

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL** held on **15 MAY 2018**

PRESENT: Councillors P Shepherd - Chairman of the Council
G Harris - Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillors: A Bacon V Martin
D Bray S Patel
J Burton N Rose
J Cook C Rouse
E Culverhouse J Rush
I Darby L Smith
C Ford M Smith
A Garth M Stannard
J Gladwin N Southworth
M Harker D Varley
C Jackson N Varley
C Jones H Wallace
P Jones E Walsh
R J Jones J Waters
J MacBean C Wertheim
P Martin F Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors M Flys, M Harrold, P Hudson, D Phillips, M Shaw and M Titterington

MINUTE SILENCE

Following the prayer Members stood for one minute in silence in memory of Honorary Alderman and former Councillor Philip Priestley who had passed away on 9 March 2018 and the Chairman then paid tribute to the contribution that Mr Priestley had made to the Council during his time in office.

91 PRESENTATION ON THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017

Members received a presentation on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 from the Housing Manager at Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils. It was noted that the Act focussed on homelessness prevention and came into force on 3 April 2018.

Members noted the following key changes:

- that the Council does not have a duty to provide accommodation to all clients seeking homelessness assistance, but all clients would receive

- advice, a written assessment of their circumstances and an agreed action plan; and
- that assistance be provided to a person threatened with homelessness within 56 days (previously 28 days).

The Act sets out three main duties of a housing authority:

1. Homelessness Prevention Duty - which relates to the need for a local housing authority to take reasonable steps in securing that a clients' accommodation does not stop being available.
2. Homelessness Relief Duty – that a housing authority takes steps to relieve homelessness within 56 days by helping a client to secure housing.
3. Main Housing Duty – where the housing authority is satisfied that an applicant is homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need, and not intentionally homeless then the authority will have a duty to secure accommodation.

It was reported that someone could approach the Council at any of these stages of duty and therefore the process had become more layered since the Act's implementation. Further, that the Council could potentially receive more homeless applications or review requests. Members were advised that from 1 October 2018, specified public authorities must refer a homeless client to the local housing authority; officers welcomed this increased communication between public bodies. Members noted that the Council had two funding streams at present: the flexible homelessness support grant and new burdens funding. However, central government had not committed funding beyond 2020.

Members were informed of various work streams carried out by officers since the Act's implementation. This included but was not limited to, officer training on the Act and new procedures, the establishment of a countywide resilience service following successfully securing a bid for Homelessness Trailblazer funding (£625k), and the implementation of a new enhanced IT system. Members were advised of possible issues going forward, including the potential for outside factors to impact on the service for instance, the roll out of Universal Credit across the County, and Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire.

A question was raised as to how the Council would support a family coming into the district where English was not their first language. Members were advised that the Council had access to facilities like Language Line that could be used to support the client, and in terms of eligibility for assistance, the client would be assessed against the eligibility criteria.

Members enquired as to whether the Council collected data about clients to establish why they might be homeless. It was noted that this was the case, and that the primary reasons for homelessness within the district tended to be when a person was no longer able to live with family members or friends, or when a landlord serves a notice to end a tenancy following an increase in rent. In the latter case, the Council would make contact with the landlord about the potential for extending a tenancy.

Members expressed their thanks to the Housing Manager for an informative presentation and concise background to the legislation.

92 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 28 February 2018 and 11 April 2018 were approved as a correct record.

93 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

94 ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman's Engagements

A list of engagements carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council between 16 February 2018 and 4 May 2018 was noted.

(b) Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

(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.

95 FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The Council was asked to approve a number of amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules as recommended by the Audit and Standards Committee at the meeting held on 8 March 2018. The proposed amendments would update the existing rules following a merge of back office facilities to support the Chiltern and South Bucks joint working arrangements.

It was moved by Councillor J Gladwin, seconded by Councillor V Martin and

RESOLVED:

That the revised Financial Procedure Rules contained in Appendix A be approved.

96 JOINT WORKING - APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee and the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee, at their meetings 24 July 2017 and 6 September 2017 respectively, recommended that a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee be established. The new Committee would be responsible for discharging overview and scrutiny functions in relation to functions delegated to the Joint Committee to facilitate the joint working arrangements at the Councils. The appointment of the Committee was subject to South Bucks District Council approving the same recommendations at their meeting on 16 May 2018.

It was moved by Councillor D Varley, seconded by Councillor I Darby, and accordingly

RESOLVED:

1. That pursuant to section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Councils agree to appoint a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with authority to discharge the Councils' overview and scrutiny functions in relation to the functions delegated to the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee as set out in the terms of reference at Appendix 1 to the report

2. That the rules of procedure for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee be agreed as set out in Appendix 2

3. The Council's constitution and respective Cabinet Procedure, Access to Information and Overview and Scrutiny Procedures Rules be

amended to reflect the new Joint Committee

4. That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the necessary amendments to the IAA to reflect the above decisions in consultation with the Chief Executive and respective Cabinet Leaders

97 CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

98 VERBAL REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS OR CHAIRMAN OF A COMMITTEE

a) Councillor Peter Martin – Joint Planning Policy Member Reference Group

Councillor P Martin encouraged Members to attend the Joint Planning Policy Member Reference Group meeting scheduled to be held on Monday 21 May 2018. The meeting would provide an opportunity for Members to discuss matters associated with the Joint Local Plan.

b) Councillor Liz Walsh – Healthy Communities Update

Councillor L Walsh updated Members on the following:

- Community forum – a new community forum had been set up and would take place on 24 May 2018 from 6 - 8pm at King George V House. The next Chiltern Virtual Community Forum is scheduled for 26 June 2018 from 7 - 9pm. Members of the public would have the opportunity to ask the police questions about things happening in their area, and tell the police their top 3 safety priorities. Councillor Walsh encouraged Members to promote the forum to residents.
- Community Grant Aid Scheme 2018/19 – it was noted that this year's scheme is up and running and that the closing date for organisations to apply for funds was 29 June 2018.
- Community cards scheme – the community cards scheme launched April 2018 is a sticker-collecting scheme to help prepare Year 6 pupils transitioning to secondary school. The sticker scheme is designed to encourage pupils to try out new activities and learn about their community. 21 schools were taking part this year and the scheme would run until 8 June. It was noted that the prize for winners of the scheme was a trip to Lego Land in July.

c) Councillor Isobel Darby – Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Councillor I Darby reported that following James Brokenshire’s appointment to Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 30 April 2018, the Council had written to the Secretary of State to congratulate him on his appointment and looked forward to working with him.

Comment on Councillor Darby’s report

Councillor Peter Jones reported that he, Councillor C Jones, and South Bucks Councillor R Bagge, as Members of the Joint Staffing Committee, awarded certificates to members of staff on 14 May for having successfully completed the Manager Development Programme, and were incredibly impressed by the number of staff that had undertaken the programme. Councillor P Jones noted that due to the success of the programme, it would be run again next year. Councillor P Jones had great confidence in the officers’ ability to deal with any future organisational changes for local government in Buckinghamshire.

99 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE (IF ANY)

There were no questions.

100 PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

101 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no reports.

102 MOTIONS (IF ANY)

No motions had been received.

The meeting ended at 7.09 pm