



	<p>Members Present: Cllrs Catherine Dann (Chairman), Sid Garg, Peter Kemp, Eddie Lavery, John Major, Michael White and Kay Wilmott-Denbeigh.</p> <p>Apologies: Pat Jackson (Cllr Eddie Lavery substituting).</p> <p>Witnesses: Linda Lancaster & Teresa Simmonds (Frays Housing), Daniel Haigh & Mark Jolly (West London YMCA), Natalie McLean.</p> <p>Officers Present: Neil Stubbings, Kaks Chahal, Barry Newitt, Ruby Ali and David Coombs.</p>		
	<p>Declarations of Interest – None</p>		
	<p>Notes of the meetings held on 13th September 2006 - Agreed as an accurate record</p>		
	<p>Exclusion of the press and public – It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>		
<p>1.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="276 1196 1230 2022"> <p>Housing Support for Vulnerable People - Major Review: First Witness Session (Witnesses: Natalie McLean, Kaks Chahal, Linda Lancaster, Teresa Simmonds, Daniel Haigh and Mark Jolly)</p> <p>Natalie McLean from the Supporting People Service User Forum gave a presentation on the impact of the Supporting People programme on her life. Members noted Natalie’s comment that she would have benefited if the support services had been available sooner than they were.</p> <p>Kaks Chahal outlined the work of Housing Services including Housing Options Team. She said that there is a huge demand for social housing and that there is limited stock available in Hillingdon. As such, the private sector rental market is being increasingly used. The Housing Options Team seeks to prevent people becoming homeless through offering advice. The single person’s drop-in, which is held each week at St Andrew’s Church, is very popular. The service is delivered through partnership with other organisations i.e YMCA, Connexions and Hostels providers within the Borough</p> <p>Housing Services also offers floating support for vulnerable</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1230 1196 1436 2022"> <p>Action By:</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Housing Support for Vulnerable People - Major Review: First Witness Session (Witnesses: Natalie McLean, Kaks Chahal, Linda Lancaster, Teresa Simmonds, Daniel Haigh and Mark Jolly)</p> <p>Natalie McLean from the Supporting People Service User Forum gave a presentation on the impact of the Supporting People programme on her life. Members noted Natalie’s comment that she would have benefited if the support services had been available sooner than they were.</p> <p>Kaks Chahal outlined the work of Housing Services including Housing Options Team. She said that there is a huge demand for social housing and that there is limited stock available in Hillingdon. As such, the private sector rental market is being increasingly used. The Housing Options Team seeks to prevent people becoming homeless through offering advice. The single person’s drop-in, which is held each week at St Andrew’s Church, is very popular. The service is delivered through partnership with other organisations i.e YMCA, Connexions and Hostels providers within the Borough</p> <p>Housing Services also offers floating support for vulnerable</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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<p>people, including people with mental health problems, including a specialist service for those from a Black, Asian or other ethnic minority group; Domestic Violence, for families placed in temporary accommodation and also a floating support for people leaving prison.</p> <p>Members asked whether any vulnerable people were falling through the net and not receiving support. Kaks advised that the role of the Housing Options Team is to promote the services that are available and how to access them, however further work is required in promoting the support services available i.e with GP's, Cllr Major said that he believed that in nearly all cases people would have benefited from receiving support earlier than they did.</p> <p>Members questioned the process undertaken when a tenant was building up rent arrears in temporary accommodation. Kaks advised that a reminder letter is sent out when someone starts to get in arrears – this letter invites the tenant to come in and discuss the support available to them. Members heard there could be problems finding out about Finders Fee residents in the private sector who were struggling with their rent. Members questioned whether private sector landlords could notify the Council at an earlier stage when tenants started building up arrears and whether this could be pursued through the private sector landlord forum.</p> <p>Members felt that more could potentially be done to advise people of the support services available to them and at an earlier stage. It was felt that people could perhaps be encouraged to contact their local Councillor when they were facing housing problems.</p> <p>Kaks advised Members on some of the gaps in housing support services, including those on offer to people in privately rented accommodation. Other gaps included advice provision for over 25 year olds; increased move-on accommodation for people ready to leave a hostel; and a night shelter for rough sleepers.</p> <p>Daniel Haigh told Members that West London YMCA was very keen to get involved in a night shelter for rough sleepers. The Council had allocated money for this, but it looked as though it would not be possible to open such a facility for the coming winter as no suitable location had been identified. Members heard that official calculations underestimated the number of rough sleepers in the Borough and Heathrow contributed to the problem.</p> <p>Neil Stubbings advised that the challenges around providing a night shelter included: lack of support from Government as Hillingdon is not considered to have a rough sleeper problem due to the Council's official count identifying only seven rough</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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<p>sleepers and this is below the threshold of ten; lack of suitable property and the current financial situation of the council would mean any Council funding for a night shelter would be competing against other priorities against a background of enormous financial pressures within the council.</p> <p>Members strongly felt that all options should be explored to see whether the Council could do more to open a night shelter.</p> <p>Linda Lancaster and Teresa Simmonds outlined their work to help single people find rented accommodation in the private sector. Most of their clients receive benefits and some have severe depression but are not officially classified as 'vulnerable'. The SOLO scheme introduces tenants to landlords and helps with the deposit.</p> <p>Frays are looking to expand their service by utilising empty properties. However, the demands on the project are growing. The more people they place, the more people who require ongoing support. With over 400 people in residence it is hard to meet both the landlords' and clients' expectations with one support worker and one part time Supporting People funded worker.</p> <p>Linda Lancaster outlined the problems caused by the high rental prices in Hillingdon. She suggested the Council offers a top up housing benefit to under 25s through a Discretionary Housing Benefit.</p> <p>Members expressed concern about whether private sector landlords did enough to monitor whether a tenant was building up rent arrears. Members asked whether landlords could be encouraged to advise the Council at an early stage when a tenant was building up arrears.</p> <p>Mark Jolly and Daniel Haigh outlined the wide range of services offered at the YMCA hostels in Hayes and Uxbridge. Members heard that the organisation is seeking to establish mediation services to enable young people to stay at home, similar to the services that are on offer in Hammersmith & Fulham.</p> <p>Members also heard about the services offered to young people being released from Wormwood Scrubs prison. Members questioned the level of support that was available and whether this is effective.</p> <p>Neil Stubbings advised that this is part of the resettlement project. Under this, Hillingdon Council should receive the names and release dates for Hillingdon residents so that the relevant support services can be notified. He advised that the project has had a</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<p>stuttering start and that the prisons did not always follow the agreed route of making referrals to the Council. He advised that the Council is about to interview for a Resettlement Officer. The Council and Probation Service would jointly fund this post for a 12 month period.</p> <p>Agreed –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Committee writes to the relevant Cabinet Member asking them to investigate whether the Council could do anything to help a night shelter be established in time for this winter. • That the final review report reflects the following issues of concern to the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What the Council could do to help establish a winter night shelter for rough sleepers ○ Whether signposting to support services could be improved so that more people know what help is available ○ That people are told at an early stage (i.e. when rent arrears are starting to build up) of the support services that are available – including Councillors and MPs ○ That private sector landlords inform the Council at an early stage that tenants are building up rent arrears so that support services can be offered • That the Committee notes the enthusiasm, commitment and expertise of the voluntary sector in working to support the housing needs of vulnerable Hillingdon residents. 	<p>Action By:</p> <p>David Coombs</p> <p>David Coombs</p>
2.	<p>Enhanced Hillingdon Independent Living Centre (HILC) – Major Review: Introductory Report (David Coombs)</p> <p>Members welcomed the detailed report and would use this to inform the witness sessions in December and February.</p> <p>Agreed –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Committee note the information provided. 	<p>Action By:</p>
3.	<p>Work Programme (David Coombs)</p> <p>Agreed –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Committee note the information provided. 	<p>Action By:</p>
	<p>Meeting closed at: 9.45 pm</p> <p>Next Meeting: 22nd November 2006 – 7pm</p>	

This is a summary of the Social Services, Health & Housing Policy Overview Committee proceedings. If you wish for more detailed information on any of the resolutions please contact David Coombs on 01895 250833.

Circulation of this decision sheet is to Members of the Social Services, Health & Housing Policy Overview Committee, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Leaders, Whips and appropriate officers.