

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

**Wednesday 15 June 2011 (7.30pm – 9:45pm)
Havering Town Hall, Romford**

Present:

Councillors Wendy Brice-Thompson (Chairman), Linda Van Den Hende, June Alexander, Jeff Brace, Pam Light, and Dennis Bull (substitute for Keith Wells)

Apologies were received from Councillor Keith Wells and Andrew Ireland

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.

**1. REVIEW OF DAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES**

The Committee were informed that at its meeting on 18 May 2011, Cabinet had considered a report updating on the position on day opportunities for people with learning disabilities and recommended a way forward in modernising the services and achieving improved value for money.

The changes were complex and far reaching and it was proposed that a consultation was carried out over the summer period on the recommended proposals for change before final decisions were made.

The recommendations were:

That a two month public consultation be undertaken on the options set out in the Cabinet Report on the basis that the Council's preferred option is to:

- close St Bernard's Day Centre and work with individual users and their carers in order to ensure that they continue to receive appropriate support either through external provision or an Individual Service budget
- Amalgamate the day care provision with Nason Waters Day Centre and Western Road Day Centre on a redesigned Nason Waters site which will entail the closure of Western Road.
- provide a remodelled service at Nason Waters providing for:
 - legacy users
 - a resource to invite in new provision (pre employment; learning opportunities; activities etc.)

Individuals Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 12 April 2011

- as well as working with all service users on their future individual service plans.
- transform provision of transport by
 - a reassessment of all users' needs for transport (including the changes that may be required as a result of the potential closures above)
 - considering the imposition of a charge for use of transport.
- To authorise officers to engage with the local private and voluntary sector market to provide mapping and evaluation of current opportunities as well as stimulating new opportunities.
- To note that Carers Assessments and Person Centred Plans would be undertaken in respect of all Day Care Service Users.
- That the Cabinet report be referred to the Individuals Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comment as part of the consultation.
- On completion of consultation the Lead Member would be authorised, to make a final decision on the proposals in this Report in consultation with the Group Director Social Care & Learning.
- To note that officers would investigate remodelling of the Nason Waters site as set out in paragraph 5.4 of the Cabinet Report, and dependent on the decision made by the Lead Member in the light of the consultation, the Lead Member would be authorised to take any necessary decisions to implement any specific proposals to remodel provision at Nason Waters in consultation with the Group Director Social Care & Learning and Group Director Finance & Commerce.

The decision was requisitioned for the following reasons:

1. There was a lack of detail in the report to Cabinet about the two month public consultation process.
2. The report to Cabinet lacked clarity about future transport arrangements which would impact adversely on service users particularly those residing in the north of the Borough.
3. The future of "remodelled" services at Nason Waters appeared uncertain.
4. That detailed consideration should be given to enhanced marketing of the Council's services to encourage greater take up.
5. To consider greater involvement of users, carers and the voluntary sector before options were considered in the proposed public consultation.
6. To reconsider the recommendation that the Lead Member be authorised to make the final decision relating to the proposals and preferred options for decisions to be made by Cabinet as a whole.

Individuals Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 12 April 2011

7. To consider national and or regional data on the impact of Direct Payments on the future provision of day opportunities for people with learning difficulties.

A member commented that a description of an Individual Service Budget would be relevant in the understanding of the report. The Committee were informed that over the last two and a half years, service users had decided to use Self Directed Support to purchase their own care packages to suit their own needs i.e. Direct Payments, Personal Budgets etc. The Committee were informed that there were safeguarding measures in place to ensure that the funds were used in a managed and supportive place, and there was also a reconciliation process for all monies spent. All officers working with Self Directed Support arrangements were experienced on what the needs of users were.

A member stated that the detailed timetable of remodelling work would include temporary accommodation, and asked if this would disrupt Nason Waters whilst the work was being carried out? The Committee were informed that at present Nason Waters was essentially a "warehouse" type structure, with no supporting walls. A surveyor would be involved with any remodelling, and would work with staff and users to develop the area of the current footprint, as well as possible extension to the centre. The Committee were informed that the remodelling also included the support and provision from other providers coming into the centre, and they had already had approaches from the local college and other voluntary sector organisations. This would allow users to make choices about what they use in the future, and to access services outside of the centre.

Also raised was the reason for inviting new providers into the centre, when the number of users had been falling over a number of years, and whether this was linked to Direct Payments. The Committee were informed that new providers would increase the choice for individuals, make changes needed in order to meet the needs of the individuals and market the provisions to younger people in a transitional process. Officers stated that take up of provisions thus far had been low, but they were looking at further marketing.

A member stated that whilst the report did not give sufficient information on the provision of proposed transport costs, it did give current costs and it was a concern that an individuals could spend over half a day on transport. The Committee were informed that this was a concern, but with the rationalisation of services this would help with the transport options and the reduction in the length of routes. At the present time, all centres were used by people all over the borough. There were two routes which served Nason Waters, one from the South and one from the centre of the borough. The new proposals would give the opportunity to rationalise journey's, and the average route would be reduced.

The Committee also asked why a mapping exercise had not been carried out before taking the decision. Officers informed the committee that mapping had been carried out in the past, however this did not allow for users to rate services and needed to be put into more accessible formats. There was also a

Individuals Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 12 April 2011

financial challenge. The new mapping exercise would also bring the information up to date. This would then give information about what is available for individuals to make a choice about the opportunities they wish to pursue.

Concerns were also raised about the speed in which the proposals were being dealt with, and that the final decision on the proposals would be made by the Lead Member. It was felt that given the nature of the proposals that the consultation should be meaningful, and that a consultation period of two months was not sufficient. Members stated that they felt the decision should be made by Cabinet, so the process was open, and that the consultation period should be increased. The Committee agreed that the consultation period was too short, and given the time of the year, holiday season, the consultation could possibly miss vital input from users and other interested parties.

Members asked why the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not been involved from the start, and given that the first meeting of the committee was not until the end of July, the consultation would have almost been completed with no input from the Committee members. The Committee was informed that due to the requisition the consultation was now on hold, however letters had been drafted to individuals, together with feedback forms and commission documents. Arrangements had been made for events to take place with individual users of the centres, staff and other voluntary organisations. The consultation was available via a dedicated telephone line, email account or in written form. Officers stated that the legal advice was that consultations could be done over 3 months, in this case it was felt that 2 months would be a sufficient timescale as any longer could cause anxiety to the individuals who used the services and would not necessarily add to the responses given the intensive programme planned.

The Committee agreed that they wished to be involved in the consultation, and since they would not be meeting until mid July, it was agreed that a topic group should be established to be involved during the consultation period.

The Committee then discussed the options of a central location, however officers informed the Committee that there was no suitable location available. It was hoped that the proposals will bring higher staffing, better facilities, better and more resources, more choice for individuals and investment for the future.

Members also asked about the mention in the report of Nason Waters being a temporary or interim measure. Officers stated that the changes were not intended to be temporary or short term but any new service needs to respond market changes and the choices made by individuals.

Members enquired about the partnership of stakeholders as mentioned under Paragraph 3.3. Strategic Position. The Committee were informed that the Learning Disability Partnership Board was made up of representatives from Leisure and Recreation, Health, Carers, Clients and Users. It was hoped that the proposals would go to the Board following the outcome of this meeting.

Individuals Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 12 April 2011

Members enquired about the demographics and trends, and asked for information as to why there was such an imbalance between providing services with Learning Difficulties in the Community, however there was a higher number of individuals in Nursing or Residential Care. The Committee was informed that this imbalance reflected an historic national position regarding the provision of service for adults with Learning Disabilities. Where a significant number of people had been placed in residential and nursing care (including specialist hospital provision) outside London. This was something that Officers in Havering and other local authorities were aiming to address through Supported Living. Officers stated that residential care was very costly to the authority, however with Direct Payments the funds could be used for Supported Living etc. Officers informed the Committee that across the borough the largest groups using Direct Payments were individuals with Sensory or Physical Disabilities, followed by individuals with Learning Disabilities and then Older Persons.

The Committee were informed that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment had evidenced a growth in the numbers of people with Learning Disabilities for whom the Council has a duty to provide day opportunities over the next ten years

Members raised concerns about the centres struggling to provide personalised services. Officers stated that due to restrictions on budgets, staff were also restricted, this was due to the finance challenges overall, and partly attributed to sickness absence, however the change in culture and management approach had improved the sickness absence level in the last year. The remodelled service would be better equipped to provide a personalised service.

The comparison between the external and council provisions was also raised. Officer informed the Committee that all the figures for this comparison were given in the report. Officers added that if all provisions were private, then the cost could rise if there was not a sufficient market, and therefore they would have concerns if any service held a monopoly of the provision. A Member asked if the Day Centres were subject to inspections. Officers stated that whilst there was no legal requirement to undertake a formal inspection by the CQC. However, Adult Social Care's Quality Assurance Team, did ensure that providers were monitored, and that information from individual social work reviews and performance information was used to identify any issues. The Committee were informed that arrangements for such monitoring would be included in the Annual Safeguarding Report, which would be presented to a future OSC meeting

At the request of the Chairman, a member of the public spoke on behalf of the public present to express the views of users and carers. The spokesperson stated that they wished the consultation to be meaningful to the users and carers, and wished to be involved in the designing of the consultation document. They felt that the consultation document was not user friendly. They also endorsed the requisition put forward by Members.

Individuals Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 12 April 2011

The Committee discussed the issues around the timescale of the consultation and members asked for consideration to be given to lengthening the period so that all issues could be looked at.

After further discussions, the matter was put to a vote.

The proposal that the requisition be upheld (and therefore that the matter be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration) was LOST (by 4 votes to 2), and it was therefore **RESOLVED:**

That the requisition of the Cabinet decision held on 18 May 2011 not be upheld.

The voting was as follows:

Councillors Alexander and Van Den Hende voted for the requisition
Councillors Brace, Brice-Thompson, Bull and Light voted against the requisition.

.....

Chairman

19 July 2011