and continued with OPC members with the support of sheltered housing managers.

The meeting concluded at 1.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of