

Minutes

**Social Services, Health and Housing Policy
Overview Committee
Thursday, 25 March 2010
Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



**Published on: 6 April 2010
Come into effect on: Immediately**

Members Present:

Councillors Judith Cooper (Chairman), Peter Kemp, Pat Jackson, Michael Markham, John Major and Anthony Way

Officers Present:

Neil Stubbings (Deputy Director ASCHH), Brian Doughty (Interim Deputy Director ASCHH), Beverley Grayley (Joint Commissioning Manager), David McCulloch, Beatrice Cingtho (Head of Housing Needs) and Nav Johal (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING

None.

3. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2010

Agreed as an accurate record.

4. 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

It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.

5. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman reported back to Committee that the Transformation report went to Cabinet on 18th March. The report was very well received and was fully supported by Cabinet. The Chairman and the committee wished to thank all the officers involved for the support and the guidance they provided to the committee.

6. WITNESS SESSION 2: HILLINGDON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Chairman thanked the witnesses for attending the meeting. The witnesses that were in attendance were:

- Naeem Arif - Executive Director, Ideal for All, Sandwell
- Vicki Phipps - Lead Officer for Personalisation, Ideal for All, Sandwell
- Chris Commerford - Chief Officer, Age Concern
- Sam Taylor - Change Manager, Transformation Team
- Steve Cross – E-Communications Manger, ICT

Naeem Arif and Vicky Phipps from Ideal for All began the witness session with a presentation on Ideal for All. The presentation focused on how the organisation developed and what resources they used to make it a success. It was a user-led organisation, but had developed from this model.

Ideal for All had started out 20 years ago and developed more aggressively over the last 10 years. They discussed the perceptions of disabled people and what the experience in reality was like when disabled people were able to take control themselves.

Disabled people, Sandwell Health Authority and Social Services worked together in the 1990's to create Ideal for All and improved the lives of disabled people by providing them with accessible services that they required.

In 1996 Sandwell Council and Sandwell Health Authority helped disabled people to set up their own Organisation, Ideal for All. An initial budget of £54,000 was awarded. Ideal for All was a registered charity and not for profit voluntary sector organisation. It was run by people of the community it served. Current staffing levels were 47; 43% had a disability.

The role of Ideal for All was to help disabled people, their families and carers and the elderly to live independent and fulfilling lives. They raised almost 50% additional funds themselves for programmes that could not be funded through the core contract. A centre was completed in 2000.

Ideal for All had a growing membership of over 2000 members; they listened to what people said. They also engaged with people through their growing network of over 150 local organisations.

A garden and market garden had been developed through funding and raising money.

Ideal for All supported people with Personal Budgets, assess for and issued items to support independent living and gave information and advice. They also produced information and learning materials in accessible formats. They helped people learn how to use computers, find work or go to college for further education.

Ideal For All supported a Social Events group to help disabled people go on accessible short holidays and day trips. Within the Centre they had a service for people with visual impairment and a wheelchair service managed by Sandwell Council and Sandwell PCT respectively. They were their tenants.

Members asked if this business model was being adopted anywhere else. Different organisations had visited them and they offered to help others for no charge. They wanted to inspire others to develop in ways to help others.

Members asked how they were so successful in raising funds independently. Money was raised from sources such as local businesses and national lottery. Naeem would send a list to the Beverley Grayley on the websites they could use for funding.

Chris Commerford spoke about Age Concern. She could relate to both Hillingdon and Sandwell. They were developing Townfield Community Centre and were working with DASH and have acquired some allotments. Age Concern had applied for local food grants from the lottery.

There were a large number of older people that were disabled. And services needed to be suited to all needs.

Age Concern worked with HCIL and were involved in the planning group with helped to re-launch the centre. They also recommended HCIL to service users for advice on purchases. The feedback they had back from users on the HCIL service was very good. Particularly from older people who preferred face to face interaction.

Sam Taylor, Transformation Team, spoke about the information, guidance and advice that could be given to service users. User led opportunity was key in this. There was a vision, and they were looking at, having a network of organisations delivering a range of functions.

Disabled people, the service users, would be part of discussions on how to develop the service.

Witnesses, Officers and Members spoke of the 'control' of the organisation in providing the service. With support, choice and independent living more control was being given to the user, but the authority still had a duty of care to consider.

Chris Commerford spoke about a possible location of a centre for service users. The old post office in the Pavilion Mall, Uxbridge. It was a central location which would be accessible to many people. The downside to this location was that it was available on a short lease and the capital investment that would be required to develop the service.

Officers explained that currently the PCT and the Council directly fund HCIL.

Steve Smith, ICT, spoke about how IT could help in providing information in engagement and support. Technology was used to show the tools and equipment already and this could be developed.

Technology could be used to promote, for funding, accessibility, having online forums/communities so users could provide feedback/views. They could use various sites to promote the service and use others thoughts on how to develop the IT service.

The Council was looking at designing a website where people can budget and shop for their needs.

The Committee also discussed training with officers and witnesses. The information that H-CIL staff gave service users was vital and therefore important that it was accurate, and that staff had the necessary tools to provide users with the service they needed.

Resolved –

1. That the chairman and the committee thanked the witnesses and officers for attending and providing useful information.
2. That the committee recommended that user groups are involved in the development of HCIL. This was vital for feedback and improving the service.
3. That the committee recommended that access and visibility of the service provided by HCIL be improved through technology.
4. That the committee recommended that employees at the HCIL centre were fully trained in order to be able to give accurate advice to service users.

7. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

David McCulloch introduced his report on Disabled Facilities Grants. The Policy Overview Committee had requested an information report that provided a background report relating to the availability of Disabled Facilities Grants in Hillingdon.

Disabled Facilities Grants were mandatory grants provided applicants had met certain statutory criteria. The concept was to provide people with a safe adapted environment in their homes to live in.

Grants were means tested and Hillingdon made top-ups available above the £30,000 statutory limit. There was a cost saving to the Council as people could stay in their homes rather than being put into residential care.

The grants needed to be necessary and appropriate for the needs of the client and reasonable and practical in terms of costs and scope. Clients went through Social Services for the initial assessment, and if a major adaptation was found necessary then a referral was made to Housing. Urgent cases were put through as category 1, category 2 cases were non-urgent that were put on a waiting list.

Cabinet had approved £3million budget in February subject to the Government contribution. If this did occur then the waiting list would be cleared during 2010/11. The number of referrals from Social Services had fallen this year in comparison to previous years. The target waiting time for clients was 25 weeks for Hillingdon, the Council had met and exceeded this target at 23 weeks.

Overall satisfaction levels from those clients receiving grants were high, at 90% being 'satisfied or very satisfied' with their adaptation and the approach of the Council. 60% of grants went to over 60 year olds.

The Council was looking at ways to assist the small number of service users who did not qualify for a grant but genuinely could not afford it. This included people on very low incomes, with no capital and substantial outgoings in the form of existing mortgages.

Officers periodically looked at how we compared to other Councils in terms of costs. The Council worked with a set price, and rates were agreed beforehand. This was a much more efficient and quicker way rather than getting estimates for each job.

The Council was looking at getting a West London wide contract for stairlifts. Hillingdon Council compared well against other West London boroughs in the average costs of stairlifts and through floor lifts.

Grants were also paid to Registered Social Landlord's as they had a right to apply. This had been under review by CLG and an announcement was imminent on this. If it was agreed that Council's paid 60% and RSLs paid the remaining 40% then it would give the Council around £100,000 saving in the DFG budget. This was the equivalent of 30 stairlifts.

Members commented that this was something the Council did well and wished to congratulate the department on always looking to improve and getting value for money.

Members also commented that looking to the future than demand for the services would increase. Meeting this would be a challenge.

Members also thanked officers for reducing waiting times and improving the service offered to users.

Resolved –

1. That the Committee noted the report and questioned officers on the contents of the report.
2. That the Committee thanked officers on the report and commended them on the improvements made.

8. SUPPORT, CHOICE AND INDEPENDENCE - THE FUTURE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Interim Director for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing provided the committee with a verbal update on Carers Assessment report that went to Cabinet last week. Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report.

This was the biggest change in Social Care for sometime. The service delivery to 6,000 residents receiving social care services would be changed over the coming years.

The report highlighted what legislation could be used, and the flexibility offered. It was noted that the Well Being power was for exceptional cases.

Members commented that monitoring should be robust and effective.

Officers commented that the Council would still have the responsibility of care to individuals.

Resolved –

1. That the Committee noted the report and questioned officers on the contents of the report.

9. 2009/10 WORK PROGRAMME

This is a standard item.

Resolved –

1. That the timetable of meetings and proposed work programme for 2009/10 be noted.

10. FORWARD PLAN

Members considered a condensed copy of the latest Forward Plan covering March 2010 to June 2010. This is a standard item.

Resolved -

1. That the report be noted

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nav Johal on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.