

## CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES of the Meeting of the HOUSING & PLANNING OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 15 APRIL 2014

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs J A Burton - Chairman  
                  "          Mrs A Pirouet - Vice Chairman

Councillors: R Burns-Green  
                  A S Hardie  
                  S A Patel  
                  D W Phillips  
                  M Prince  
                  Mrs L M Smith  
                  C J Wertheim

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors D J Lacey and N Stewert

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Mrs I A Darby

#### 27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Housing & Planning Overview Committee held on 21 January 2014, copies of which had been previously circulated, were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

#### 29 28 DAY NOTICE FORWARD PLAN & WORK PROGRAMME

There were no items that remained outstanding on the Work Programme of the Committee.

There was a request for a report on the allocation of funds for affordable housing for the next meeting.

The Committee were given a brief update on the progress of the new shared service in Health and Housing. It was advised that the shared service was on track to deliver savings of approximately £60k this year (£120k next year) as expected and only 2 redundancies had resulted from the process. The teams would be located at the CDC offices from approximately the end of October 2014.

Members reviewed the Forward Plan, to identify potential topics for review. The Committee agreed that there were no further items that they wished to include on the Work Programme at this time.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Work Programme of the Committee be noted.**

2. That no further items from the Forward Plan be added to the Work Programme of the Housing and Planning Overview Committee at this time.

## 30 HOUSING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

The report updates the budget position for grants and loans made to upgrade homes, for renovations and to tackle serious health hazards in housing. It was noted that demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) had remained strong over the last 5 years. For 2013/14, the number of approvals was 67 and the number completed 65 at an overall cost of £460,000.

A high proportion of DFGs were awarded to Paradigm tenants and so an annual capital contribution had been made to the DFG fund by Paradigm since 2006 and this had been increased for 2014/15. The government allocation had been confirmed and so no further increase was required from CDC's annual contribution.

The Committee were asked to note however, that there would be a new procedure for funding from 2015/16 as a new Better Care Fund, run by Bucks County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was being set up to allocate future government funding. The potential longer term risks of this arrangement were listed in the report.

With regard to the Discretionary Renovation Grants, the Council has a statutory responsibility for housing conditions in the area. To meet anticipated demand, a sum of £50,000 was requested to be transferred from the provisional to the active fund. This would deliver housing improvements to vulnerable owner-occupiers, support the return of empty properties and increase the supply of safe private-rented accommodation.

It was noted by the Committee that the repayment clause in section 7 was a new addition to enable the reclaim of funds if a property was sold within 10 years.

It was requested that the Housing team contact the Disability Focus Group to make them aware of the scheme.

### **RESOLVED**

**That the recommendations contained in the draft Cabinet report be endorsed by the Housing and Planning Overview Committee and that the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.**

### 31 HOUSING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS BUDGET - HOUSING INTERACTION TRUST

The Committee were reminded that it had agreed to a one-off payment of £10,000 to provide additional funding to Housing Interaction Trust last year to help it meet increased demands for its service. This meant that the Council had contributed a grant of £30,000 plus the additional £10,000 to the Trust in 2013/14. This year, a report from the Housing Interaction Trust (HIT) identified further increases in demand for its services and an increase in cases with complex and multiple issues. The Trust had requested a contribution of £40,000 from the Council in 2014/15 to help it to maintain its core services. It was noted that the Trust had a key role in homelessness prevention in the Chiltern District. The request for further funding was for new projects and not just a continuation. The clients presenting to the Trust had increasingly complex problems including mental illness that were more difficult to address. None of the clients assisted by HIT had made a subsequent homelessness application to the Council during the last year.

Councillors considered that HIT were doing an excellent job and agreed that it was useful to visit schools with their outreach work. There was some concern that the outreach work could increase the overall demand and therefore the funding required each year. It was noted that Officers had tried to help HIT find additional funding but found limited success.

It was recognised that the shared Chiltern and South Bucks housing service had commenced on 1 April 2014 and that the implementation of this service during 2014/15 would be looking at the longer term delivery of housing support services to young people across Chiltern and South Bucks. It was also noted that by the end of 2014/15, HIT would know the position regarding the renewal (or otherwise) of their current Supporting People funded contracts with Bucks County Council. Following a vote, the committee resolved to recommend the report to Cabinet.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the recommendations contained in the draft Cabinet report be endorsed by the Housing and Planning Overview Committee and that the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.**

### 32 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

This document was intended to give guidance for the implementation of core strategy policies on energy and sustainability and energy policies in the Delivery DPD. The draft policy would go to Cabinet in July for approval for public consultation and then following consultation this Committee would consider the consultation responses and draft SPD with a recommendation to Cabinet. If supported by Cabinet the SPD would be recommended for adoption by Full Council.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning to play a key role in reducing greenhouse emissions and in promoting the use of renewable energy. The SPD is intended to be best practice for new buildings and to encourage existing buildings to be more energy efficient.

The SPD would provide guidance on environmental matters on energy, water, flood, air quality, noise, biodiversity, waste and renewable energy.

With regard to energy consumption, the Committee were asked to consider whether Local Renewable Energy Targets should be set, now that the South East Plan (which Chiltern District was part) had been revoked. It was noted that any commitment to targets would require data collection and on-going monitoring as well as research to establish a target. The Members agreed that it was more important to provide appropriate guidance and objectives than to commit resources to research and monitoring work at this stage.

Members asked about the possibility of wind power in the district but were advised that Chiltern was either not within an identified area considered suitable for efficient wind production in the UK and/or was not appropriate due to the Chilterns AONB and other constraints.

With regard to nitrous oxide emissions (usually from diesel exhaust fumes), Members were concerned about the impact of HS2 lorries in the district but were advised that this could not be a local planning consideration as HS2 was a matter outside local control but could be a matter for consideration on the environmental impact assessment of HS2 that the Government should take into consideration.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the recommendations contained in the draft Cabinet report be endorsed by the Housing and Planning Overview Committee and that the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.**

**The meeting ended at 7.30 pm**