

Minutes

SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

11 May 2011

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors: Judith Cooper (Chairman) Peter Kemp (Vice-Chairman) John Major (Labour Lead) David Benson Patricia Jackson Kuldeep Lakhmana
	OFFICERS PRESENT: Neil Stubbings – Deputy Director Social Care, Health and Housing (SCHH) Beatrice Cingtho – Head of Housing Charles Francis – Democratic Services Officer
55.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>) Cllr Beulah East substitute Cllr Kuldeep Lakhmana
56.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>) None
57.	TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2011 (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>) Were agreed as a correct record.
58.	TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED IN PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>) All items were considered in Public.
59.	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR VULNERABLE AND DISABLED PEOPLE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>) The Deputy Director of Social Care, Health and Housing and the Head of Housing introduced the report and answered questions from the Committee. The report provided the Committee with contextual housing needs information and focused on how the needs of vulnerable and disabled people in temporary accommodation was identified and addressed and how this complied with the requirements of The Disability Discrimination Act

(DDA).

The following points were noted:

Legal Background

- Service providers must treat disabled people in the same way as they would treat any other person, when offering or providing a service or facility. The Act places a duty upon a service provider to remove or alter any physical barrier that makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use that service.
- There is no specific requirement under the DDA relating to housing, other than the same requirement not to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person.
- The Council's Allocation Policy covers the assessment of need on the grounds of disability and vulnerability by awarding higher priority to those whose medical condition is affected by their housing situation (which include disabilities).
- There are specifically adapted properties which only disabled applicants can apply for.
- Home Adaptations are also carried out using the adaptations budget for council homes and Disabled Facilities Grant for private homes.

Key Information

- Key data on the housing needs of the residents of the borough is contained within the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) which feeds into key documents such as the Housing Strategy.
- Homelessness is a key priority and much has been done to improve temporary accommodation standards by phasing out the use of bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation (except in emergency) in favour of leased properties.

Assessment of need

- Applicants who indicate that they have an illness or disability which is affected by their current home, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are assessed and awarded priority based on their need.
- Independent medical advice is obtained from the Council's Medical Adviser who liaises with Occupational Therapists and other Medical professionals to recommend the best possible housing outcome for every individual.
- In terms of mobility, there are two assessment recommendations:
 1. **DSL 1:** Where an applicant requires use of wheelchair both indoors and outdoors
 2. **DSL 2:** Where the applicant cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time.
- Certain properties that become available for letting are suitable for people with restricted mobility and those awarded with mobility priority can bid for these properties. In the LOCATA free sheet or website such properties are labelled with a symbol showing a wheelchair followed by the number 1 or 2.

Temporary accommodation supply

- Out of the privately leased temporary accommodation (PSL) portfolio of 839, there are 660 (79%) accessible properties. None of these properties are adapted.

Addressing gap between needs and provision

- Households in temporary accommodation where the disabled person is an adult typically tend to be single person households. These households are more likely to remain in B&B accommodation until such time as a suitable adapted property becomes available.
- The analysis shows that the need of disabled household is being met within existing temporary accommodation resources but it is essential to continue with the current flexible approach that addresses need as it changes.

Waiting time until housed 2010-11

- The waiting time for alternative suitable accommodation for disabled households is longer than for other households. The length of time people requiring adapted properties wait in temporary accommodation is influenced by the falling supply of affordable housing.
- The council has specific housing and planning targets relating to the supply of new build permanent housing including the provision of adapted properties. These are detailed within the councils Local Development Framework (LDF), a key planning and housing document.
- The new build units built by Housing Associations in 2011/12 will deliver 33 wheel chair accessible units.
- The council's own HRA Pipeline scheme will deliver 85 units of accommodation over 2010 to 2012 all of which will be built to life time homes standard. 47 units were delivered in 2010/11 of which 5 units were fully wheel chair adapted.

Housing Need for other vulnerable households as at 31st March 2011

- The average waiting time on the register before permanent housing for this client groups was 33 months compared to 39 months for all other households.
- Of these, there were currently 207 vulnerable households living in temporary accommodation:
- There is sufficient provision within the temporary accommodation portfolio to meet the housing needs of these households. However, in order to ensure suitability, support needs assessments are carried out before placements are made.
- Housing Needs staff work with several agencies (Community Mental Health Teams, Social care colleagues, DASH, Age UK, Hillingdon Drug & Alcohol Service) to fully understand individual support needs and ensure that the relevant support is in place to maximize long term independence and prevent the avoidable deterioration of conditions. There are protocols, contracts or procedures in place with each agency to support and maintain consistent processes. These are reviewed every 24 months or sooner where there is a change.

During the course of discussions the Committee raised a number of points:

- Members were assured to learn there were no unnecessary delays to needs assessments. Officers confirmed that needs assessments were conducted while households were on the housing waiting list rather than wait until they were eligible for potential properties.
- Members asked about the waiting times for alternative accommodation for disabled households and how current timescales compared to previous years, highlighting any particular anomalies. This has been provided in a follow up report discussed with Cllr Peter Kemp on 10th June 2011.
- In response to query about average waiting times, Officers explained that as the number of households seeking adapted accommodation was relatively low, it only required a few families to seek several larger properties to significantly affect the statistic for average waiting times.
- It was noted that the Authority had made a series of improvements to residential accommodation such as the Point West facility which included a manned front desk to improve the safety of residents.
- Officers confirmed that discussions had taken place with Legal Services and the Council's equalities officer to ensure Council policies were anticipating housing needs for disabled people to ensure the Authority did not contravene the DDA.
- With regards to the numbers of adapted disabled properties, Officers confirmed the Council had a significant number of wheelchair adapted properties and were currently working hard to increase this number although there would always be a delicate balancing act required, to manage the number of adapted properties and number of voids.
- It was noted that when the Authority was informed a vulnerable individual was not coping with independent living, an assessment would take place and the resources of the Supporting People Programme would be available to assist them.
- Members asked officers to provide further statistical information about children living in care and care leavers which did not appear within the officer report. Care leavers are awarded a higher band (B) in recognition that they have an urgent need to move from care to independent living. During 2010/11 22 care leavers were rehoused. As at 31st March 2011 there were 15 care leavers on the housing register aged between 17 and 25 years, of which 7 were male and 8 were female. The waiting time for suitable social housing averages less than one year.
- Officers confirmed that they were working with a variety of external partners to ensure the needs of vulnerable and disabled people were met.

Resolved –

1. That the report be noted
2. That Officers be requested to provide further information on waiting times and children living in care / care leavers as detailed above.

60. **WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING DATES IN 2010/11** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Resolved –

1. That the report be noted

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. That Officers be thanked for their support to the Committee throughout the Council year. 3. That the Committee discuss a number of possible options for review topics for the next municipal year at the next meeting.
61.	<p>FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>This is a standard item.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted 2. <i>576 – Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy</i> – to be considered at the next meeting 3. <i>S1 – Progress Report on the Disabled People’s Plan</i> – to be considered at the next meeting
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 7.50 pm</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Charles Francis on 01895 556454. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.