



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 14 AUGUST 2014 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Chaplin (Chair)
Councillor Riyait (Vice Chair)

Councillor Alfonso
Councillor Cutkelvin
Councillor Dawood

Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Willmott

In Attendance

Councillor Cassidy – Member for Fosse Ward
Councillor Connelly – Assistant Mayor (Housing)
Councillor Dempster – Assistant Mayor (Children, Young People and Schools)
Philip Parkinson – Interim Chair, Healthwatch Leicester (Standing Invitee)
Councillor Rita Patel – Assistant City Mayor (Adult Social Care)

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16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Palmer (Deputy City Mayor) and Councillor Waddington, (Member for Fosse Ward) had been invited to the meeting for agenda items 6, "Patient Transport Services: Impact on Adult Social Care", and 7, "Fosse Court Residential Care Home", respectively. As both were unable to attend the meeting, they sent their apologies for absence.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As a Standing Invitee to the Commission, Mr Philip Parkinson (Healthwatch invited representative) declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting in that he had a relative in receipt of a social care package from the City Council.

Councillor Chaplin declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 8, "Review of Housing Related Support Substance Misuse Services", in that

Heathfield House was in Stoneygate Ward, which she represented.

Councillor Dawood declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 9, "Closure of the Douglas Bader Day Centre – Update", in that the Centre was in his ward and he had discussed its closure with the Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care).

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the respective people's judgement of the public interest. They were not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

23. REVIEW OF HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT FOR SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES

The Director for Care Services and Commissioning (Adult Social Care) submitted a report outlining the findings of a statutory consultation exercise on a proposal to remodel Housing related support services for substance misuse.

The Director explained that the review was needed to ensure that the service remained appropriate, as the contract for services at Heathfield House would end on 31 March 2015. Consultation had been undertaken on different options for the service and this had shown support for a dedicated service that included floating support and accommodation-based support. It therefore was proposed to procure a mixture of accommodation in a 10-bed unit that offered stays of up to 12 months and floating support.

The Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care) reminded the Commission that, when the closure of the accommodation-based services for people with alcohol dependency at Evesham House had been agreed, an undertaking had been given that consideration would be given to how Evesham House could be used in the future. Procurement of the new services now needed to be undertaken quickly, in order for there to be no break in service when the contract for services at Heathfield House ended on 31 March 2015.

The Assistant Mayor (Housing) drew Members' attention to the weaknesses in the current delivery model that had been highlighted as a result of a review of the service. In particular, it was noted that the current service had 24 beds, but no floating support, so only a small number of people could be accommodated per year. Moving to floating support would increase the service capacity. Procuring a mixture of floating support and accommodation therefore was recommended as the way forward

The Council's current financial constraints were noted, but the Commission agreed that smaller accommodation units appeared to work better than larger ones. The extension of the time for which accommodation-based support could be received was welcomed, particularly for people with multiple abuse issues. In addition, the potential use of Evesham House for the remodelled service was welcomed, as this provided a good base from which to change and/or expand the service in the future.

However, some concern was expressed about replacing 24 hour support with floating support, particularly if urgent action was needed to help someone maintain a tenancy. In reply, the Head of Commissioning (Care Services and Commissioning) explained that:-

- It was difficult to say how effective the current contract had been, as it only specified that activity levels should be monitored. This would be rectified under the new contract, which would require outcomes to be monitored;
- The current 'ad hoc' service described in the report was a service available for all substance misusers, not specifically for those users who had left Evesham House. This service was 'Engage' and was a harm reduction model;
- Floating support would be used to try to ensure that service users did not reach a point at which their tenancy could fail, (for example, working with housing officers to consider what housing stock was available). At present, the service was accommodation based, so that kind of support was not available and this could lead to tenancy breakdown;
- Care would be taken to ensure that a service user did not move on from accommodation-based support until they were ready to do so; and
- Floating support would not be 24 hour support.

The Commission questioned whether this change in service was needed because the Homelessness Strategy was not working. In reply, the Assistant Mayor (Housing) assured the Commission that he had checked the number of service users today and the Strategy was working. A report by Shelter highlighting problems had been prepared in 2013 and the situation had changed since then.

He further advised that:-

- There were a number of rough sleepers in the city. These included some who had arrived from other cities, for whom this Council was not responsible, and some who were immigrants. The Council could not help the latter, but was able to pay their fare to return to their home country;
- Rough sleepers did not always want to engage with Council services;
- Service users were no longer having to spend long periods in hostels, but were moving in to settled accommodation; and
- The Council would be examining the current contract for substance misuse services, even if it did not have to make savings, as an appropriate service was not being delivered. For example, accommodation currently was limited, no floating support was available to help prevent people losing their homes, and no support was available to people once they left residential

accommodation, so they often returned there.

The Commission noted that there was a national move towards providing services in the community, but expressed some concern that the report was not clear about whether 10 beds would be sufficient and how much floating support could be provided. However, it also was noted that if indefinite support was offered, required financial savings would not be achieved.

In reply to concerns about what action could be taken if community support did not work, the Head of Commissioning (Care Services and Commissioning) advised that the reduction in capacity created by increasing the length of stay in accommodation could be off-set by the other services identified in the report.

The Commission noted that the “Dear Albert” project mentioned in the report was a social enterprise, which was being supported by Voluntary Action LeicesterShire, to explore the possibility of Evesham House as an asset transfer for the Local Authority. Those running the social enterprise were interested in using Evesham House for a recovery community and were in the early stages of establishing a business case for this. No Council funding would be required for this project.

The Assistant Mayor (Housing) confirmed that the business model to be used by the “Dear Albert” project had proved to be successful in other areas, so he was confident that a workable model could be developed using the facilities of Evesham House. The Commission noted this and suggested that a report on the project could be made at the next meeting.

The Chair reminded the Commission of the declaration of interest she had made regarding this item.

The Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care) advised the Commission that the Phoenix Cinema would be showing a film illustrating self-help for substance misuse on Friday 20 September 2014. Members of the Commission were encouraged to attend.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care) be asked to advise the Executive that this Commission supports the proposed procurement of substance misuse services comprising a mixed model of floating and accommodation-based support;
- 2) That the Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care) be asked to:-
 - a) note this Commission’s concern that this report was presented to the Commission very near to the date on which it was proposed to take a decision on the procurement of substance misuse services, leaving little time for scrutiny of the proposals; and

- b) ensure that future reports are submitted in time to enable full and proper scrutiny to be undertaken of proposals contained in those reports;
- 3) That the Director for Care Services and Commissioning (Adult Social Care) be asked to submit a report to the next meeting of this Commission on the “Dear Albert” social enterprise project, the provider to be invited to the meeting to discuss the work proposed; and
- 4) That the Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care) be asked to ensure that members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission are aware of the film to be shown at the Phoenix Cinema on 20 September 2014 about the movement around self-help for substance misuse.