



Minutes from Older People's Council (OPC) Meeting

22.7.25

Present: Mary Davies (chair), Angela Stretton. Jan Holm, Cllr. Kerry Pickett, Jerry Thomas. Bharti Mistry, Lorna Holloway. J Clarke, Ali Mohammed, Michel Creedy, Doug Thompson. Val Cane, Dave Richtor, Gaynor Lewis Smith, Marion Adler, Khalid Ali, Sara Fulford. Jaqueline Yeates, Charles Foley. Victoria Hamer, Maxine Thomas, Dave Richtor, Cllr. Tim Rowkins, Chris Brown.

On Line: Cllr. Theresa Mackey, Julia Ingle

1. Welcome, introductions and ground rules- Mary

2. Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as accurate.

3. Chris Brown- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer for B&H City Council (B&HCC) came to talk about her work, team and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), as well as the importance of intersectionality as requested by the OPC.

Chris's power point slides are included as an attachment with the minutes.

EIAs are to help make better and fairer decisions and systematically look at the impact on people with protected characteristics under the equality ACT. As well as the 9 groups of people B&HCC also consider carers and those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage as well as some additional groups. The EIAs should look for disproportionate negative impact s and impact and seek mitigation to reduce that impact, with an expectation of SMART action plans.

Heads of Service in each area of the council are accountable for for EIAs for their departments and sign off although lead officers may write them. Sharing/ consulting with others to get extra insight is encouraged. EIAs are expected to be proportionate for the demography of local areas. There is an expectation of consulting and engaging with communities. Your voice survey portal for the council assists consultation(Although members of the meeting pointed out that they can be very short term, without much publicity and have quite prescriptive questions.)

Possibility People and Healthwatch also sometimes run engagement on policy decisions, and consultations may be with some 3rd sector organisations eg OPC.

The EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) team reviews all EIAs that are sent to them by services but due to capacity limitations can only monitor EIAs they are sent.

Comments/ Questions included:

*Request that **older people are added to age consideration category on EIAs**(Chris will take this back and it should be a relatively easy alteration to make especially as the form is under review by the EIA team.)*

Need data on people who are housebound as there are many unique challenges and experiences for this group of people.

Consultation surveys need more publicity as timescales are often short. On line surveys are difficult for many older people to participate in. Some paper copies needed.

How do we address making EIAs meaningful whilst not overburdening groups where there may be 'consultation fatigue'?

Disability and Older people is a frequent intersection especially around mobility issues and access. Possibility People also have community engagement, as do Age UK, and Ageing Well, so many issues are already known, as well as national issues also being reflected in local populations.

Concerns were raised about **the under-representation of older people's needs in previous assessments**, especially regarding transport and budget decisions.

Julia Ingle brought attention to the lack of data concerning **housebound individuals, pointing out the difficulties they face in accessing information, consultations and services.** We have some frustration over the lack of inclusion of elder and disabled individuals in recent developments, and question the adequacy of community consultation and the impact of budgetary decisions on vulnerable populations.

Some decisions seem to have a clear negative impact, but are still taken due to budget pressures rather than **more creative ways needing to be considered to generate income.**

OPC members have been shocked at some EIAs being inadequate, or stating there is no impact, without fully considering the impact on older people

Actions: Chris Brown will send out the slides from the presentation after the session, ensuring they have alt text embedded for accessibility.

Chris Brown will take feedback regarding the equality impact assessment process back to the team for consideration and **inclusion of older people in the age category heading.**

Chris Brown will share the council's general EIA template form which contains internal guidance for officers completing the form.

4. Dr Khalid Ali and Victoria Hamer on Research in Medication related harm on discharge from hospital for Older Adults.

8 variables increase the risk of medication related harm including living alone.

Dr Ali discussed his research on medication management for older adults after hospital discharge, revealing that one in three patients faced medication-related issues or harm, and sometimes hospital readmission, many of which are preventable. He shared insights and **proposals that suggested additional interventions by pharmacy teams visiting discharged patients** could reduce medication-related harm and hospital readmissions, but needs support and funding. People present added that length of hospital stay and information and more helpful preparation for discharge are also likely to be significant factors.

Victoria Hamer presented four questions for patients and carers to consider regarding medication adjustments, More details are attached with these minutes.

They would appreciate views on proposals from more older people, and ask that meeting participants send responses to questions attached to these minutes and seek other feedback where possible. Thanks.

5. Tim Rowkins , Deputy Council Leader spoke about Local Government Re Organisation and Devolution.

2 processes running alongside – the creation of more unitary authorities

(Some local areas still have District and County Councils- will change to unitaries).

Devolution of more powers from central government to local community

areas. This started in the 1990s with Scotland and Wales, then Cities and regions eg London, Liverpool, Manchester. In this government manifesto to expand devolution- to give local communities more control/flexibility over finance and budget to meet needs and priorities of local areas, without having to continuously apply for govt grant funding. Eg for net zero policies, Health needs. Regional transport. Eg of Bradford was given as Cllr. Rowkins had recently visited. Big regional unemployment issues so Bradford had focussed on successful training and reskilling projects.

Brighton and Hove Council will still exist, , with its current roles and be less affected by changes than some other local regions as it is already a unitary authority.

Regional mayors- Will they be all powerful? No as will have at least 2 reps from each unitary council.

One proposal locally is to have 5 unitary authorities throughout East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove for the devolved regional authority. Brighton and Hove may need to expand a bit as 280,000 are the recommended population size of a unitary authority. **Regional Authority proposal is Brighton ,& Hove together with East and West Sussex.**

The time frame for the changes is relatively very quick. Mayoral elections are due next year, with elections to new unitary authorities in 2027.

Is it already decided? Yes to a large extent , the submission is in to central government and the bill is through Parliament, only the Secretary of State can overturn it at this stage, but some of the detail of area sizes eg for unitaries is out for consultation and local areas can submit what they want, but govt. will want to see local co-operation.

B&H Consultation is open until 25th August.

Exploring the options for local government reorganisation [Link below:](#)

[Project: Exploring the options for local government reor... | Brighton & Hove City Council](#)

Questions/ Concerns/Issues raised at our meeting:

Q. What will happen to B&H housing allocations quotas?

A. Regional authorities would analyse where needed most May have enhanced local powers about aspects of housing eg air b and bs limiting- serious issue here.

Q. Big changes – why not a vote or referendum? Concern big decisions taken by a few, and it is not understood well by the majority?

A. No precedent for that in Loc Govt reorganisation. Consultation is out until 25th August.

Q. How will minority/ disadvantaged voices get heard when the regional authority is so big and removed from communities? - especially where there is no data, eg for housebound, and isolated from consultations already? Eg transport policy doesn't take into account the need for cars for those with mobility issues. How will older people get heard?

A. Wards will still have local councillors. Wards not likely to change much. Local councillors will remain in touch with voters and will feed issues back up for those voices to be represented at regional level. Eg given of Nady Burnham work for homeless.

Feels too rushed.

A. Agree timescales are very quick.

Q. Concern - How does the voice of Brighton and Hove as a unique City, both in demography and politically, get heard, rather than dominated by East and West Sussex which are very different.?

A. There are likely to be several parties in the regional government group, which will be small (maybe 2 reps from each unitary), and expected to work co operatively.

5. AOB. Short this time as 3 speakers today.

Sara mentioned the OPC gets lots of e mails about related meetings and information, and will create another 'other' distribution list if people express a wish to receive them. There is space on attendance sheet to indicate if want them, also can e mail us to let us know.

Thanks to all speakers!

Next Meeting 9th September 2-4 pm Brighton Town Hall.