

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the SERVICES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 19 JANUARY 2016

PRESENT: Councillor J A Burton - Chairman
" L M Smith - Vice Chairman

Councillors: D J Bray
M Flys
A S Hardie
C J Jackson
S A Patel
C J Rouse
M W Titterington
N I Varley
E A Walsh

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors
E A Culverhouse, P M Jones and J J Rush

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors G K Harris, R J Jones, J E MacBean
and C J Wertheim

44 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Services Overview Committee held on 29 September 2015, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee, as a correct record.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman requested that item 6 on the agenda be considered first and the Committee agreed.

Note 1: Councillors C Rouse, R Jones and J MacBean entered the meeting at 6.35 pm.

46 COMMUNITY SAFETY ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The Committee received a presentation from Superintendent Yvette Hitch, Local Police Commander for Chiltern & South Bucks on a proposal for an accreditation scheme for partners in the Chiltern District. The scheme would train and empower staff to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to enhance community safety.

It was advised that this was a nationwide scheme that could include staff from public services and private companies. Some examples were given of how this had worked in other areas including Oxford. With additional training from the Police, staff would be able to assist with minor disorder including littering, underage drinking, dog fouling, cycling on the footpath and begging. A fixed penalty notice (FPN) could be issued which would be enforced by the Police.

The scheme aimed to give more professional recognition to community workers including park wardens, security staff and traffic management staff. It would also enhance the sharing of information between partners and threat assessments which had been shown to allow the Police to work more effectively.

The training would be with Thames Valley Police, followed by assessment and exam. There would be a national accreditation for the qualification received and refresher training. The cost to set up the scheme was currently £750 and there was a £50 vetting fee for each candidate.

It was noted that Parish Wardens were employed in some areas but there were none currently in Chiltern District. Councillors were concerned that such a scheme could result in fewer Police Officers or Police Community Support Officers from being available locally.

It was advised that in other areas, the scheme had been shown to strengthen partnership working, to reduce the frequency of offences once the scheme had been publicised and so not many FPN's were actually issued. It could provide more reassurance for communities. The focus was more on changing behaviours and empowering communities and less on the penalties.

Councillors asked for a further report to be brought to Committee, to detail the costs to the Council, where the money from any fines issued would go, the cost to staff time in setting up and more detail about the training including length of time to train and vetting procedures.

The Chairman thanked Superintendent Hitch for the presentation.

Note 2: Councillors Harris and Wertheim left the meeting at 7.18 pm

47 28 DAY NOTICE

Notice was drawn to the upcoming Community, Health and Housing event with South Bucks District Council on 3rd February. Councillors were invited to attend the meeting at 6.15 pm at Capswood. Consequently, reports on homelessness, affordable housing and housing standards would be informed by this event and reports brought to a future meeting. It was proposed to bring forward a report on air quality and climate change to the next meeting. It was also suggested that the Thames Water Liaison Officer be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss flooding in the district.

A public consultation was currently underway to scope the Joint Local Plan (which started on 19 January and will end at 5 pm on 14 March 2016). This is the initial consultation to help scope the Plan and incorporates issues and options for development to be tested. There is also intended to be a Preferred

Options consultation in October/November later this year. Prior to the Council agreeing submitting a draft Plan this Committee and the South Bucks equivalent Committee would have the opportunity to consider this in more detail. An item would be added to the Forward Plan on this as soon as the most appropriate date had been identified. In the meantime members of the Committee were encouraged to look at the Consultation Document and submit any views they wish to be considered as part of the consultation.

48 HOUSING COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS FUND

Following changes to the benefits system, universal credits and other changes, there has been an increase in debt problems and homelessness in the district. The report recommended support to the CAB debt advice service and to the Housing Interaction Trust (HIT). It was noted that the HIT had recently merged with Connection Floating Support but any funds would be ring-fenced to be used for this purpose only.

The Committee acknowledged the track record of delivering specialist advice and homelessness prevention of these organisations but enquired whether other charities would lose out if this allocation was made. It was advised that this grant had come available as other support agreements had lapsed.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cabinet agrees a grant of £25,000 to Chiltern Citizens Advice Bureau to support the continuation of the Specialist Debt and Money Advice Service and**
- 2. That Cabinet agrees a grant of £40,000 to Connection Floating Support to support the continuation of the Housing Interaction Trust service and that these grant allocations be funded by utilising a contribution of £55,000 from the Housing Community Organisations Fund budget for 2016/17 and a contribution of £10,000 from the Community Grants Fund.**

49 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

This Performance Report (Quarter 2) would have been considered at the cancelled November meeting and refers to the period April to September 2015. The Quarter 3 report was being prepared and would be discussed shortly at the 15 March 2015 meeting.

It was noted that the first item on the Appendix A, relating to the rate of sickness absence amongst staff was very high; this was due to short term and long term sickness being reported together. Subject to approval by the Personnel Committee, from April 2016 (Quarter 1) short-term sickness would be reported separately from long-term sickness.

Within the Sustainable Development section of the performance indicators, the percentage of new enforcement cases where a site visit had occurred within the set out timescale for urgent cases had achieved 100% (against a target of 30%) and it had been agreed to change the performance indicator to a more meaningful one. This will come into place from April 2016.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

Note: Councillor J MacBean left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

50 SERVICE PLAN SUMMARIES

The service plan summaries for Chiltern District Council were attached to the report. They outlined the aims and achievements of the shared services, the customers, action plans, key performance indicators, risks, costs and comparisons. South Bucks District Council had their own set of summaries although there was overlap between them.

With regard to Customer Services (CS) and the complaints procedure, it was asked whether compliments and positive feedback could also be included in the service plans so achievements are recognised too. The new joint complaints and feedback policy will be worked on by CS once the new joint team has settled in place.

RECOMMENDED

That the Service Plan Summaries be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.33 pm