

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the COUNCIL

held on **6 JANUARY 2015**

PRESENT: Councillor N L Brown - Chairman
" Mrs M Harker - Vice Chairman

Councillors: Miss P A Appleby
A K Bacon
S P Berry
M Z Bhatti
Mrs J A Burton
M J Cunnane
Mrs I A Darby
A D Garnett
A J Garth
J L Gladwin
A S Hardie
G K Harris
P J Hudson
P M Jones
D J Lacey
P E C Martin
D G Meacock
D W Phillips
M Prince
D Spate
N M Rose
J J Rush
J S Ryman
P N Shepherd
Mrs L M Smith
M R Smith
M Stannard
M Vivis
J F Warder
C J Wertheim
A P Williams
F S Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors R Burns-Green, Mrs A Pirouet, C H Spruytenburg and N Stewert

74 PRESENTATION FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF PARADIGM HOUSING

Paradigm Housing Chief Executive, Alison Hadden attended the meeting to outline the impact of Welfare Reform on customers.

The key areas covered were as follows:-

- Size Criteria (" Spare Room Subsidy") – reducing benefit by occupying a larger property than deemed necessary.
- Benefit Cap – Maximum benefit levels set for non working households

- Universal Credit – Partial unification of benefit system including direct payment of universal credit housing costs to tenants as opposed to landlords.
- Other changes included Personal Independence Payments and the ending of Council Tax Benefit

In respect of the Spare Room Subsidy approximately 600 households had been affected initially but had reduced to 490 households; and it was noted that arrears figures were stable within those affected by Spare Room Subsidy. There had been a dramatic increase in mutual exchanges which had now stabilised, but had resulted in more assisted management moves and a degree of flexibility on moving residents with arrears. There was a concern regarding the long term picture with respect to Discretionary Housing Payments when housing benefit transfers to Universal Credit, as Discretionary Housing Payments are an important safety net feature of the current system.

In respect of the Benefit Cap, members were advised that the impact outside of London area was minimal but customers were to be offered support either directly or through signposting, and experience showed good support from Local Authorities and Department for Work and Pensions. The area of concern was that this may become more problematic over time especially with the potential of lowering the cap in the future.

It was reported that the Universal Credit was not a simple fix and that there were a number of benefits that were not included in the Universal Credit and it was being rolled out slowly initially. The housing cost impact had not yet been felt but as time progressed over 50% of customers may be affected. There was a proactive and effective change in approach to rent payment and rent arrears recovery. There had been a pragmatic communication with the customer base which had avoided saturation with information whilst maintaining the message of the changes.

The other changes were yet to have an impact as the Personal Independence Payments had rolled out slower than expected with a major push planned for October 2015. The Council Tax Benefit changes had not impacted as significantly to date as feared but the effects were likely to be cumulative..

The Key Concepts of Paradigm Strategy to deal with Welfare Reform was to avoid duplication and a scatter gun approach; but to consult internally and externally and based decision making on evidence with a multi departmental and agency approach.

Members received the presentation and raised questions in respect of land costs in Buckinghamshire, Paradigm's Asset Management and Investment Strategy and the impact of interest rate rises on the organisations financing costs.

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 4 November 2014 were approved as a correct record.

76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

77 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman's Engagements

A list of Engagements carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council between 5 November 2014 and 6 January 2015 had been circulated.

(b) Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised of a forthcoming event; the Chairman's Reception which was due to be held on Friday 6 March 2015 commencing at 7.30pm

(c) Announcements from the Leader of the Cabinet

The Leader of the Cabinet had no announcements to make.

(d) Announcements from the Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive had no announcements to make.

(e) Petitions

No petitions were submitted.

78 LICENSING & REGULATION - 23 OCTOBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor N Shepherd, seconded by Councillor J Warder and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Licensing & Regulation Committee held on 23 October 2014 be received.

79 PLANNING - 30 OCTOBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor D Phillips, seconded by Councillor J Burton and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Planning Committee held on 30 October 2014 be received.

80 PLANNING - 20 NOVEMBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor D Phillips, seconded by Councillor J Burton and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Planning Committee held on 20 November 2014 be received and the recommendation included in minute 129 be adopted.

81 RESOURCES OVERVIEW - 2 DECEMBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor A Garnett, seconded by Councillor J Gladwin and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Resources Overview Committee held on 2 December 2014 be received.

82 PERSONNEL - 3 DECEMBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor M Smith, seconded by Councillor D Phillips and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Personnel Committee held on 3 December 2014 be received.

83 JOINT APPOINTMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION - 8 DECEMBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor M Stannard, seconded by Councillor I Darby and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Joint Appointments and Implementation Committee held on 8 December 2014 be received.

84 GOVERNANCE & ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE - 10 DECEMBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor N Rose, seconded by Councillor M Stannard and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Governance & Electoral Arrangements Committee held on 10 December 2014 be received

85 PLANNING - 11 DECEMBER 2014

It was moved by Councillor D Phillips, seconded by Councillor J Burton and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Planning Committee held on 11 December 2014 be received.

86 CABINET MINUTES

The Portfolio Holder for Support Services responded to a member question in respect of statutory and discretionary spend.

It was moved by Councillor I Darby, seconded by Councillor M Stannard and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Cabinet held on 16 December 2014 be received and the recommendations contained in Minute 54 be adopted.

87 CABINET REPORTS

a) Councillor Rose – HS2

Councillor Rose reported that the final draft of the alternative to the HS2 proposals was being prepared, the Chiltern Long Tunnel proposal. A final report was due to be published by the end of January 2015. A full report was to be presented to the next meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday 10 February 2015.

b) Councillor Hudson – Youth Awards

Councillor Hudson reported that the Chiltern Youth Awards were due to take place on 9 March 2015 and nominations were due by Friday 13 February. The awards were a recognition of good work by individuals aged between 8 – 21 in the area.

88 QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

89 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports.

90 MOTIONS (IF ANY)

No Motions had been received.

The meeting ended at 7.38pm