

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **CDC COUNCIL**

held on **10 JANUARY 2017**

PRESENT: Councillor M Harker - Chairman
" P N Shepherd - Vice Chairman

Councillors: A K Bacon
S P Berry
D J Bray
J Cook
E A Culverhouse
I A Darby
M Flys
C J Ford
A J Garth
J L Gladwin
G K Harris
M J Harrold
P J Hudson
C J Jackson
P M Jones
R J Jones
D J Lacey
J E MacBean
P E C Martin
S A Patel
D W Phillips
N M Rose
C J Rouse
J J Rush
M W Shaw
L M Smith
M R Smith
D M Varley
H M Wallace
C J Wertheim

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors J A Burton, A S Hardie, C M Jones, M J Stannard, M W Titterington, N I Varley, E A Walsh and F S Wilson

158 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 15 November 2016 were approved as a correct record.

159 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

160 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman's Engagements

A list of Engagements carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council between 11 November and 25 December 2016 had been circulated.

(b) Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced the following forthcoming events:

- Wednesday 18 January – Community Network Event supported by the 11th Infantry Brigade at Chiltern District Council (Council Chamber) from 3pm – 6pm
- Friday 3 March – Chairman's Civic Reception at Chiltern District Council (Council Chamber) from 7.30pm – 9.30pm

(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 by a councillor.

161 PRESENTATION FROM PARADIGM HOUSING

The Council received a presentation from Matthew Bailes, Chief Executive of Paradigm Housing Association. The Chairman advised that Matthew had been Chief Executive of the Association since 1 September 2015 and he had a wealth of experience in the housing sector.

The Chairman added that Matthew was previously Executive Director, for Regulation at the Home and Communities Agency where he was responsible

for regulation of social housing providers in England. He had led a successful programme of modernisation of Regulation, including updating the Regulatory Framework, operational strategy and the structure and skills mix of the Regulator. Prior to leading the Regulator, Matthew was the senior civil servant responsible for policy on affordable housing.

Matthew opened his presentation with some key facts in respect of housing in the Chiltern District as follows:

- Severe housing crisis in the region (House Prices were 14 times the average income in Chiltern)
- Rents average of £1,300 per month
- The Association's role was to support people affected by the crisis
- Rent had been cut by 1% which had reduced the Association's income stream and capacity to adequately support tenants and meet financial commitments (a projected loss of £10m per annum by 2020)
- Homelessness and costs of temporary accommodation was increasing

The broader context was outlined in respect of the uncertainty of the market post Brexit, ongoing austerity, political pressure to build more homes with a focus on home ownership and the need for action on the housing supply. It was reported that a Housing White Paper was due to be published shortly.

Members were advised of the potential impact on changes to Welfare Reform which would result in residents receiving rent benefit payments directly rather than the current arrangements through their local council and it was likely that this would create risks and challenges in the future. There had also been reductions in the amount of benefit that the government will pay residents. The changes were causing Paradigm to rethink their build programmes.

It was reported that the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme had been delayed and the scale of the funding for this was still unclear. If this was introduced then all residents would qualify for Right to Buy and this could present challenges in terms of funding to build replacement properties. The proposed introduction of the Tenant Deal by Paradigm was also outlined which balanced the needs of existing tenants with those of future tenants. The Tenant Deal would include aspects such as rent in advance, pre-tenancy checks, the Housing Association taking action more quickly when tenancy breaches occurred (eg. rent arrears) and residents bearing costs for damages to property or missed appointments.

H Wallace and C Ford entered the meeting at 6.45pm

The Chief Executive of Paradigm concluded his presentation by outlining the need to build more new homes in the area and the opportunities for the Housing Association and local authorities to increase joint working to achieve the development of brown field sites for more affordable homes.

D Varley entered the meeting at 6.50pm

The Chairman invited questions from members.

In response to members' questions, Matthew Bailes explained that work was ongoing with the planning departments at local authorities to work in conjunction with the emerging local plan where possible. He also reported

that alongside the developing Local Plan, Paradigm was looking at opportunities now to re-develop existing infill sites in its ownership to deliver more affordable housing. In particular, it was noted that Paradigm were keen to explore the viability of the use of disused garage sites for development subject to considering possible legal constraints, but the possibilities were to be explored through a strategy to identify sites and to work closely with the local authorities. There were also considerations being made to the opportunities to build up on sites (ie. Provide developments of more than 1 storey).

P Hudson entered the meeting at 6.55pm.

It was reported that £1.4billion had been earmarked in Autumn statement for affordable housing and some for rented accommodation; and Paradigm were considering these funds as an option and while most was for shared ownership it was being considered for other options where possible.

It relation to sheltered accommodation provision this was being considered on a scheme by scheme basis as it was currently considered that over 55 accommodation was the hardest to let and the needs of current and future tenants needs were being considered. Many older people were no longer interested in the “traditional” sheltered scheme model.

It was noted that one of the major challenges to deal with was to ensure that infrastructure needs were met for all new developments and agencies needed to improve their joint working on this. Paradigm is considered a medium size agency home provider and therefore did not have the strongest influence but a senior official from the government was visiting Chiltern in the near future to discuss the needs of the area and the opportunities for agencies and local authorities.

The Chairman thanked Matthew Bailes for his very informative presentation.

162 CHILTERN AND WYCOMBE JOINT WASTE COLLECTION COMMITTEE - REVISED CONSTITUTION TO INCLUDE SOUTH BUCKS

It was moved by Councillor M Smith, seconded by Councillor P E C Martin and

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and Resolutions of the Cabinet held on 13 December 2016 be received and the recommendation contained in Minute 172 (iv) be adopted.

163 CABINET REPORTS

a) Councillor Darby – Modernising Local Government

Councillor Darby reported that on Monday 16 January, each District Council had scheduled a Special Meeting of Council to consider the recent reports on

the options to modernise local government across the County. The final report had been published on the Council's website on Tuesday 10 January.

b) Councillor Rose – HS2

Councillor Rose provided an update on the progress of HS2 and confirmed that the House of Lords Select Committee had now reported.

S Berry entered the meeting at 7.15pm.

Councillor Rose advised that Lord Stephenson had tabled a number of amendments to the Select Committee's report and this would be noted at the next meeting of the HS2 Steering Group due to be held on 1 February to which South Bucks District Council members were also invited. It was noted that HS2 Limited were currently embarking on increased community activity and engagement in the District.

In response to a member's question, Councillor Rose confirmed that the HS2 were considering changing their proposals to use concrete rather than shingle for the track bed not only in the tunnel but also outside the tunnel which could result in increased noise levels. This was an area being investigated at the moment.

164 QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

165 QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

There were no questions.

166 PETITIONS

Mr P Plato, of 2 Deer Park Walk, Chesham, Bucks presented the following petition to the Chairman on behalf of local residents:

“Against Proposals to Develop 900 homes on Land NE of Chesham & Removal of Site #1 from Green Belt Designation

Chiltern District and South Bucks District Councils are jointly preparing a Local Plan until 2036. Part of the proposal is to expand the town of Chesham by building new homes of which 900 are proposed to be built on agricultural land currently designated as Green Belt on the NE of Chesham at a hamlet called Lye Green.

The Lye Green community fears these plans, if adopted, will (amongst many other things) result in:

- *Significant damage to the openness and visual appearance of the area, which is close to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Chiltern Hills*
- *The loss of identity of the community in Lye Green which will then simply become absorbed within Greater Chesham whose sprawl will threaten and adversely impact upon the amenity of other nearby villages & settlements particularly from increased traffic*
- *Loss of good quality agricultural land and the adverse impact upon the wildlife, flora & fauna on the affected land.*

The Lye Green Residents also question how the Council can claim 'exceptional circumstances' to justify removing this site from the Green Belt. They also question whether Chesham can cope with such an expansion, when the road & drainage infrastructure is at capacity & the Council Highways Dept. have reported that 'significant increased in congestion' in the town will occur adding to already bad air quality particularly in Berkhamstead Road. There are also concerns how sustainable such proposals are in terms of being too far from local shops and the Underground Station which itself struggles to cope with existing commuter demands.

The community feels that any expansion of the town must follow the Government's advice by looking to brownfield sites first ie: unused or derelict employment land, empty offices, & unused areas outside the Green Belt – ie Brown not Green).

We question the need and ability of Chesham to cope with a disproportionate share of the new homes being planned to the combined areas of South Bucks & Chiltern District and urge that the proposal to build on the Preferred Option Site #1 on land to the NE of the town be scrapped.

Please sign this petition & visit www.brownnotgreen.weebly.com for more information on what else you can do to help."

The petition contained 1764 signatures.

ACTION:

The Chairman received the petition from Mr Plato and confirmed that in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme the petitioner would receive an acknowledgement and appropriate response from the Council within 10 working days.

N Varley entered the meeting at 7.21pm

167 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports.

168 MOTIONS (IF ANY)

The meeting ended at 7.23pm