



MINUTES OF THE ONE COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **Wednesday, 13 October 2010 at 7.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Colwill (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) and Councillors Beckman, Brown (for Castle), Colwill, Lorber, Beckman and Van Kalwala

Apologies were received from: Councillors Castle, McLennan and Sheth

1. Terms of reference

RESOLVED:

that the terms of reference of the committee as agreed by Full Council on 13 September 2010 be noted.

2. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None made.

3. Direct Services Transformation - Learning Disabilities (wave 1)

Alison Elliott (Assistant Director, Community Care) introduced the report which set out progress on the learning disabilities direct services transformation which aimed to bring a significant change to the provision of Adult Social Care direct or in-house day services. A report to the Executive in July 2010 sought permission to consult on proposals for changes, reflective of the personalisation agenda, and this was the third of a three month consultation period. Alison Elliott stated that discussions had taken place with carers, staff and service users and the report to the Executive in December was expected to put forward a number of options. The direct services transformation project was based on reducing the number of social care premises and introducing differences in the way in which services were provided and accessed. The associated financial benefits were expected to come from the number of service users that would become more independent and the council was working with carers to offer suitable alternatives.

The committee heard from Ms Manek speaking on behalf of carers. She expressed concerns over the numbers of day care service users seen to be involved which she felt should be far higher, requested clarity over the analysis process for assessments and more information on allocation of personal budgets. Ms Manek also had concerns over how the private and third sector would be managed. She expressed support for the transformation programme, including the proposed move to new premises on the John Billam site but had concerns over what would be offered and how costs would be reduced. Ms Manek also asked whether there were any contingency plans should the new strategy not be successful. She referred to the Stonebridge Day Centre which was in need of considerable repair

and regretted that this had resulted in additional problems for carers and service users. Ms Manek stated that generally, she wished for greater transparency throughout the process.

The Assistant Director in response, acknowledged concerns over previous assessments and assured of greater involvement by carers in future. She put that the numbers had remained consistent and that personal budgets were indicative and were now being calculated. The council would be willing to involve carers in commissioning should they so wish. Planning was taking place for a range of options. The council was committed to the transformation and ensuring the effective use of resources, working with carers to ensure the best for service users.

Members requested information on day care proposals to include detailed information on the numbers currently attending centres and costs, the cost of current direct payment and future projections to allow more in-depth scrutiny of the comparative costs of using existing centres compared to the cost of personalised support. The proposal to replace a number of centres and replace them with one centre in the north of the borough on the John Billam playing fields site was also questioned in particular the impact on distances travelled to which the Assistant Director responded that some travelling currently took place in transporting users to themed centres. It was noted that further information would be available on proposals so that views can be submitted to the Executive in December.

On the construction of the day centre on the John Billam site, the committee noted that a contractor had been appointed but work had not yet started. The Assistant Director advised that wave two would involve older people, on which consultation would also take place.

In response to members' request for advance consideration of the format of the assessment, Alison Elliott advised that this would be dependent on the outcome of the Personalisation - Customer Journey project and the number of users for whom services would need to be provided. Members requested a report on the numbers expected to be involved in direct payments as a percentage of the total.

Ms Manek concluded that the carers group wished to be constructive and suggested the establishment of a board of trustees with carers representatives to oversee developments and be able make timely contributions.

The committee noted the report.

4. Personalisation - Customer Journey Project

Alison Elliott (Assistant Director, Community Care) introduced the report which set out the aims of the Personalisation – Customer Journey project which included improving the whole process of adult social care. It built on work which started in 2009 and aimed to deliver the personalisation agenda, responding to demand in a timely way, minimising 'hand-offs' and the movement of clients between service teams. She outlined problems that had been experienced with information technology which needed to be redesigned and simplified. Savings were based on the ability to manage demand and having appropriate staff in place to make early decisions. Meetings would take place with service user groups and work would be completed by March 2011.

On the numbers likely to be affected the Alison Elliott advised that currently approximately 50 users required assessments weekly. Effective screening should allow at least 75-85% to be assessed and allocated care packages within the 28 day timescale.

The report was noted.

5. **Performance and Finance Review Quarter 1, 2010/11**

The committee considered the report from the Directors of Finance and Corporate Resources and Policy and Regeneration which summarised Brent Council's spending, activity and performance in the first quarter of 2010/11 and highlighted key issues and solutions. It took a corporate overview of financial and service performance and provided an analysis of high risk areas. The report was accompanied by appendices providing budget, activity and performance data for each service area, the Local Area Agreement, ring fenced budgets and the capital programme. Vital Signs trend data and graphs were also provided along with the council's overall budget summary.

The Director of Policy and Regeneration, Phil Newby, advised that the finance elements of the report had already been discussed by the Budget Panel and members could therefore confine themselves to the performance aspects of the report. He stated that performance management system across the council was under review due in part to changes introduced by central government. The Director referred to concerns over the performance figures for the quarter, mainly due to lack of data and changes taking place within the health service. He drew members' attention to new indicators, some of which were to be reported on an annual basis although this could be reviewed. Phil Newby summarised concerns over particular targets including knife crime figures which had increased following changes in the method of calculation and domestic violence as grants to support initiatives had been reduced. Employment figures were being monitored in particular for women as there was evidence of reductions in the availability part time jobs and also recycling figures which hopefully would be addressed with the new contract. There was also a rise in the number of looked after children. The Director noted with concern that there was an increase in the number of complaints not being dealt with at stage one. In summary, he acknowledged the concerns and hoped for a reformed performance package in which the council could have confidence.

The Chair referred to additional grant funding that had been received for social care reform and sought assurances that it would be reserved for this purpose. Concern was also expressed over the level and pattern of complaints and the Director suggested that the Head of the Complaints Team attend a future meeting to answer questions.

The report was noted.

6. **Order of business**

The committee agreed to change the order of business to take earlier in the meeting an item for which members of the public were present.

7. Motions referred from Full Council - 13 September 2010

The committee considered a motion referred by Full Council on 13 September 2010 regarding car repair and paint spraying garages expressing concern at the problems caused to residents and calling on this committee to set up a task group to consider how such activity could be regulated and where possible and prevented.

Members agreed that car repair and paint spraying garages caused problems in a number of locations around the borough despite best endeavours. It was hoped that a task group could identify the stumbling blocks, in particular those relating to legal, financial and planning issues and recommend changes. It was agreed that all councillors should be made aware of the task group so that they could identify sites in the wards. It was also suggested that the issue be broadened to take in road-side selling.

The committee agreed to establish the task group, nominations for membership to be made through the political group offices.

8. The Corporate Strategy 2010 - 2014 - Brent Our Future

The Director of Policy and Regeneration introduced the Corporate Strategy 2010-2014 – Brent Our Future which set out the vision and strategic objectives for the borough which, he commented, were in line with the current financial position. Phil Newby advised that the consultation had taken place with partners and agreement had been reached on a combined document which incorporated the Community Plan.

In response to comments on the extent to which the strategy could have been more radical, the Director advised that the strategy was about outcomes and that the question of delivery would be dealt with separately.

The committee noted the Corporate Strategy.

9. One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The report before the committee set out options for inclusion in the One Council Overview and Scrutiny work programme which included issues raised at the One Council, Many Voices event held on 28 September 2010 and other issues that related to council priorities.

In response to the proposal that procurement be included as a topic for consideration, Phil Newby suggested that procurement was currently under review under the One Council programme and he would be in a better position to advise on when this should be timetabled for consideration after progress had been made. Members commented that it would be helpful to have in advance details of programme projects so that objectives could be challenged where appropriate. It was agreed to receive at the next meeting a progress report on tranches which would include information on objectives and targets and that the status of each project be a standing item on future agendas. Members also requested an update on the Civic Centre project include timescales, delivery and projected costs.

RESOLVED:

that the work programme as amended be agreed.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

R COLWILL
Vice Chair, in the Chair