

MINUTES

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2015

Present:

Councillors:

Mrs Bassadone	Mahmood (Chairman)
Conway	Silwal
Hearn	Imarni
Link	W Wyatt-Lowe
Guest	Howard

Councillor Harden (Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services)

Officers:

Kayley Johnston	Member Support Officer (Minutes)
Andy Vincent	Group Manager
Claire Lynch	Community Partnerships Team Leader
Fiona Williamson	Group Manager Property and place
Julie Still	Group Manager Resident Services
Steve Baker	Assistant Director (Chief Executive's Unit)
Mavis Cook	TLC Co-Opted Member

The meeting began at: 7:35pm.

Before the meeting begun Cllr Mahmood introduced Cllr Guest who was attending in regards to item number 7.

Cllr Mahmood asked for Portfolio Holders to send their apologies if they are unable to attend the meeting.

OS/222/15 MINUTES

The minutes of the Housing and Community OSC meeting on 16 September 2015 were agreed by members and signed by the Chair.

OS/223/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr Mclean, Cllr Banks, and Cllr Timmis and Co-Opted TLC Members Howard and Horn.
Councillor Howard substituted for Councillor Banks.

OS/224/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Guest was here to present on item 7 she presented a declared and interest as she is Dacorum's Representative on Drug Link Rep, Cllr Howard also declared that she sits on the CAD board.

OS/225/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

OS/226/15 **CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE**
COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL IN

None.

OS/227/15 **VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING – CHANGES TO GRANT**
ARRANGEMENTS

S Baker introduced Claire Lynch, who is the Community Partnership Team Lead and is heavily involved in the project and the author of the report.

Later this month, Cabinet will be receiving a report seeking their approval to replace the current core funding arrangements. The new processes are what we call outcome based commissioning. We currently have 10 locally based Strategic Partners these are listed in the report and receive annual grant funding to deliver a range of services for Dacorum residents. The agreements don't focus on what the outcomes or benefits are for the residents of Dacorum or the Council and the agreements themselves are not contracts and therefore are not enforceable.

This Council has agreed that the grant funding for the Strategic Partners would cease after this financial year and from 1st April 2016 it will be replaced by an outcome based commissioning model.

Members should note that the advantage of the commissioning approach is that the actual needs of Dacorum residents are assessed using the best available evidence. The Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny received a similar report to this last week and their comments have been incorporated in the Cabinet report. Clearly it's too late for your comments to be incorporated in the Cabinet report so we will record any comments made and verbally relay them to the Cabinet Meeting so Cabinet can take into account your views when they make their decision.

Cllr Hearn asked if this had been discussed with the voluntary sector and what was their feedback?

S Baker said yes there has been two rounds of consultations with the Strategic Partners Claire has been to the consultation meetings and she will brief you on it.

C Lynch presented the report explaining they are moving to an outcome based commissioning model. This is in line with Cabinet office good practice. It is a four stage process, analyse, plan, do and review, and at the minute they have gone through the analyse stage. There have been two stages of consultation; the first stage was a survey that went out to users and face to face meetings with Strategic Partners, a survey and conversations with internal staff was also carried out. Once they had a better understanding they then moved onto stage two consultation where they started to develop some of the outcomes that they wanted to see for each service.

There have been two CMT and Cabinet Member joint workshops to set the direction, group the services into contracts and shape outcomes.

What we are proposing is that the funding from the existing ten organisations that are funded through the Strategic Partner Programme is used to fund seven services that are based on evidence.

We are now in stage two consultations until 6th November and we have had requests from two services to have an additional stage three consultation (Living Stable Live – previously the Druglink and DENS grant funding/ Preventing Relationship Breakdown – previously Mediation Hertfordshire and Relate Dacorum, Watford and Three Rivers grant funding) The outcomes for each of the services can be viewed in the appendix from 3A-3E and the report outlines the phased approach.

The first tender we are proposing will be the released at the start of November and that will be the Information Advice and Advocacy Service. That is the service which is currently

delivered by the Citizens Advice Bureau. There will be a staggered approach thereafter which will be the voluntary sector support service which will be released in January. .
C Lynch highlighted that some of the acronyms were missing in the glossary. When the report refers to CMT that is Corporate Management Team, CRI is Crime Reduction Initiative and CAADA is Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse.

S Baker added that the meetings were done on a face to face individual basis to ensure quality consultation.

C Lynch was happy to take questions on the report

Cllr Harden arrived at 7.50pm

W Wyatt-Lowe said going back to the consultees, stage two. Staffs Residents and Councillors, when do you approach Councillors other than those in the room, with regards to Residents on the list? CILR Wyatt-Lowe does have a slight concern that we assess people's needs, irrespective of what people say we might want to consider their wants rather than their needs because quite often they don't want what they need and he worries about presuming people's needs without asking them. Should we be looking more at residents' opinions earlier in the process? Cllr Wyatt-Lowe does also have a concern about using outcomes as sometimes you get tied down with in-flexible outcomes and we want flexible as we may find what matters this year might not matter next year, can we build in flexibility of outcomes when commissioning?

C Lynch said with the involvement of Councillors, the first stage consultation was sent out to all Councillors through the DBC mailing list, in the form of a survey. There were also two joint workshops with Cabinet Members and CMT before the Overview and Scrutiny's process.

We did carry out a survey for residents which was open to existing service users and residents and this was publicised on our website, Digest, Gazette article and the team made sure that Strategic Partners ensured their service users had access to the consultation. We are proposing that we move through a co- design process, they have asked that the Strategic Partners nominate service users that want to become part of the consultation/ co-design process and help shape the service.

In relation to the residents' wants and needs they do agree that people say that what they want is different to the evidence of what people need. They have combined good practice after looking at areas like Camden to see how others are commission things and they have taken an approach to combine local information with national guidance. The majority of outcomes identified were quite broad and they are quite flexible with the provider. We will build flexibility into the contract, for example a clause to take into consideration changes in legislation which may affect demand.

Cllr Mahmood said there are so many core funded organisations and he noticed that when it comes to funding the biggest ones still get the biggest chunk. Is there a review of all of the services?

C Lynch said in terms of the financial values, Page 29 has a table which breaks down the financial values from before and after the review. There has been a redistribution of finances which takes into consideration other sources of funding in the area. Dacorum will be benefiting from just over £26k of money that the area has not seen in the past for Voluntary Sector Support. This has enabled a proposal for a larger reduction for that service and the savings have been redistributed to some of the services which Cllr Mahmood has referred to that support groups such as young people and victims of domestic violence.

Cllr Mahmood said that when they go out to tender we are only tendering for our funding. So are we saying that those organisations like Community Action for Dacorum can still function if they don't get the tender? And when the tender process goes on, are you saying the Strategic Partners might not get the funding?

S Baker added to that saying other organisations might tender for these services. It may be that some strategic partners may not be successful, we can't rule it out. It may be the case that an organisation that loses out on the Council funding may still be in a position to operate depending on what other contracts it has with other authorities and other sources of funding; it may still be able to operate as a service but will not be able to operate these services under a contract and will not receive Council funding.

Cllr Mahmood asked how the funding process is fair for everyone, at the moment existing service providers benefit from subsidised rents, if a new organisation was to come in how would they benefit?. How would it be made equal?

S Baker said yes it's a good question they do currently benefit from nominal rents and this will have to be taken into account as part of the evaluation process and adjustments will have to be made to create a level playing field.

Cllr Imarni referred to page 7, Hertfordshire County Council commission for the countywide service. How does it work and how confident are you that they will be able to provide the best service to Dacorum residents if you were to take on a County Model?

C Lynch said the reference to HCC is a separate service that's being commissioned by HCC. HCC did not have a standardised countywide approach in the past and are now moving to a county wide model. We will be benefitting from £26k more from HCC which means we can reduce the amount we put into the voluntary sector support, knowing that the gap will be bridged by the HCC fund. Existing CVS and Volunteer Centres from across the County are coming together to submit a tender for this service but as far we are aware there has been delay with the tender process due to the process of service providers trying to align themselves.

Cllr Imarni thanked C Lynch and said obviously there is a financial benefit but she's concerned about the quality of service and how can this be maintained.

C Lynch said one of the benefits of moving to the outcome based model is that it focuses on our residents and the result of the service rather than the service itself. The providers focus on how the community are benefitting it's about community satisfaction, improvement in behaviours and changes within the community rather than looking at how many sessions and how many people for example. We are looking at how people and the community changes, there will be a lot of learning as this is the first time we are monitoring outcomes. The first 6 months to a year will be used to set a base line to be realistic for these service providers and target KPIs will be set thereafter.

Cllr Howard had a thought about how it would be cascaded to residents, because they have got used to the names of the current providers, how you will publicise it.

Cllr Harden reiterated that the names won't be changing we are just defining what we want from the service.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe said if someone else gets the job then wont this cause confusion? They will continue to use the one they know.

C Lynch said social value and added value will be embedded in the tender process, a good implementation plan and communication plan will need to be submitted and will be scored to

make sure that the service will have the best chance of actually working. They will be doing their best to provide the best service for residents.

Cllr Harden added to that by saying the important part of this is partnership. There was a scenario, effectively we were funding the strategic partners to help residents and now we are more clearly defining what it is we want them to provide.

Cllr Mahmood asked if there is succession planning in case one doesn't win a bid.

Cllr Harden said these contracts will run for at least 3 years and there is nothing to say that the organisation that bids for it may not be the same organisation in a year or 3 years time.

Cllr Mahmood said how is the HRA funds being decided upon and how come it's not being tightened?

A Vincent said there is a 10% reduction in the funding they provide.

Cllr Mahmood said it's a very good report and very informative.

OS/228/15 ASSIGNMENT AND SUCCESSION TO A COUNCIL TENANCY

Cllr Guest announced that she requested this report to come to overview and scrutiny because she had had an issue in her ward.

The mother had not assigned her house to her son and then lost capacity and then her son had his tenancy removed by DBC.

Cllr Guest said we need to have a policy for when someone loses their capacity, she asked if Power of Eternity entitles someone else to assign the house to them?

Cllr Mahmood asked the office to present the report before questions were asked.

A Vincent said yes it's a complicated area of the housing law it relates to assignments and successions and he differentiated the two.

Successions and assignments can only happen once, this causes some difficulty when that has been used up.

A Vincent said that assignments can only happen once they have exceptions and can make some discretion.

There is a statutory succession if the property is correct for the remaining household that would be ok but if there was an issue with the size of the property there is no legal right for a person to succeed the tenancy.

We then make a judgment as to whether they move to a smaller property or if they have any duty at all to house someone.

Cllr Mahmood said you can't make someone homeless can you?

A Vincent said they could make people homeless what they wouldn't do is make someone who they consider is statutory homeless. Statutory duty, for example would a house hold with children, where as a single women or man they would not be considered as statutory so therefore they could be made homeless.

Cllr Mahmood raised an issue; if someone is homeless they come to the Council anyway!

A Vincent said yes but it doesn't mean we house them, it's only if they have a priority need.

Cllr Imarni also said that she knew of someone in the Hemel area who has lived in a DBC property for 20years with their mother and they were told that they can't be added to the

property tenancy so if the situation then turned out like Cllr Guests there was no ability to transfer the tenancy.

A Vincent gave an example of survivorship and that would then equal to one statutory right, which would then use it up. Children do not have a statutory right; this is not good practice however the son would have a statutory right if anything happened to the mother.

Cllr Mahmood referred to 2.1 from March 2012 it says things have changed, is that what you are telling us now about children?

A Vincent said if the tenancy is older than 2012 then the tenancy right will be obtained if it's newer than that then children don't have a statutory right in law.

N Harden added to that it's a Localism Act 2011 section 160.

Cllr Mahmood said you talked about 3 types of tenancies, secure, flexible and introductory. Could you please explain?

A Vincent said introductory happens in the 1st year it's for the tenant to prove their the sort of person we want to house.

Flexible is a 5 year fixed term plus the 1 year introductory. Generally new tenants get this.

A secure tenancy has been in place since 1983 the rights are the same but they don't have a fixed tenancy. Sheltered housing would have a secure tenancy.

Cllr Mahmood said if they were looking at modifying this policy what would they do to appease these cases.

A Vincent said each request is done on merits and they look at the circumstances of the household and the accommodation available, largely they do make the right decision. There is a review opportunity for those that aren't happy with the decision. It goes through 2 tiers of management Andy Vincent does think we should take this to the Senior Management Team to scrutinise the decision in terms off acceptance of the allocation policy. He also advised that the Councillors should ask to have a look at any acceptations of the allocations policy being made and what the outcomes have been and suggested this is brought back to the committee as a report

Cllr Mahmood agreed.

Cllr Guest thanked everyone on this and said it's been very helpful and illuminating and understands the system on merits.

Action: None

Outcome: Report was noted.

OS/229/15 LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

J Still presented this report and apologised for the structure of the report as she had been on annual leave later than anticipated.

J Still gave a very brief overview of the events in February in Highfield. The event was very well received by residents and had some really great outcomes and some individual stories from residents.

A resident got work experience from it; someone had got a full time job, and managed to get off benefits. People benefitted from the healthy eating programmes and it has had an impact on families.

The event in Tring was also very successful.

Moving forward they are going to target certain areas that flag up red alert, Adeyfield's event will be next in April. It's not about DBC delivering it all it's about facilitating and working with agencies to deliver.

J Still was happy to take questions from Members

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe had a question on funding, how do we get funding from outside for what we do he believes it should come from HCC and the CCG's at future events. Secondly he said that too much reliance is currently placed on Councillors. While it is appropriate for Councillors to turn up to events in their areas, those events should not be impeded if Councillors are unable to be present.

. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe also put forward a question to the Portfolio Holder, strangely the text doesn't talk about plans, futures and lessons learnt, could you tell me how far the funding can run in the next year and if you will be looking for more.

N Harden said that the neighbourhood action team and the rest of the services as a whole are doing it from the resources that they carry out with other departments, in the past it's a case of neighbourhood action groups were set up, this funding that does that has been restructured and that's where Love your Neighbourhood comes from we will be targeting what is needed in that community.

J Still added have had offers from Thriving Families who have offered to help with the Tring event 37 older people attended and 31 of those signed up to different clubs it's about the outcome in changing lives.

Cllr Conway said the comments have been fantastic and she attended the Tring even and said it was very successful.

Cllr Link went to the Highfield ones on a few occasions was really good for the community and got to see people she wouldn't normally see.

Cllr Mahmood highlighted that there was a section that was blank in the report.

J Still apologised, the report is only a draft and still to be completed.

Cllr Mahmood asked if they could have plans of what's going on so they can benefit from the plans.

J Still to send an email to the committee with future plans.

Cllr Mahmood asked how it was publicised.

J Still said they do everything they can do, letters in school bags. The local paper, hand delivered letters, posters and signs, and people still say they weren't aware of it. However they do do their best of advertising they even email out to neighbourhood action groups

Cllr Mahmood said he knows of a few notice boards which could be used for advertising.

Cllr Harden said it would be good if a local representative could go round to all the shops with posters for advertising.

Action: As above.

Outcome: Report was noted.

F Williamson presented the Interim report for Gas Installation and Servicing to give the committee an update of the progress, they last reported to Overview and Scrutiny in January. This report includes the financial statement. The figures from the final audit on Osborne haven't been included because they're subject to some further clarification, once this has been finalised the committee will be updated.

F Williamson briefed the committee on some key things, Gas servicing compliance has remained high and the installation programme is resulting in a reduced number of CAT 1 breakdowns where a boiler fails and requires immediate replacement. Please note the CAT1 breakdowns in the report should read 120 year to date, the 29 figure in the report relates to April only.

Osbornes they are getting involved in youth projects and apprenticeships and have created 17 new jobs and 6 apprenticeships.

The performance within the contract, they have seen Osbornes turn around 79 properties since the start of their contract in the same day as part of the empty homes project; this was done in partnership with the Housing Management Team, this has created a net increase in revenue.

There are details of the planned works programmes that are being delivered to date, currently they are on target to get front and back external doors replaced in the next financial year. The customer satisfaction graph remains high.

As a result of the year-end review which was taken in conjunction with the partner advisor the key strategic indicators were reviewed for Osborne's compliance with those. As a result of the year-end review which was in conjunction with the partner advisor they need to have 100% of the performance indicators met for a minimum of 9 months of the year, they only had 9 months of the first year's period anyway and they were reviewed on a minimum level of acceptable performance which meant they lost 0.8% of their performance related profit. In terms of their overall performance the partner had advised, whilst they hadn't achieved 100% they had achieved a sufficient minimum level for compliance.

F Williamson was happy to take questions.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe asked to what extent did Osborne's write the report.

F Williamson said the year-end report was drafted by herself and the Partnering Advisor, the community initiative is Osbornes material that they have provided and the information has been validated.

Cllr Imarni asked how they would address the situation if one of the contractors were to slip what would happen as the partnership is so close.

F Williamson said if we did feel that anything did slip or was to fail or had failed then they wouldn't be granted another year.

Cllr Mahmood said AM is stated in the appendices, who is AM?
AM should be TAM and apologised for the formatting.

Cllr Mahmood asked who Wimal was.

F Williamson replied he is the Commercial Relationship Surveyor who has commercial Quantity Surveying background and worked both on the consultant side and with a number of contractors. His role is to scrutinise the applications of payments to make sure the target costs are in line with the contractual model.

Cllr Mahmood said you talk about zero day jobs, the first thing that comes to his mind was zero defect jobs, is that what you mean.

F Williamson said there are two indicators to that, the first time fix and they also record the number of jobs that are recalled because of a defect, they are measured as re call jobs.

Cllr Mahmood said is it also worth pushing towards a 7 day target rather than a 9 day target for empty homes.

F Williamson said this is something they can look at.

Cllr Mahmood said it's nice to hear compliments are we normally only hear negative feedback.

F Williamson said they do record compliments internally from residents.

Cllr Mahmood thanked J Still for the report and the good news in the report.

Cllr Mahmood also asked if all council kitchens have CO monitors fitted.

F Williamson said the Gas contractors, Sun Realm do the installs; there has been a recent change in legislation which means all of the properties have to have them due to people fitting log burners and open fires.

Cllr Silwal asked F Williamson about carbon mono oxide detective device must be installed in every tenant house from Nov first, she replied yes.

Cllr Mahmood also asked what PRP means.

F Williamson said Performance Related Profit.

Action: None

Outcome: Report was noted.

OS/231/15 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Agreed

OS/232/15 APPENDIX A – WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2016

Agreed

The meeting closed at 9:25pm