

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INDIVIDUALS  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday 12 April 2011 (7.30pm – 8:30pm)  
Havering Town Hall, Romford**

**Present:**

Councillors Wendy Brice-Thompson (Chairman), Linda Van Den Hende, Barry Oddy (Substitute for Councillor Jeff Brace), Eric Munday (Substitute for Councillor Lynden Thorpe) Keith Wells and Ron Ower

Apologies were received from Councillor Jeff Brace, Councillor Lynden Thorpe and Andrew Ireland

David Cooper, Head of Adult Social Care was also in attendance

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman announced the arrangements to be followed in the event of the building needing to be vacated as the result of an emergency.

**31. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Individuals Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**32. SOCIAL WORK TASK FORCE (ADULTS/ CHILDREN)**

The Committee received an update report on the National Social Work Taskforce (NSWTF) Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) from the Head of Adult Social Care. This provided the recommendations of the National Social Work Taskforce as reported in December 2009 and endorsed by the Government and the likely impact of these recommendations on the Council, the work undertaken by Havering so far, and the actions required in relation to the first published reports from the successor body to the NSWTF.

The Committee was informed that the NSWTF was formed following further and wide spread criticism of the profession during and after the public enquiry into the death in Haringey of Baby P. At the time a full review of social work was carried out for both adult and children's social care services, with a view to making a comprehensive reform. The group was chaired by Moira Gibb, the Chief Executive of Camden, and included sixteen other officers from a selection of organisations across the country representing social care.

The Committee was informed that the NSWTF made fifteen recommendation, which had been endorsed by the Government. The Group Director (Social

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Care & Learning) and the People Strategy Manager, Social Care and Learning, presented a briefing report to CMT in August 2010. The purposes of the briefing report were to set out the main issues identified from the work of the NSWTF, summarise the recommendations it made and to explain the subsequent expectations on employers in relation to the implementation of the fifteen recommendations.

The Committee was informed that the SWRB had identified five areas of reform, directly linked to the National Social Work Taskforce recommendations. These areas were around the competencies and capability of the core social work roles. It also ensured that there were training and development opportunities in place, and that there was more focus on how training is delivered and the development of social workers monitored.

The Committee discussed their views on how social workers are perceived and were informed that compared to the medical profession, social work was a fairly new profession. The Committee was informed that nationally the average turnover of social workers was around 7 years, which was high compared to the medical profession. This in part reflects the relatively "new status" of social work as a profession. Many of the changes recommended by the NSWTF can be seen as part of the strengthening of the profession, e.g. strengthening the screening of people who enter social work training, and ensuring that the training is more robust. The Reform Board was very wide ranging and also looked at the practices that work well.

The Committee noted that the Local Authority provided work placements for trainees from local colleges. This was a good way of getting feedback from managers on the skills of new staff, and any issues that needed addressing. The Local Colleges had asked Adult Social Care officers to sit in on the interviews for the social care courses.

Members asked if there was any counselling in place for social workers. The officer stated that this is dealt with through supervision. Supervisors ensure that the social workers are doing the job properly, are interacting with the clients, monitoring the practices being carried out and assist with managing workloads etc. If however the social worker was struggling, and counselling was thought to be necessary, the service would arrange for this to take place.

The Committee noted the update report

### **33. SECTION 75 PARTNERSHIPS REVIEWS – LEARNING DISABILITIES/ MENTAL HEALTH**

The Committee received an update of the current Section 75 Partnership Arrangements operating in Adult Social Care. This covered the Section 75 agreements between the London Borough of Havering and North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) to provide services for adults with mental health problems and the Section 75 agreement between NHS Havering and the London Borough of Havering to provide support to Adults with Learning Disabilities. The Committee were informed that the progress of the partnerships was going well in that they were both within budget. There was however pressure on the Learning Disabilities budget.

#### Mental Health Services

The Committee was informed that there was active engagement with service users of the mental health service, and the service users had reported that they receive responses from any concerns which they raise with the service. Service users had indicated that the service is easy to deal with and they are open to criticism. The Committee was also informed that NELFT were a three-star performing organisation and that monthly performance reports were produced.

#### Learning Disabilities Services

The transfer of resource and funds for this service came across to the Local Authority on 1 April 2010. The Local Authority were then financially responsible for those patients in relation to mental health. The Committee was informed that the Local Authority had needed to ensure that the funding met the client's needs. Work was currently under way with care providers to ensure best value for money.

Members asked if given the current financial climate, whether constraints on the budget would continue. Officers stated that budget management had proved difficult in light of the increase in demand, and also due to the demographics of the borough e.g. large number of people placed in residential care, many outside the borough. Officers informed the Committee that nationally over the past 5-10 years most social workers and commissioners had been aware of the financial constraints, and were taking steps to address this through market management.

The Committee was informed that the service works closely with clients on the Autistic Spectrum, who also had learning disabilities. Officers stated that where possible clients with learning disabilities were encouraged, and supported into, employment. The service looked for particular jobs dependent on the person's learning disability, and there was evidence that the people remained in employment. Obviously this would be more challenging in the current financial climate.

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The Committee was informed that through the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board, work had been undertaken with hospital staff to ensure that they were able to support patients who had learning disabilities. The background to this work nationally had come about following the "6 lives report" produced by the Local Government Ombudsman, which had investigated cases of abuse involving people with learning disabilities. Officers informed the Committee that all clients with learning disabilities were provided with an information pack which they could keep with them, and which explained their situation should they be admitted to hospital.

The Committee noted that all clients with learning disabilities are entitled to have a yearly health check up with their GP and, whilst there was progress in this area, there was still room for improvement. Engagement with GPs and the Consortia was being planned.

The Committee **noted** the update.

**34. LIBRARY SERVICES DVD – HOW THEY SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL AND LEARNING DISABILITIES**

The Committee decided that since there was no officer available to present this item, it should be deferred to the next meeting.

**35. DEMENTIA STRATEGY JOINT TOPIC GROUP REPORT**

The Committee received a report on the Dementia Strategy Joint Topic Group. The Committee felt that the report was very comprehensive and **agreed** to refer the recommendation to Cabinet, the North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) or other bodies as appropriate.

**36. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report summarising the Committee's activities during its year of operation ended May 2011.

The Committee **noted** the Annual Report and authorised the Chairman to **agree** the final version; and **agreed** that the report be referred to full Council.

**37. REALLOCATION OF WORKLOAD OF PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report on the reallocation of workload of the Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Following the announcement by the Leader of the Council that the Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be abolished at the end of the financial year the report invited

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the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider adding to their work programmes items that were due to be considered in the future by the Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Individuals Overview and Scrutiny Committee was therefore asked to scrutinise the “Impact of Personalisation of Social Care on Voluntary Sector”. The Committee **agreed** to add this to their work programme for the next municipal year.

**38. FUTURE AGENDAS**

The Committee discussed items they wished to review in the next municipal year. These included:

- Review of the Dementia Strategy report within 12 months
- Update on the situation with the Dial-a-Ride service

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Chairman

19 July 2011