

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM****COUNCIL MEETING – 30 JUNE 2010**

Question by: Ms Margaret Turley

To the: Cabinet Member for Community Care

QUESTION

“The Council’s strap line says it is “Putting Residents First”. How is the Council doing that with Hammersmith and Fulham’s unpaid carers?”

Response:

- The council is fully committed to supporting unpaid carers.
- In 2008, the council undertook extensive consultation with carers and key stakeholders as part of a process to review the borough’s 5 year Carers’ Strategy.
- The purpose of the review was to take stock, evaluate progress to date against key objectives to date and develop a revised action plan to deliver the outcomes the council’s wants to achieve by 2011.
- One of the key findings of the strategy review was that only a minority of the total carers in the borough are being identified and receiving services. In order to improve this, it is clear that carers’ support services need to outreach into the community and link with services, resources and networks that carers are already engaged with.
- The current contract for the provision of adult and young carer support service in the Borough, currently supplied by the Carers’ Centre, will end in July 2010, the new improved service for Carers in the Borough will be in place from the 1st August.
- Carers will be able to access services locally, with support groups activities being held in different areas of the borough.
- To ensure carers can access the support and advice they need, a dedicated Carer Helpline will be introduced as part of the new service.
- A leaflet is in the process of being circulated to carers, containing information about the new improved service, which will help carers to continue in their caring role.
- It is our aim to offer the best possible service we can to our carers and that is why we are making these changes.

Achievements in 09/10

- A Carers’ Strategy Group was established to provide leadership and shape direction for implementing the action plan. Carers and key stakeholders are represented.
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- Total spend on Carers Support i.e. Carers Centre and others is £1,122,000; made up of Respite = £267k (incl £20k for emergency planning); Carers Support Service Contract = £236K; Ad-hoc payments/small grants/salary = £146k; Alzheimers = £163k; Health Gain Money = £310k.
- The council participated voluntarily in a new national government carers' survey, to gain a comprehensive picture of our carers' views on support and services available.
- The council engaged with H&F LINK to make carers' issues important. LINK steering group representatives now attend the Carers' Strategy Group.
- Two full-time health trainers for carers were appointed to offer tailored advice, motivation and practical support to individuals who want to adopt a healthier lifestyle. During this first year, 56 carers have accessed the service. We have increased the number of health trainers for carers from 2-4 in 10/11.
- 1200 information booklets were circulated to over 120 GPs, pharmacists, places of worship and libraries.
- In a pro-active attempt to reach and provide support to 'hidden carers', 3868 information booklets were mailed out to registered blue badge holders.
- Carer support services were advertised through the Life Channel in 24 of the borough's GP surgeries.
- A 'Carers' Individual Budget' pilot scheme commenced to offer carers a direct payment to purchase services, including short breaks, to alleviate the stress of caring. In total, 148 assessments were completed, with just under £100,000 allocated. 135 carers' small grants were also approved.
- Emergency care planning is available to carers with 97 plans completed.

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COUNCIL MEETING – 30 JUNE 2010

Question by: Ms Pauline Trapmore

To the: Cabinet Member for Community Care

QUESTION

“How much public money in total was spent by LBHF on all aspects of the tender for the carers’ services contract? Please break the total figure down to show what was spent from when the review began in 2008 right up to date. The Council will be aware that cost for this covers an eclectic range of areas from legal advice, training for panel members to press relations, etc. Please detail all.”

RESPONSE:

The total amount spent by LBHF on all aspects of the tender/review was – **£19,090.41**

Breakdown:

- National advertisements in Community Care Magazine (£1435.85 ex VAT) and The Guardian (£2870.40) - £4306.25
- Representative from CarersUk - £5000. To ensure transparency, a national expert was recruited to support 6 carers through the tendering assessment process. Their remit was to fully participate in the evaluation of bids, run a training workshop, offer additional support carers and submit a ‘User Involvement’ report. This will be used in future council tendering exercises.
- Hire of the Irish Centre for carer involvement training workshop (incl. refreshments) - £141.77
- Carer involvement expenses - £340
- Legal expenses from July 2009 to date - £6,918.90. This amounts to 89.5 hours of time.
- Procurement/Commissioning officer time - no additional cost as existing resources used

Expenditure related to the strategy review:

- Hire of venues for 2 consultation events (including refreshments), Irish Centre (£1325.99) and Bush Hall (£1057.50) - £2383.49

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

COUNCIL MEETING – 30 JUNE 2010

Question by: Ms Marjorie Serra

To the: The Leader

QUESTION

“We understand that the Hammersmith and Fulham Carers Centre has been valued at £1.7million. Please confirm your understanding of the building’s value.”

RESPONSE

We assume the property referred to is 182 Hammersmith Road which the Council owns. We do not have a valuation report valuing the property at £1.7million.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

COUNCIL MEETING – 30 JUNE 2010

Question by: Ms Desiree Cranenburgh

To the: Cabinet Member for Community Care

QUESTION

“Before the election the Council gave indications that the Hammersmith and Fulham Carers Centre would get the new contract. Why was it announced almost immediately after the election date that the Hammersmith and Fulham Carers Centre would not be awarded the contract? Please detail the exact date the decision was made.”

Response:

The council did not give any such indications. All deliberations by the Tender Appraisal Panel (TAP) and decision makers who approve the TAP’s recommendations are completely confidential until such time as the decision is made and the council chooses to make this decision public.

The date the decision was made was part of the standard timeline for the council’s tender approvals process. The decision was made by the Director of Community Services in line with his delegated duties on the 11th May 2010.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

COUNCIL MEETING – 30 JUNE 2010

Question by: Mr Bruce Marquart

To the: The Leader

QUESTION

"There are many voluntary groups, including ours, delivering extensive front-line services and jobs to local LBHF residents. We all have tenancies due to expire in August, 2010 at 241 King Street, Palingswick House, what are the future conditions for a Long term Lease Extension to Palingswick House so that this work can continue uninterrupted?"

Response:

In order to protect front line services from the impact of tightening finances, we have made a commitment to reduce the council's levels of debt. We currently owe £133 million which costs us £5 million in interest payments alone - money which could otherwise be spent on vital services such as home care for the elderly and child protection.

Our priority has to be council services before buildings.

Reducing our debt means selling assets that do not currently provide value for money. We plan to dispose of buildings we no longer need, or where services could be better and more cost-effectively delivered from alternative sites that are not suitable for disposal. We will use the proceeds from these sales to cut our debts and to protect spending on services, including voluntary sector grants.

A number of council buildings must be considered for disposal - where they do not offer excellent value for money, are not sited in our areas of highest needs, are poor in terms of access and would not be cost effective to retain.

We believe that establishing community hubs in the highest areas of deprivation in the borough will better meet the accommodation needs of the 3rd sector now and in years to come. The council is establishing a hub in Edward Woods Estate in the north of the borough, and Fulham NDC are also establishing a hub in the south of the borough.

With these points in mind, the Council will be consulting on the future of Palingswick House from July, with a view to a Cabinet decision on the future of the building later this year.

Whilst I fully appreciate the concerns of organisations based in Palingswick House, the economic climate and reducing the council's debt must remain our key priority.