

SOCIAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Social Affairs Select Committee held on
24 January 2012 commencing at 7 p.m.
at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre, Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks.

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Cook (Chairman)
Cllr. Ms. Lowe (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Ball, Brookbank, Ms. Chetram, Eyre, Mrs. George, Horwood,
Maskell, Mrs. Purves, Raikes, Miss. Stack, Miss. Thornton and Towell.

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Ayres, Mrs Morris, Pett and
Searles.

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item No. 1)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Social Affairs Select
Committee held on 1 November 2011, be approved and signed by the
Chairman as a correct record.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item No. 2)

Cllr. Mrs. Cook declared a personal interest as a member of the Sevenoaks District
Arts Council.

Cllrs. Eyre and Raikes declared personal interests as Trustees of the Stag Theatre.

Cllr. Raikes declared a personal interest in that he had attended a group choir
holiday which Gill Shepherd-Coates had also attended.

Cllr. Miss. Stack declared a personal interest in that she had a friend who
volunteered for the Alzheimers Society.

24. FORMAL RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET FOLLOWING MATTERS REFERRED BY THE COMMITTEE AND/OR REQUESTS FROM THE PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (Report No. 3)

- (a) 2012/13 Budget and Review of Service Plans (*Response from Cabinet
– 8 December 2011*)

The response from Cabinet was noted. A Member asked whether the Police had
been approached for contributing man hours to the CCTV Control Room. The Head
of Community Development said she would talk to the Area Commander but
explained that at the moment they were embedding a new staffing regime.

*ACTION 1: Head of Community Development to approach the Area
Commander about contribution of man hours to the CCTV Control Room.*

25. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Report No. 4)

The Actions from the previous meeting were noted. The Vice Chairman reported that
she and the Chairman had met with Mumsnet to see how the scrutiny role could be

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potentially used to help with the Miscarriage Code of Care campaign. They were hoping to visit Darent Valley and Pembury Hospitals to see how far they were implementing the Code of Practice, and then meet with the representatives to discuss both their best practice and where any improvements could be made. The plan was to then write a report and feed it in to the Kent County Council (KCC) Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee chaired by County Cllr. Chard. Cllr. Miss. Stack and Cllr. Raikes also agreed to attend the visits to the hospitals.

ACTION 2: Visits to be arranged to Darent Valley and Pembury Hospitals in relation to the Miscarriage Code of Care campaign by Mumsnet.

26. OLDER PEOPLE'S STRATEGY ACTION PLAN (Item No. 6)

The Head of Community Development reported on the findings of the consultation process via the Older Peoples Forums. The results of the consultation would help form the priorities of the Action Plan following the themes of the Community Plan: Older People's contribution to the Community; Helping people to stay active and healthy in later life; The right support and services; Housing to meet needs; and, Safe and strong communities.

In response to questions, the Head of Community Development advised that the 50+ label of older people was a government one, however clearly the age range of 50–70 needed to be differentiated from the frail or elderly. Some discussion arose on the definitions. The frail and elderly were more easily identifiable and it was agreed that the target groups were difficult to define by age. It was generally felt that people would be self selecting by the services offered, and that there was a marked difference between those in full time employment, those retired and active and the more vulnerable, but that it was important to direct resources appropriately and to the right people.

28. COMMUNITY PLAN PRIORITY: MEETING THE NEEDS OF AN AGEING POPULATION (Item No.7)

The Chairman welcomed Carol Infanti and Sue Stower from Kent County Council (KCC), Viniti Seabrooke from Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services (ADSS) and Gill Shepherd-Coates from Age UK to the meeting.

The Head of Community Development reported that by 2031, 25% of the population would be aged 65 and above whilst those in the age group 20 – 64 would decrease by more than 5%. Meeting the needs of an ageing population was one of the twelve priorities in the Community Plan. The District Council was currently helping meet the needs of the aging population by supporting the voluntary sector through it's grants programme and involvement in community safety and health and wellbeing initiatives. The Chairman advised that she had attended a tea dance and had been impressed by the lively jazz band. She suggested that the Committee attend a health walk, and urged all Members to help advertise these walks in their wards.

A Member asked whether consideration had been given to holding the Trickster Musical – a community safety initiative warning against letting strangers in the house, in locations other than The Stag Theatre. The Head of Community Development responded that this could be investigated further when it was looked at again in autumn. However, part of the experience was the trip to the theatre. It was quite

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expensive to put on the show and was felt more prudent to transport as many people to one location as possible. The musical was publicised through local groups, press releases, working with the housing associations and advising voluntary groups.

Action 3: Investigate cost and feasibility of showing performances at alternative venues when the next Trixster Musical was planned.

Members considered and noted the visit report to Hollybush Court Day Centre ((Item No. 8) also refer to Minute 29 (b) below)). In response to a query as to the affordability of the service offered by the day centre, Gill Shepherd-Coates replied that it was set at the best level they could and was a historical charge. All walks of life used the centre and as yet no-one had not been able to afford the service offered, but there were funds for anyone in financial difficulties.

Viniti Seabrooke, Project Manager – Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services (ADSS), addressed the Committee and tabled a report on the work of the group. It was a separate registered charity to the Alzheimer's Society based at Northfleet and operating in North West Kent covering the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley area. It was a struggle to meet need and there were many people on their waiting lists for the services provided. They had a dedicated support worker for their Black and Minority (BME) Service Development Project and were currently focusing on the gypsy and traveller communities. The GP Early Intervention Project was lottery funded. A template had been formulated to help GPs assess patients on a more uniform basis for memory problems. There was a Carers Learning Group in Hextable and Gravesend and they hosted a Dementia Café each month in Dartford, Gravesend and Swanley. With regards to future developments, the Swanley Silver Dream Project was currently competing for lottery funding. There had been 1400 applications for the funding and 83 were through to the next round, with only 30 projects to be successful. She was pleased to report that they were through to the next round. The project would focus on gypsies, travellers and older people in the Swanley area. It would run for three days a week, and carers and patients would attend together but split up for different activities. The bid was currently for £160,00 and the main problem was locating an appropriate venue.

In response to questions she explained that it had not been easy trying to engage the gypsy and traveller communities but to achieve this they had been working closely with facilitators. Resources and appropriate venues were the main issues facing the charity. At the moment the day care service only had sixteen places and there was a long waiting list. Funding and services were not shared with Age UK but it may be time to investigate joint working. Funding was mainly through KCC, the lottery and donations, however the BME service development post was funded by the NHS. With reference to the GP Early Intervention Project and the template produced for GPs, this had initially begun as a pilot to engage with the BME population and was carried out at one surgery in North West Kent. From that it had been rolled out to the wider community. It was a five year project and was currently in its fourth year. The template had been developed because the Commissioners had asked for it as no two doctors were diagnosing the same way. With regards to the Befriending Scheme, it was just a social visit for the carer or patient. All volunteers were CRB checked, trained and vetted by the charity and observed working in the day centre first. It was suggested that the SDC Professional Services Manager may be able to help locate an appropriate venue.

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ACTION 4: The Professional Services Manager be asked to help identify appropriate premises.

Gill Shepherd-Coates from Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, took the opportunity to explain that as a result of the nationwide merger between Age Concern and Help the Aged, Age UK was formed. They took the decision to become a brand partner at an early stage and relaunched as Age UK Sevenoaks & District. Tonbridge did not take the decision until later. As a result of the changing landscape in public services, the decision was taken to merge forming 'Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge'. Twenty-eight more Age Concerns were looking to move towards Age UK but Swanley was one of the centres that would not be able to in the first round.

Day Care was offered via the Centres at Hollybush Court (Sevenoaks), Townlock (Tonbridge), Sencio Leisure Centre (Edenbridge) and Meeting Point (Swanley). People were referred by their GPs, Social Services, relatives, friends or were even self referred. Within the Hollybush Court Day Centre they offered aromatherapy, bathing, chiropody, hairdressing, indian head massage, reflexology and reiki and a comprehensive range of support services. The bathing service was very popular and was used by daycare clients, and others in the community who for example were awaiting bathroom adaptations. There were seven lunch clubs organised in partnership with the local community and they were just starting one in Tonbridge. Advice services were funded by Age UK and there was a wealth of leaflets and booklets which could also be downloaded from the internet. Hollybush Court Day Centre also acted as an office for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and could issue certain benefit claim forms, verify documents and fast-track claims. In Sevenoaks there was also a Computer Learning Centre open five days a week from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m, which could accommodate up to four people and offered one to one training for people at their own learning speed. Being able to use the internet etc to keep in touch with family and friends was very important, and Age UK had recently launched an online community. There was a trained Counsellor available as and when needed and they benefited from funding through Age UK from national lottery funding for their 'Fit as a fiddle' campaign to encourage healthy lifestyles. An advocacy worker had been engaged ready to launch an advocacy project that would also cover Swanley, and they had benefited from £5000 from a bid to the Home Improvement Agency and Social Services to help with repairs to people's boilers.

With reference to funding, KCC were responsible for 36% of their funding, which was being reduced by 5% year on year under a four year programme. Last year there had been a deficit of around £80,000 but a legacy had helped bridge the difference. Funding currently received was mainly for project work and not revenue funding for core services. However trading activities did provide some income via commission, under the arm of Age UK Enterprises, for selling insurance and funeral plans etc. The downside to this was the number of exams needed to pass to meet Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, but it was worthwhile because of the gain in extra revenue.

The challenges facing Age UK was the rising aging population which was set to increase by 50% over the next 25 years with 2 million with care needs and around 800,000 unable to get financial support or care because of qualification criteria being raised. Most enquiries received were concerns as to how to pay for long term care, with a rise in those that were asset rich but cash poor. People were trapped in their

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large properties as many bungalows have been sold off and redeveloped. There were around sixty applications for every leasehold sheltered accommodation flat available. It was difficult to find appropriate leasehold accommodation within Sevenoaks. Mrs. Shepherd-Coates had recently received a report from Age UK on Care on the Community and would obtain further copies for the Committee. All reports and leaflets could also be ordered or downloaded from the Age UK website. Transport was also an issue. The Age UK minibuses were running at capacity. A Member pointed out that VAWK had some underuse of their transport and Age UK should perhaps liaise with them to see if they could help each other out.

Sue Stower, Head of Service for Older People and Physical Disability for South West Kent (covering Sevenoaks – not Swanley, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge – not Malling) addressed the Committee. Services were accessed by contacting the Kent Contact Assessment Service where trained workers would give an initial assessment of need. If the needs were relatively straight forward issues i.e. installation of a grab rail, they were dealt with at that stage quite easily. However the majority of cases needed more help, and assessment would be referred to an enablement team of Occupational Therapists and Social Workers – or ‘case managers’. The former home care service had been reconfigured and retrained as an enablement service – based on occupational therapy. This service was free for up to six weeks and very successful. 60% of those using it did not need ongoing care but could access the service for slightly longer. Teams would assess needs at home, and work out the client’s needs and desired outcomes of intervention. A managed service could be facilitated or a personal budget supplied to the client for them to access the services they required and be signposted to other organisations. Focusing on the clients’ needs and achieving their desired outcome was challenging especially in the current economic climate. They also provided assistive technology such as fire alarms or telecare sensors. This was very new technology which could study patterns of behaviour and help them tailor care support to the person’s waking patterns which was especially helpful with dementia.

Carol Infanti Strategic Commissioning Manager, KCC, was responsible for grant funding and contracting arrangements. There was a drive to support clients in their own homes, providing choice and empowering them to make their own decisions on their care. Occupational Therapists worked with the Council through facilities grants and with West Kent Housing on adapting homes. They provided capital project support to top up where a facilities grant was not enough. They were also keen to work with planners on housing and local plan policy, for example making sure that wheelchair access was available and the need for more sheltered accommodation. They worked very closely with health colleagues and one of the biggest challenges was timely discharges and avoidance of unnecessary hospital stays. In this particular area one of the challenges was the longer life expectancy and associated issues such as dementia.

A Member requested that she attend a meeting of the Services Select Committee’s Under-Occupation of Social Housing Working Group as they often felt that there was a lack of synergy between planning and care needs. In response to a question as to what role the Council could best play in supporting issues arising from longer life expectancy in the area, she advised that promotion and support of active lives and sharing of information regarding services and voluntary groups available would be important. Issues with care homes were affordability, choice and the fact that some

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people went in too early rather than receiving support to enable them to stay in their own home for longer. Extra care housing such as that offered at Emily Court in Wilmington, Dartford was a model of the way forward. Catering for a diverse aging population needed different ways of thinking. They were trying to get the private sector to respond to the emerging needs of the new older generation which would be achieved in part by the clients being able to fund services themselves via their direct payments.

ACTION 5. A Members Visit be arranged to Emily Court.

The Chairman thanked all the speakers who had attended and for a very interesting evening.

29. FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS VISITS (Item No. 8)

(a) South East Ambulance Service

Members considered and noted the feedback report.

(b) Hollybush Court Day Centre

Covered under Minute 28 above.

(c) Voluntary Action Within Kent (VAWK)

Members considered and noted the feedback report which was tabled at the meeting.

30. FUTURE BUSINESS, THE WORK PLAN 2011/12 AND THE FORWARD PLAN (REPORT NO. 5)

The Committee discussed the Work Plan. It was agreed that the 'Future of NHS in the District' be moved to September and looked at with Kent Fire & Rescue Service provision and the Police.

31. PROGRAMME OF VISITORS TO FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE (INCLUDING VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS) (Report No. 9)

The programme of visitors for future meetings was discussed and noted. Consideration would be given as to whether the next meeting could be held at the Swanley Youth & Community Centre. With reference to June's meeting it was agreed that consideration would be given as to whether the meeting could be held at the golf club or other leisure centre. The Community Plan priority for June would be 'Strong Active Communities' and September's 'Safe and Strong Communities,' with speakers to be invited from the Kent Fire & Rescue Service and Kent Police.

ACTION 6: Head of Community Development to look at alternative meeting venue for March and June meetings.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.30 P.M.

Chairman