

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY, HEALTH & HOUSING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP held on 21 MARCH 2016

PRESENT: Councillor G K Harris - Chairman

Councillors: C J Rouse
P N Shepherd
E A Walsh

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors S P Berry, M Harker, P J Hudson and C J Jackson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors I Darby and J MacBean.

19 NOTES

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21 UPDATE ON CURRENT ISSUES FROM CABINET MEMBER AND HEAD OF SERVICE / SENIOR OFFICER

The Head of Health & Housing gave an update on the Community Health and Housing Services covering the following key points.

Bucks Home Choice: The Bucks Home Choice partnership had commissioned the Locata system for the operation of Homes Choice up to 2018, with no increase in the membership and support fees.

Homelessness: 77 homelessness applications had been made in 2015/16 so far, which was on course to match the total figure of 87 received for 2014/15 which demonstrated continued high demand.

Affordable Housing: It was reported that 18 affordable houses had been delivered. During discussion it was raised that local authorities may no longer be able to require a contribution towards affordable housing from developers and the Council would need to look at ways to stimulate the market in affordable housing to ensure they continued to be delivered. A proposal to establish a members' housing working group would assist officers in examining the options available to the Council in delivering affordable housing. Previous examples of stimulating the development of affordable housing had cost around £20,000 a unit.

Licensing: The Council was in the process of tightening its policy for licensed vehicle drivers. The existing CDC policy, which was already a robust scheme,

had been reviewed and refined in a number of areas and was now being introduced in SBDC, where further changes might be made, following which it would be presented to CDC again. It was also noted that there was the possibility of a central data base for licensed vehicle drivers in the Thames Valley Policy area being created to allow licensing authorities to keep track of drivers moving between districts. A Taxi Forum with statutory authorities had also been suggested following a meeting with taxi drivers; the PAG considered this a welcome development which they wished to take forward.

Health and Safety: It was noted that prosecution of DECCO for a fatality the previous year was on-going.

Strategic Environment and Sustainability: the IPPC inspection programme for Wycombe was a year ahead of plan and the income for it was being received. The CDC IPPC inspection was on schedule.

Community Safety: there had been a slight rise in crime, mostly in violent crime, although this was partly due to changes in how it was reported to include non-physical incidents like bullying. Members noted that there seemed to have been a rise in burglaries in the Chalfonts since Christmas and it was confirmed that this was the case, however, the Thames Valley Police had responded effectively since then and the figures were falling again.

Leisure: The Chiltern Community Awards had been a success; they had received a strong number of applications and the awards event had been well attended. There had also been extensive refurbishments at Chesham and Chiltern Leisure Centres: improvements had been made to the reception area, spinning studio and fitness studio at Chilterns Pools and the reception area and club room lounge at Chesham Leisure Centre. There had also been two successful Active Bucks applications, which had awarded £10,000 to deliver sports and leisure activities in Chesham and Prestwood's local parks.

22 UPDATE FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates on outside bodies.

23 CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S (CYP) PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Principal Wellbeing and Leisure Officer introduced the report which was intended to update members on the Board's priorities for 2016/17. The Bucks Children and Young People's Plan identifies the overarching aims and vision for the board in terms of supporting children and young people locally which it is looking to deliver: safety, healthy, fulfilling lives, reaching their potential in education and other aspects of life, and resilient.

One of its upcoming projects aimed to develop awareness among young carers of the relevant support and social networks which were available to them, as well as potential employment or training support schemes. Another project, which was still being developed, aimed to support healthy eating by developing cooking skills and encouraging families to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

During discussion Members asked if there was any additional ways that the ideas surrounding resilience could be promoted to children due to the high level of pressure put on children to achieve. The possibility of contact through schools was raised, which might be achieved by offering speakers, and through youth clubs. It was also suggested that it could be included in the cop cards scheme, which reached children as early as year 6.

The PAG members agreed that the report be noted.

24 BUCKS STRATEGIC FLOOD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

It was noted that this report had already been to Services Overview and significant comments had been made, one update since then was that it had been confirmed with BCC that the emergency flood defences would not be charged for when they were used.

During discussion it was asked whether people living in flood areas were aware of it and whether the information was available to the public. It was advised that there had been awareness campaigns to promote this information and the Chesham Flood Action Group was very active, however, probably the majority of people were not aware. Chesham was particularly at risk due to a combination of factors, including the age of the town and its location on the meeting point of a number of tributaries. In the event of flooding it was noted that there was a flood plan in place at County and District levels.

The PAG members agreed that the report be noted.

25 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

It was confirmed that additional passive tubes for measuring NO₂ were being installed the following month. It was also asked whether this could be publicised more widely to provide reassurance to action groups concerned about this issue. It was advised that the possibility of passive monitors along the Misbourne Valley in response to HS2's construction had been raised at the last meeting of Cabinet and with funding from HS2 these would be provided.

The PAG members agreed that the report be noted.

26 DECC COMMUNITIES FUND PROJECT

In 2014 CDC, as part of a consortium of 14 other local authorities, won £2.5 million from DECC to retrofit solid wall insulation. Its focus was engaging with local communities: across the 14 authorities 15,000 homeowners were approached to promote solid wall insulation and social landlords had also been targeted. From 2015 there had been a change in focus to promoting energy efficiency to reduce fuel poverty and a range of energy efficiency measures had been offered with a strong take up from residents.

In response to questions it was confirmed that the cut off date for applications had been the 16 March to be finalised by the 31 March. It was noted that as much of the funds granted as possible would be allocated, however, this was dependent on the markets taking up the offered funding. Within Chiltern it was advised that 8 homes had benefitted from solid wall insulation and 27 fuel poverty measures installed.

In future projects the Council would be looking to combine various utilities suppliers and link them with social landlords to offer different fuel poverty measures, because individually they would be unwilling to fund fuel poverty projects. They would also aim to find clusters of houses where improvements could be made to several properties at once.

Looking ahead it was confirmed that the DECC Communities Fund Project would be ending in 2016 although other sources of funding would still be available, such as the British Gas Trust. When seeking funding in the future it was advised that CDC would have much more voice when acting as part of a consortium and that the Council would need to seek funding as it could not rely on its grant provision.

Note: Councillor Rouse left the meeting at 7.17pm.

27 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ENERGY STRATEGY

It was advised that substantial comments on the report had been made at the Services Overview Committee on the 15 March; these would be taken to the Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) and before the Energy Strategy was presented to Cabinet additional work would be done to provide a clearer vision of how it could be delivered. It would therefore probably be deferred and presented to the Cabinet in June. It was asked whether there would be any disadvantage to delaying the adoption of the Strategy and it was advised that it was important for the Council to have a clear understanding of how it would be developed before adopting it.

Members noted that the report would be deferred.

The meeting ended at 7.21 pm