

# Agenda Item 3

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## HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

10 JANUARY 2019

(7.15 pm - 8.45 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Peter McCabe (in the Chair), Councillor Andrew Howard, Councillor Joan Henry, Councillor Sally Kenny, Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Councillor Dave Ward, Councillor Stephen Crowe, Councillor Hina Bokhari and Di Griffin

Hannah Doody (Director of Community and Housing), John Morgan (Assistant Director, Adult Social Care) Caroline Holland (Director of Corporate Services) and Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer.

Councillor Tobin Byers (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) and Councillor Mark Allison (Cabinet Member for Finance and Deputy Leader of the Council)

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Saleem Sheikh

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### 4 CROYDON AND WANDSWORTH PERSONAL INDEPENDENT PAYMENT ASSESSMENT CENTRES - ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS. (Agenda Item 4)

The Chief Executive of Merton Centre for Independent Living said recent data revealed a slight improvement in the number of Merton residents receiving the Personal Independent Payment (PIP). However the rate of Merton residents being denied the award is higher than the national average. There is an overturn rate at the Sutton Tribunal of 70% highlighting there are still challenges with the process.

The Policy and Strategy Manager at Merton Centre for Independent Living gave an overview of the audits and recent visits stating that they had visited Croydon and Wandsworth assessment centres in December 2018. The findings were documented in the audits provided to the Panel, alongside a short film on journeys to the assessment centre.

A panel member asked what steps are being taken to ensure the recommendations from the audits are implemented. The Chief Executive of Merton Centre for Independent Living said they have been sent to ATOS and it is hoped they will be incorporated into future practice.

Panel members expressed concern about the appeals process and the high over turn rates in Merton. The Chief Executive of Merton Centre for Independent Living said having an assessment turned down had implications for the claimant such as stress and financial hardship.

Panel members discussed the feasibility and previous discussions about having an assessment centre in Merton. A panel member highlighted that there is technology to provide pop up assessment centres in the borough.

The Chair suggested that local MP's could be asked to speak to government ministers responsible for the DWP to highlight the lack of an assessment centre in Merton.

The Panel unanimously agreed the following motions

ATOS to be required to attend at our next panel to justify continued lack of provision of pop-up PIP assessment centres in Merton. Proposed by Councillor Andrew Howard seconded by Councillor Dave Ward.

Merton Council to urge Croydon and Wandsworth counterparts to increase blue badge parking proximate to their PIP assessment centres. Proposed by Cllr Stephen Crowe and unanimously approved.

RESOLVED

Scrutiny Officer to action the motions and report back to the Panel.

## 5 BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE 2019-23 (Agenda Item 5)

The Director of Corporate Services gave an overview of the report highlighting that it includes proposals totalling £9.7 million. There is predicted to be a budget gap of £8.8 million by 2022-2023.

A panel member expressed concern about the number of reviews taking place in regards to the budget proposals and the time available to scrutinise them. The Director of Corporate Services said the scrutiny panel budget meetings in November and January provide an opportunity to review budget proposals.

CH88 Homecare Monitoring System – Panel members queried what savings will be made from the call monitoring system. The Director of Community and Housing said the equipment monitors the length of time a carer is in the clients' home, so the council only pays while the carer is in the property. Further savings will be realised when the system is rolled out to all Providers as we only pay for the care given. This proposal is positive for residents as it ensures that the care commissioned is

provided at the times agreed with the customer and their care and support needs are met.

CH89 Older People Day Activities – The Assistant Director of Social Care reported that there are two day centres for older people in Merton. One is council run and the other is commissioned by Merton. Both are running with approximately a third in capacity. Merton also has over 20 lunch/social clubs run by the voluntary sector providing over 760 lunches per week and these are thriving and very well regarded by the public. The Director of Community and Housing said the department will review the current local offer and determine the menu of options that will meet the needs of the community.

Councillor Crowe said the Panel may wish to take a view on a preferred option. Some Panel members wanted to wait for the outcomes of the review. A panel member said that both day centres are valued by the community and should remain open.

Councillor Crowe proposed a motion that the department retain one of the day centres. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Howard.

Councillors Stephen Crowe and Andrew Howard voted in favour of the motion Councillors Peter McCabe, Joan Henry, Sally Kenny, Dave Ward, Hina Bokhari voted against the motion.

The motion was denied.

CH90 Out of Area Placements - Panel members asked for further details on the savings proposal. The Director of Community and Housing reported that reviews will be completed for each individual on a person by person basis based on their individual care needs to see if care can be provided locally and that people can be closer to their family and local communities. This leads to a better outcome for the individual as they will be closer to friends and family. Providing care locally can also provide financial savings to the council.

Panel members sought reassurance that the individuals would still be cared for and asked if will there need to be an investment in local providers. The Director of Community and Housing reported that this group are already receiving care and support, their placements will be reviewed with a view to finding opportunities to bring them closer to home. There is already provision in borough such as shared lives and supported living who currently support those with a low level of need.

A panel member asked if the council is reducing the budget to Merton Centre for Independent Living. The Director of Corporate Services reported that there will not be a reduction in the Strategic Grants budget but the organisations who receive the funding may change, as these are currently being recommissioned. The council is working with MVSC to determine the criteria.

The Chair said it would be not appropriate to comment further given that a competitive process will take place.

6 BUSINESS PLAN 2019-23 SAVINGS PROPOSALS INFORMATION PACK  
(Agenda Item 6)

7 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 7)

The Panel noted the work programme.