

Unconfirmed minutes subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the South Mid Sussex County Local Committee

South Mid Sussex County Local Committee

25 January 2011 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 7pm in Burgess Hill Library, The Martlets, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9NN.

Present: Mr P Griffiths, Mrs S Knight, Mrs H Ross and Dr C Wilsdon (Chairman).

Chairman's Welcome

81. The Chairman introduced the Committee and Officers and welcomed all to the meeting. The Committee agreed that it was particularly pleased to see that members of the 'Protect the Frontline' group, who had been protesting outside against the proposed changes to the eligibility thresholds for Adults' day care services, had decided to join the meeting. It was noted that Mr Griffiths was expected to arrive shortly.

Declarations of Interest

82. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

83. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 October be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Urgent Matters

84. The Committee agreed to consider one further nomination for Authority School governorship at Item 8, the reason for urgency being an improved service to the school's governing body.

Adults' Services Consultation

85. The Chairman introduced the Director of Adults' Services to give a verbal report on the current consultation entitled 'Changes to Adult Social Care' and the process for seeking customer's views regarding proposed changes. Ms Rogers explained the reasons for the proposals, the national guidelines for consultation, who had been consulted and how this had been achieved, that the consultation remained open until 03 February.

86. Mr Griffiths joined the meeting at this point.

87. The Committee noted that further workshops were planned to speak with local groups and that following the closure of the consultation all responses would be analysed and a report prepared. The report would be considered at the Adults' Services Select Committee meeting on 01 March, which would be web cast, and the decision then made by the Cabinet Member in mid March, which, once it cleared the call-in procedure, would come into effect on 1 April. Those who had not yet responded to the consultation were urged to do so and informed that questionnaires were available to take away.

88. The Chairman thanked Ms Rogers for her report and invited questions and comments from residents. Responses included:

- That the meeting had not made arrangements to cater for deaf residents. *This was noted and apologies were given*
- that while footballers were earning £1000's a week carers were losing the little financial support they had. *Ms Rogers agreed that this did not seem fair and that state benefits were not affected by the proposals under discussion. Ms Rogers sympathised with residents in trying to understand which government or local authority body was responsible for which aspect of funding and care as this was difficult. She urged people not to become too anxious and asked them to continue to speak with their care workers on these issues. Ms Rogers further explained that the proposals intended that resources were focussed on those with the greatest need and that of 9,000 people currently receiving care, very few would have their support arrangements removed altogether, but about half would have some changes.*
- that fears of losing housing was making people very anxious and ill. *Ms Rogers explained that she couldn't comment on individual circumstances and that problems to do with housing should be taken up with the District Council. Again Ms Rogers sympathised with people's difficulties in understanding which local authority was responsible for which service*
- that vulnerable people were very worried. *Ms Rogers reiterated that residents must continue to liaise with social workers for information and explained that no changes would be put in place until people had received a reassessment of their care needs. It was also explained that Adults' Services had aimed to undertake the consultation on the proposals as quickly as possible to avoid a long drawn out period of uncertainty for customers*
- that the loss of respite care was of great concern. *It was explained that these services came out of a different budget, in Children's Services, and would not be affected by the proposals being discussed*
- that customers doubted their needs would be met. *Ms Rogers assured residents that the most vulnerable would be protected, that while the Service must make savings, the aim of the proposals was to protect those most in need*
- that those currently not the most vulnerable would become so without the support of the services they had at the moment.
- it was noted that day care centres would be closed and that local charities were being expected to increase facilities for day care but questioned where the extra funding for that was to come from. *Ms Rogers explained that £1m per year of additional funding would be invested into the voluntary sector to support changes to additional day activities and support services.*
- that the Government was giving Councils more freedom on how grants are spent but the fear was that funds wouldn't be used to support residents living circumstances. *It was explained that the County Council had been in receipt of approximately 90 different grants but these would now be combined into one pot, which would give the County Council more freedom to spend the money in areas considered to have priority.*
- that the consultation information did not reach some people. *Residents were invited to write in if they had specific concerns or suggestions on the consultation process.*

89. The Chairman thanked Ms Rogers for her responses. The Committee noted that all those affected would receive a reassessment of their needs before any

changes were made and it was anticipated that these would be completed within six months, should the proposals be accepted and that there would be a right of appeal. Ms Rogers emphasised that similar eligibility thresholds were already in place in neighbouring counties, that the focus was on those requiring intensive support and while thresholds for care had risen, so had investment in the voluntary sector.

90. The Chairman invited comments and questions from members. Mrs Knight declared an interest as a member of the Carers Association and informed all that in the past 15 years funding for the Association had risen from £6,000 to £300,500 and this would help all carers get respite. Mrs Knight urged any resident with any concern to contact their County Councillor at any time and let them know what was needed and that together, working as a whole community, help was available. The Committee reiterated the invitation to residents.

Progress Statement

91. The Chairman referred all to the report (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Committee noted the attached information regarding the Localism Bill and that an agenda item on the subject was planned for a future meeting. The Chairman informed the Committee that Network Rail were now looking at the business case for retaining the bridge and that it could be licensed for a further two years while future plans for reconfiguring the railway lines at the junction were being drawn up. The Chairman was commended for his efforts in this and for his part in achieving the improvements to the station at Hassocks.

Community Initiative Funding

92. The Chairman introduced the report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Committee resolved to support four of the five applications and noted that it did not have sufficient funds to cover each bid fully so would need to make lesser awards as appropriate. It declined funding for 1506 Mid Sussex Branch of the Royal Sussex Regiment Association as it felt this project did not have a wide nor long-lasting community benefit, however, the Committee undertook to supply information regarding local affordable accessible transport to assist the Association.

93. Resolved that:

i) the following awards be made:

1447/SMS **Keymer and Hassocks Cricket Club.** Requested £3,000 towards a replacement artificial pitch surface and underlay. Awarded £2,400

1488/SMS **Albourne Parish Council Village Hall Committee.** Requested £2,500 towards a replacement radiator system using low surface temperature radiators. Awarded £2,000

1505/SMS **Mid Sussex CVS.** Requested £1000 towards updated, user-oriented website. Awarded £580 and recommended the CVS also apply to the Central Mid Sussex CLC

1510/SMS **Wildlife Rescue & Protection Group.** Requested £500 towards the purchase of equipment/materials. To include display boards and a carrying case. Awarded £170 and recommended the group also apply to the North and Central Mid Sussex CLCs.

- ii) funding was declined for the following application:
1506/SMS **Mid Sussex Branch, Royal Sussex Regiment Association.**
Requested £1,200 towards the cost of a coach outing for the Association to the Imperial War Museum.

Appointment of Local Authority School Governors

94. The Committee considered the extra tabled nomination and the report by Director Operations Learning (copy appended to the signed minutes).
95. Resolved that the following candidates be appointed, each for a term of four years:

Mrs Cheryl Palmer to Oakmeeds Community School
Mr Vernon Cowdell to Windmills Junior School

96. The Committee noted the recent Ofsted report on Southway Junior school giving a rating of 'satisfactory' and agreed that the school had a great future and that members who had visited had noted particularly good atmosphere at the school.

Talk with Us Open Forum

97. The Chairman invited comments and questions from residents. These included a request from Bolney Parish Council for a speed limit reduction on the A272 through the village. The Committee discussed the merits of this and the possibility of other holistic safety measures and agreed to put it on its list for prioritising at its July meeting. The Highway Manager outlined the current policy noting that the CLC could agree to implement lower speed limits against officer recommendation if it felt that the benefit to the community would over ride the perceived dangers. The Highway Manager agreed to gather data and/or undertake an assessment of the road and report back to the Committee.

98. The Committee was commended for its effectiveness and particular thanks extended to the Highway Manager, Mr Smith, who in the short time that he had been assisting the Committee had attended to and resolved several local issues.

Date of Next Meeting

99. The Chairman informed all that the next meeting would take place on 19 April 2011.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Chairman