

Item No. 8.	Classification: Open	Date: June 28 2006	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Motions	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

1. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR AUBYN GRAHAM (Seconded by Councillor John Friary)

Please note that, in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 3.10(3), council assembly shall consider this motion.

Maroon Project

Council assembly welcomes the valuable and important service which Maroon Project in Camberwell has provided for many years for mental health sufferers in Southwark.

Council assembly notes that the project has been running from industrial units unsuitable for vulnerable service users.

Council assembly calls on the executive member for health and social care to investigate and report back on what attempts have been made by Southwark council in the past 10 years to find suitable premises for the project; and further calls on the executive member to assist in relocating this valuable project in adequate premises.

Note: If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the executive for consideration.

Comments from the Strategic Director Health and Community

The Maroon Resource Centre is located in several rented rooms within an office building in Lomond Grove (not far from Camberwell Green) and also has the use of a Salvation Army hall next door for some activities. It provides day services including outreach and centre based activities such as support with daily living and lunchtime meals for African and African-Caribbean people with mental health needs. The service is currently managed in-house, but is due to be outsourced in line with the Executive decision taken in April 2003 to outsource all in-house day services. There are 8 staff, 25-30 service users on a daily basis (with 107 registered) and approximately 30 carers. Previously the service was run by a non-statutory sector organisation but in 1999 in response to management issues it was brought in-house and renamed Maroon.

Over a number of years the council has tried to locate more suitable premises for the project within the Camberwell Green, Walworth or Peckham areas as health and social care are very well aware of the limitations of the current site. The specification is for ground floor accommodation to include office space, interview rooms, activity rooms, shower room, kitchen with dining space, disabled access and good transport links including bus routes as service users make their own way to the centre.

There is a shortage of suitable sites in the required areas of the borough. At least a dozen properties have been viewed over the last five years and several buildings have been seriously considered, but these have either ceased to be available following protracted negotiations, found to be unsuitable after commissioning surveyors and architects, or found to be non-compliant with the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) or health and safety requirements. Three of the sites which were seriously explored were:

- 114 Peckham Rye: this was first identified as a potential site in 1998, but after lengthy negotiations, the then occupier, Metropolitan Housing Trust, was unable to find alternative premises so the deal collapsed. The property came back on the market in 2001, but again after protracted negotiations, the deal collapsed when the landlord unexpectedly leased the site to another organisation.
- The Unity building, Peckham: after viewing and commissioning a surveyor in 2003, there was opposition from carers to the location of the building due to the proximity to pubs and clubs as well as concern that the configuration of rooms over the floors within the building would have made it difficult to operate a safe service without a considerable increase in staffing resources.
- Nunhead day centre site: this was a former day centre and therefore would have had the necessary planning permission, but after consulting service users, staff and other stakeholders it was felt that the site was not in the right location as it was outside of the core areas, did not have sufficient transport links and the building would have been too institutional.

In 2006 so far four sites have been considered: 73-75 Camberwell Road, which had a large unsuitable basement area, 2/2a Grosvenor Terrace, Camberwell, which was not suitable due to planning regulations, 106-108 Camberwell Road, which was found not to be compliant with DDA and Health and Safety requirements and 7 Badsworth Road, which was ruled out after surveyors and architects had drawn up plans for alterations, as it required over £600k refurbishment to make it suitable for a day centre, which was considered prohibitive given the Council's available Capital budget.

In summary, a number of properties have been considered, but the issues remain: shortage of suitable accommodation, particularly as ground floor premises are required, DDA compliance and planning regulations. In addition there are the issues of both rental costs and capital expenditure to refurbish the unit. At present £212,000 has been earmarked through the mental health capital grant to support alternative premises for the service.

A further meeting involving senior officers from health & social care and property has been set up for the end of June. The issue of the Maroon resource centre re-location will be given a high priority by council officers.

In combination with our partners, the Council is committed to providing a number of other facilities for black, minority and ethnic (BME) mental health patients in the borough. These include the provision of funding for the SIMBA (Share in Maudsley Black Action) project, the Rockingham community centre, the Vietnamese mental health centre at Thomas Calton Centre, and a user group for Africans and African-Caribbeans at the Lorrimore Centre among others. The council also currently provides a direct service for mental health sufferers at the Castle Day Centre, although the service is in process of being tendered out to the voluntary sector.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Member Motions	Town Hall Peckham Road London SE5 8UB	Constitutional Team 020 7525 7228

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
Report Author	Cameron MacLean, Constitutional Officer
Version	Final Version
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