

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 15 November 2023 at 7.00 pm at 160, Tooley Street, SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Esme Dobson
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Sabina Emmanuel
Council Charlie Smith

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

OFFICER SUPPORT:

Martin Wilkinson, NHS full time chief operating officer for Partnership Southwark
Pauline O'Hare, Director of Adult Social Care
Chloe Harvey, Thrive-to-25 Programme Manager, Children and Adult Services
Matt Little, Principal Strategy Officer, Local Economy Team
Stuart Robinson-Marshall, Head of Business Strategy, Housing and Modernisation
Shaidi Khan, Accessible Transport Manager, Customer and Exchequer Services
Michelle Peake, Head of Specialist Services, Housing and Modernisation
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, Scrutiny Team

1. APOLOGIES

The chair, Councillor Suzanne Abachor, gave apologies as she was in Nigeria on family business. Councillor Nick Johnson and Councillor Sam Dalton also gave apologies.

Council Charlie Smith attended as a reserve for Councillor Suzanne Abachor. Councillor Sabina Emmanuel attended as a reserve for Councillor Sam Dalton.

The vice chair, Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall, chaired the meeting.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. REVIEW: ACCESS TO TOILETS - LOOS FOR SOUTHWARK

The chair drew member's attention to a briefing enclosed from Loos for Southwark – a group of local residents supported by Age UK London. She then invited John McGeachy, Campaigns Manager, Age UK London to present and local resident loo campaigners Thelma Purcell, Eileen Conn and Carol Vincent to introduce themselves.

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Members asked about the consequences of insufficient toilets; in places such as Peckham where there is poor provision. Campaigners said this a Public Health issue and they have seen men urinating in the street, children held over gutters, and then there is the unseen issue of people not coming out.
- Several years ago there was a petition of 4,000 people for a toilet at Peckham Town Centre.
- The plan at Peckham Rye station is understood to be a toilet behind the barriers, however this is unclear and residents have been unable to get clarity on delivery and how these will be operated. This is an example of the need for transparency and early dialogue with local people.
- A toilet strategy with early engagement with the community, including business, in advance of published plan, would be the best approach. It is crucial that the views of a wide range of people are heard so the community can get the type of toilet that is really needed and problems such as anti-social behaviour are mitigated.
- A member commented that there are toilets at leisure centres and libraries however people do not know about them and more information would help in advance of delivery of Peckham Rye Station toilet.
- Member raised concern about the loss of the Camberwell Green automatic loo, which may be the result of anti-social behaviour.

- A member asked if installation of stand up Pissoirs would improve provision. John McGeachy said that this could help male delivery drivers, however there is the principle of potty parity for sex .
- It was suggested that a councillor toilet champion would be helpful.
- Campaigners said a Community Toilet scheme with good engagement with business would be welcome. There are several good examples of community toilet schemes: Lewisham is very good at engagement, Richmond is considered to have one of the best schemes and Merton is revisiting its scheme. Campaigners cautioned that a while a good Community Toilet scheme can contribute to expanded provision they are only one part of the solution.
- Member asked why a strategy was being recommended and the campaigners said that often in councils often there are lots of officers doing different things so a good plan is about joining up and coordinating delivery.
- Campaigners said that a good toilet strategy would also focus on bringing partners together, engagement and better information. This can all help with delivery when there are budget constraints. A good plan is about the community being kept updated and the council and partners held accountable. There also is a need for a London wide plan and ultimately government funding.
- A member asked campaigners if provision of toilets ought to be considered an equalities issue and the loo campaigners said yes, absolutely. They said otherwise people cannot get out and about. It is also about health and wellbeing, participation, especially with an aging society. There is also a race issue here, as it is often easier for white women to access provision in pubs, whereas for a black women this is harder.
- Members suggest a signs on local business such as “use our loo”. Members commented that unfortunately some pubs discourage use which is a shame users might also be potential customers. Campaigners said attitudes of business owners can vary a lot.
- Members asked about Radar key holders and how accessible and easy to use they are. A campaigner said that Radar loos are often not open and of recent her dentist and other places no longer provide them. It is a big problem when out and about – it is possible to traverse Oxford Street and find none. She said this really impacts on older people, and added that another issue is accessible loos being too small and not fit for purpose.
- The chair and members thanked the campaigners.

6. REVIEW: ACCESS TO TOILETS - AGE UK LONDON BRIEFING ON ADDRESSING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The chair drew members attention to the briefing that John McGeachy, Age UK London, has provided, following up on questions raised at the last meeting around anti-social behaviour and the provision of public toilets. This was noted.

7. REVIEW: ACCESS TO TOILETS - OFFICER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The chair brought members attention the following briefings enclosed in the main agenda:

- Changing Places
- Access to Toilet facilities – Business engagement

The following officers were then invited to present:

- Chloe Harvey, Thrive-to-25 Programme Manager, Children and Adult Services presented the Changing Places programme
- Matt Little, Principal Strategy Officer, Local Economy Team presented on business engagement
- Stuart Robinson-Marshall, Head of Business Strategy, Housing and Modernisation, how provided a presentation AccessAble

In response to the previous agenda item officers noted that anti- social behaviour has been an issue in Southwark and that Belair Park toilet suffered an arson attack and Portland Street toilets near East Street Market have been destroyed twice, and immediately repaired.

Council officers are doing an accommodation review of the around 200 properties that the council and partners utilize. Around 100 of these could potentially have toilets that could be accessed by the public. Once the review is completed these toilets can potentially be added to the AccessAble.

Member were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Members asked how business could be involved in a Community Toilet scheme and officers said that engagement with businesses via the Business Improvement District (BIDS), Southwark Chamber of Commerce and other fora could contribute to a toilet strategy. There would be potential to produce stickers and other information on websites to promote such a scheme.
- Member asked about a map for Community Toilets. Mathew Little said that while the Local Economy team would not get involved in producing a map they could distribute this to business and would expect that libraries would have a hard copy as well as digital offer.
- Officers were asked how much the Changing Places modular unit cost. Officers said this cost £70k unit per unit and associated ground work cost. It is the gold standard, and meets heritage requirements. This will open up the park to disabled residents.
- Members asked officers if there is an equalities duty to provide accessible toilets.

Officers said that opening up as many accessible toilets in Southwark buildings as possible would contribute to increasing equitable provision and they believed this was a duty. There is new guidance expected on Changing Places that refers to duties to provide accessible provision where people convene.

8. INTERVIEW WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The chair invited Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, to give a short introduction to her portfolio and the following themes were covered:

- Food transformation
- Food insecurity/ right to food borough
- Integrated care
- Disability inclusion forum
- Maternal health inequalities
- Care home providers

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Quality of care and gaining assurance. Officers are working with providers, holding regular conversations with CQC, working with health professionals, talking with families and moving to broaden the approach beyond compliance to quality of care.
- Short Break / Orient Street consultation and decision making timeline. Once the consultation is completed the information will be collated and options appraised. The intention remains to take this through cabinet and March will be a good time for pre-scrutiny. There are other providers of Short Breaks (other than Orient Street) for people with high care needs and Direct Payments are also an option. People with higher needs ought to have a social workers to pass on information.
- Care Charges and the council budget position. Government improvements to funding for social care and Direct Payments would enable significant change, meanwhile support is available to those most in need.
- Disability Related Expenditure and the role of social workers and finance team, and council support including guidance.
- Mental Health - middle age and the wellbeing hub.

- Support for unpaid carers.
- Life expectancy/ health inequalities/ behaviours. Receiving different treatment depending on where you are from, and being treated with a lack of respect, impacts negatively on relationships, and health and well-being overall, and is a concern.

9. BLUE BADGE APPLICATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD

The chair drew members' attention to the briefing on the Blue Badge process and criteria for award. She then invited the following officers to present and take questions:

- Shaidi Khan, Accessible Transport Manager, Customer and Exchequer Services
- Michelle Peake, Head of Specialist Services, Housing and Modernisation

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Officers were asked about help to fill out the form and officers explained that MySouthwark service point offers advice and information Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, based at Peckham Library. People can book a 30 minute appointments and officers will do the application with the resident, if needed. This can take an hour, which will be accommodated. There is also self-service access to computers, with floor workers to assist.
- Members suggested advertising this service further, including on the Blue Badge webpage, and officers acknowledged there was more that could be done and provided reassurance this would be taken forward. Members asked for information so they can assist with alerting constituents.
- Officer were asked if a similar facility could be opened in the north of the borough. Officers said previously there were more locations to get assistance but budget cuts meant these have been cut back. Officers are now exploring libraries, but this would take additional resources and so this would be a cabinet decision, and if agreed would take time to implement.
- Members asked if home visits can be done and were advised that there is a benefit service that visits people in homes, if required.
- Members asked if it would be possible for people with ongoing disabilities or degenerative conditions to have an automatic renewal rather than yearly assessments, which can be very difficult to arrange. Members' spoke of the

difficulty in obtaining medical opinion, particularly for conditions where visiting a specialist is rare, alongside the current pressure on the NHS. They asked if it was possible to have a more compassionate system and recommended looking at Haringey Council, which has taken steps to renew deaf peoples' applications.

- Officers said will look at Haringey to see what more can be done. They explained that the Blue Badge process is a national system. It does allow some automatic renewals such as people who are blind. There are also some neurodegenerative conditions where this is possible. Officers said, however, it can be difficult to continue and application with a change of borough as then new data is often required. It is also possible for officers to access some information required for the application, depending on data protection. Officers said they do check every system to increase automation. However officers said there are some occasions where conditions and circumstances can change and there is also sensitive data that the council do not hold on to. Officers undertook see what more they can do.
- Officer were asked about recovery of the estimated value of a Blue Badge (£700) in the case of fraud and officers said they work closely with the fraud team to recover losses.
- Member noted that the appeal success rate is high at 52%. Officers said that the appeal process is a way of guiding of people to provide extra information. One of challenges is that some people do not feel comfortable sharing sensitive information. Members suggested that in that case using words such as 'review and reconsideration' would be a better way of communicating to applicants that they did not meet the threshold for acceptance, rather than refusal and officers provided assurance that this is their approach.

10. MUSCULOSKELETAL (MSK) COMMISSIONING CHANGE

The chair drew members attention to the 'Trigger Template' from lead commissioners from the South East London Integrated Care Board, setting out their intention to decommission the Southwark community Musculoskeletal (MSK) service. This was circulated by email, as unfortunately there were problems uploading it onto the website.

Martin Wilkinson, NHS full time chief operating officer for Partnership Southwark presented and members then asked question. The following points were made:

- A member commented she was provided self-help information electronically but would have preferred a one to one session initially.

- Members were provide with assurance that removing the service would keep sufficient capacity through services provided by GSTT.
- Appointments can be made via GP and via self-referral into GSTT .
- Obesity may be a contributing factor to MSK problems, along with other determinants of health.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

RESOLVED

The Short Breaks/ Orient Street consultation will be added to the agenda of the last meeting.