



Overview & Scrutiny Committee
7 October 2008

**Report from the Director of
Housing and Community Care**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Consultation on Modernising Learning
Disabilities Day Services**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a briefing on the consultation on modernising learning disabilities day services. It sets out the background to the consultation, the current position and outlines the next steps including how members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee can become involved.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to comment on key aspects of the briefing note and agree proposals for Overview & Scrutiny involvement in the next steps.

3.0 Detail

Current position

- 3.1 Following consultation meetings with carers in 2007 and users February 2008 on options to develop day opportunities, a significant number of issues and opposition have arisen, requiring community care to reconsider options and the consultation process. It is now likely consultation on options will commence early 2009, once assessments/review have been concluded and analysed in order to consider best way forward.

Background

- 3.2 The consultation which considered changes within the way services were delivered from 3 day centre bases to 2 with more outreach facilities were subject to considerable concern and opposition from carers and users, none of whom wanted to see change to the existing day centres.
- 3.3 During the consultation we recognised those with high dependency needs and/or autism needed a building based service. Commitments were given to reprovide Albert Road (with release of funding from South Kilburn development) to provide a resource centre and ASSPECTS autistic unit based on Stonebridge currently in a portakabin, not considered an ideal building.
- 3.4 Since August the position in South Kilburn has changed with difficulties in progressing the overall regeneration funding arrangements due to the national building 'credit crunch'. Alternative sites are being looked at but timing would depend on release of capital.
- 3.5 Following the users first consultation meeting, allegations were made by carers and users that users were being coached about what to say during the Council's consultation process. There was also an issue about whether a statement had been made about a service user saying that he did not want carers at a users meeting. This led to the Director of Housing and Community Care arranging an external investigation. The investigator has made numerous recommendations and community care has drawn up an action plan (appendix 1). The Director of Housing and Community Care accepted all the investigators recommendations. The investigator concluded the current consultation exercise on the future day services seems to have been poorly thought out and executed. It has resulted in considerable opposition to plans which have not been well explained or understood.
- 3.6 It is important to note that two relatives/carers involved do not accept the recommendations or scope of the investigation and report and have raised ongoing concerns about the consultation process and related matters. The Complaints Manager, following discussion with the Director of Housing and Community Care has therefore commissioned a Stage 2 investigation under the statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure. This is ongoing. Any additional or different recommendations regarding consultation on other matters will be considered by the Director of Housing and Community Care to implement.
- 3.7 The attached action plan has been considered by the Learning Disability Partnership Board on 11 August 2008, in order to provide a framework as to how to improve consultation at the next stage and gain trust of users and carers and have an open and transparent process. The main issues identified needing improvement were advocacy, communication and the learning disability partnership board, Valuing People Now is issuing guidance on 'refreshing' partnership boards in the autumn.

A particular issue was about the role of advocacy and that has been changed for those who use day centres, following conflicts identified between advocacy

roles and organisational views. However this is also subject to complaint and under consideration by the Director of Housing and Community Care.

3.8 Progress of assessments and options

All users attending Stonebridge, Strathcona and Projects will have had assessments/reviews by November 2008. These will be considered overall in order to shape the future of day care provision within the context of DoH requirement to provide individual budgets by April 2009. The majority of new younger people requiring services want different opportunities and DoH wants LA's to develop these, not just for Community Care to provide but general services such as education, employment, and leisure activities. How to improve access to community activities and how to ensure users feel safe and secure were key issues from the consultation that are being taken forward, as part of the action plan. The consultation options, process and timetable will be considered at the LDPB prior to formal consultation early 2009. A letter has been sent in September to carers and relatives detailing this.

3.9 Developing standards for day services

The DoH invited some LA's to participate in a pilot project involving users and carers to determine standards that should be expected from those using day services. Brent is participating with user and carer representatives. The work commences in September 2008.

Next steps and outline timetable

- 3.10 As stated above we will be reconsidering the options based on the assessments. A particular issue regarding timing of any developments will also be the progress of the South Kilburn regeneration development and when funding would be available for a new resource centre, releasing the Albert Road site, and the availability of other sites. It is anticipated options will be clarified for consultation early 2009. It is proposed Overview and Scrutiny Members visit a day centre, and one of the café projects, meet with a group of users to hear their views, and a group of carers. It is suggested the latter this be arranged through the carers centre who have been involved in the consultation process.

4.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 4.1 None

Background Papers

Contact Officers

Martin Cheeseman

Director of Housing and Community Care, tel 020 8937 2341

Martin.Cheeseman@brent.gov.uk

Christable Shawcross, Assistant Director Community Care tel 020 8937 4230

Christable.Shawcross@brent.gov.uk
