

MINUTES of the meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE SERVICES BOARD** held at 9.00 am on 9 December 2015 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 25 January 2016.

Elected Members:

- * Mr Keith Witham (Chairman)
- * Mrs Margaret Hicks (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Ramon Gray
- Mr Ken Gulati
- * Miss Marisa Heath
- * Mr Saj Hussain
- Mr Daniel Jenkins
- * Mrs Yvonna Lay
- * Mr Ernest Mallett MBE
- Mr Adrian Page
- Mrs Dorothy Ross-Tomlin
- Mrs Pauline Searle
- * Ms Barbara Thomson
- Mr Chris Townsend
- Mrs Fiona White

Ex officio Members:

Mrs Sally Ann B Marks, Chairman of the County Council
Mr Nick Skellett CBE, Vice-Chairman of the County Council

Co-opted Members:

Substitute Members:

Mr Ken Gulati
Mr Daniel Jenkins
Mr Adrian Page
Mrs Dorothy Ross-Tomlin
Mrs Pauline Searle
Mr Chris Townsend
Mrs Fiona White

In attendance

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Dorothy Ross-Tomlin, Pauline Searle, Fiona White and Chris Townsend.

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]

There was no declarations of interests to declare.

58 CALL IN OF CABINET DECISION: APPROVAL TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF COMBINED SENSORY SERVICES AND THE PROVISION OF MOBILITY AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS [Item 3]

Witnesses:

Dave Sargeant, Strategic Director
Liz Uliasz, Area Director
Anna Tobiasz, Adults Category Lead, Procurement & Commissioning
Clive Boswell, Surrey Deaf Forum spokesperson (assisted by Wendy Anderson, Surrey Deaf Forum Secretary and his interpreter Melanie Clark)
Heather Gerrard and Don Gerrard, Hard of Hearing Forum
Bob Hughes, Chief Executive of Sight for Surrey
Bev Bishop, Head of Adult Services - Sight for Surrey

Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Independence and Wellbeing

Key points raised during the discussions:

1. The Chairman informed the Board and the witnesses of the procedures of a call-in and that the Board can make recommendations to the Cabinet however they cannot make decisions.
2. The Surrey Deaf Forum spokesperson was invited to outline the nature of users' concerns. He advised the Board that it was felt that there had not been due regard to service user viewpoints during the tender due to meetings not taking place and they would like this to change post-award. They also had concerns about value for money when there was only one bid for the contract; how the budget would be allocated to meet the needs of deaf people in Surrey, how there would be continuity of care and whether the Social Value Act was suitably considered in the tender.
3. The spokesperson highlighted to the Board that Sight for Surrey had historically provided services to blind and visually impaired people and that the contract could have engaged the existing provider, First Point, to meet the needs of deaf people. Furthermore, the spokesperson suggested that some of the value of the contract could have created work for disabled and deaf people and small businesses in Surrey.
4. The representative from the Hard of Hearing Forum explained that this Forum had initially been left out of the tender process but did take part in the evaluation of the tender in May 2015. However, circumstances changed following this evaluation and the final decision with a sub-

contractor not becoming involved raising doubts about how the primary contractor would meet the needs of the deaf community. The issue is not whether Sight for Surrey can deliver the Council's combined sensory service but the validity of the Hard of Hearing Forum's contribution to the evaluation.

5. The Chief Executive for Sight for Surrey introduced himself and provided a background of the organisation including its history, the services that it provides and its reputation. The Chief Executive understood the concern raised and emphasised that Sight for Surrey would deliver the highest quality of service to its users through key workers who specialise in deaf and hearing impairment services and that most of the key workers would be transferred from First Point from the 1 February 2016.
6. Sight for Surrey's Chief Executive emphasised to the Board that EU tender processes had been followed and Sight for Surrey had indicated a plan to sub-contract but the other provider withdrew for reasons unknown to Sight for Surrey, so they decided to operate the services themselves. These plans to meet the specification would mean one contract, one Chief Executive and a single set of administration costs allowing money to be orientated to the frontline.
7. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Independence informed the Board that the decision was the result of a long-term joint tender that was first outlined in 2010 to the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People. The plan was to combine services to provide a person centred service not dictated by local authority structures. A combined service would reflect the needs of service users and those of their families.
8. Regarding the issues raised by the Forums present, the Cabinet Member stated that there was some disconnect between the individuals and organisation involved in the consultation. Involved were the Surrey Vision Action Group, the Surrey Hard of hearing Group, the Surrey Deaf Forum and the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People but contact was lost with the Deaf Forum and the Council were uncertain what had happened. The issue of continuity of service, staff will be able to transfer to Sight for Surrey so there is a choice for existing staff. Finally, the issue of one bidder for the contract – a number of organisations expressed an interest but ultimately did not submit a bid. Sight for Surrey met the criteria required and was tasked with delivering the outcome of the contract therefore how the budget is allocated to deliver these outcomes was a matter for them.
9. The Chief Executive of Sight for Surrey was asked by the Board what provision his organisation had for deaf people. He advised that Sight for Surrey had the staff and equipment for its current client base but that they would upgrade their text resources and add video communications. He expected staff would transfer from First Point but in the event that did not happen they had contingency plans to ensure the right staff were in place.
10. Members queried the level and appropriateness of the consultation carried out by the Council in relation to the tender and what monitoring

arrangements would be put in place once the contract is implemented in February. The Cabinet Member and the Adults Category Lead from Procurement reiterated the discussions, meetings and events held with representatives from three user forums over the last year and advised the Board that Andrew Taylor from the Surrey Deaf Forum had been invited to participate in all of these different ways. The Category Lead also explained how the contract would be monitoring including the Key Performance Indicators that had been agreed. It was suggested that if the contract was awarded that the Vice-Chairman of the Board take a role in the monitoring of Sight for Surrey's delivery of the service.

11. The Board pointed out that reassurance for service users is essential. Uncertainty could persist until the start of the contract in February. Sight for Surrey advised the Board that if they were awarded the contract following the outcome of this meeting they would start to contact staff about TUPE arrangements immediately and had confidence that key people would follow the contract.
12. Members questioned Sight for Surrey's track record of meeting the needs of deaf people and how they could ensure they had the right staff as per previous comments. Sight for Surrey's Chief Executive appreciated that there could be nervousness due to the organisation's orientation towards the visually impaired but they were a highly praised organisation and if awarded the contract would receive the money required to provide statutory services. Regarding staff the Board were advised that they were already advertising for a social worker for the deaf with one already in post and have identified two other potential deaf services sub-contractors. However, it would not have been responsible to spend money on deaf services until the contract award had been made nor to consult with service users. The Chairman recognised the difficult situation Sight for Surrey were in as they had not yet been awarded the contract for this service.
13. The Chief Executive elaborated on the children's aspect of Sight for Surrey's work explaining that there is no existing contract for specialised children's deaf services but that conversations were underway with the Council Children's Services about integrated children into Sight for Surrey's work. He did also note that out of the organisation's charitable funds they provide pastoral services for deaf families.
14. The Surrey Deaf Forum Secretary raised some issues regarding elements of the Care Act 2014 which stipulates the expertise required to complete assessments. The Secretary had concerns that the new service might not have qualified assessors that are sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences. The Cabinet Member reassured the Surrey Deaf Forum that the specification was Care Act compliant and referred to the Monitoring Officers assessment in the papers.
15. The Board reflected that there had been a simple breakdown of communication somewhere in the procurement process but that it was key to now bring together all the concerned parties and their expertise to make sure the new contract delivers the service people need.

Recommendations:

1. The proposed contract for combined sensory services will ensure that Surrey residents continue to receive a timely provision of service and enable Surrey County Council to continue to meet its legal duty to provide appropriate services to people with a visual impairment, hearing impairment, dual sensory loss, people who are deaf and people who use BSL and for children for the provision of mobility and independent living skills, and the Board agrees to support the proposed contract
 2. The Board further recommends to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Independence and Wellbeing that he ensures vigorous evaluation and monitoring of the services, and that the Vice Chairman of this Board, Mrs Margaret Hicks, be involved with the evaluation and monitoring of the contract on behalf of the service users and that she reports back to the Board
16. In relation to the Board's recommendation to support the proposed contract (Recommendation 1 above) the Chairman called for a recorded vote.

The following Members voted in favour of the recommendation:

1. Mr Keith Witham
2. Mrs Margaret Hicks
3. Miss Marisa Heath
4. Mr Ramon Gray
5. Mrs Yvonna Lay
6. Mr Saj Hussain
7. Ms Barbara Thomson

The following Members voted against the recommendation

1. Mr Ernest Mallett MBE

The recommendation was carried 7 votes to 1.

59 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 4]

The date of the next public meeting will be on Monday 25 January 2016 from 10.00am.

Meeting ended at: 10.40 am

Chairman