

HEALTH & HOUSING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 21 November 2013

Present: Mrs Woolveridge (Chairman)
Mrs Burrows, Dr A Dhillon, Dr Matthews, Mr Pepler, Dr. Pope and
Mrs Simmonds

25. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Group held on 26 September 2013 were received.

26. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

The PAG received outside body reports from members as follows:

- Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group (10 October 2013) - Councillor Woolveridge
- Bucks CC Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (17 October 2013) - Councillor Woolveridge on behalf of Councillor Matthews
- L&Q Shires Neighbourhood Committee (21 November 2013)- Councillor Woolveridge
- Padstones (November 2013) - Councillor Cranmer
- Buckinghamshire Health Care Trust (28 August and 25 September 2013) - Councillor Pepler
- Health Communities Partnership (15 October 2013) - Martin Holt on behalf of Councillor Woolveridge

The PAG also received oral updates on the following:

Age UK Buckinghamshire - Councillor Simmonds

Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals Foundation Trust - Councillor Matthews

During the discussion on this oral report PAG noted with concern the issues surrounding Wexham Hospital, and the difficulties in obtaining information. The Portfolio Holder asked Mrs Matthews to keep a careful watch on the issues and to report back.

27. PORTFOLIO HOLDER BUDGETS 2014/15

The PAG considered a report seeking approval for the draft revenue budget and fees and charges schedule (as set out in an appendix in Part II) for 2014/15 for the Health and Housing Portfolio.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder has **APPROVED** for submission to the Cabinet:

- 1) The 2014/15 revenue budget of £763,698
- 2) The 2014/15 fees and charges

28. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2014/19

The PAG received a report which asked Members to consider the broad themes proposed in the new Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 as follows:

1. Maximise the provision of affordable housing.
2. Prevent and reduce homelessness
3. Maximise the use of private sector homes
4. Respond to the challenges of welfare reforms

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The report did not give specific details but will be used as a guide to produce a draft strategy which will be considered early in 2014.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, which indicated its support for the themes, the Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the proposed themes of the new Homelessness Strategy and requested officers to prepare a draft Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 for consideration early in 2014.

29. UPDATE ON ACQUISITION SCHEME

The PAG received a report which updated Members on the progress of the Acquisition Scheme which was approved in February 2012.

The report explained that of the £4,060,768 of commuted sums received for affordable housing schemes a sum of £1,250,000 had been originally allocated to the acquisition scheme under which London and Quadrant Housing Group (L&Q) purchases a mix of properties for sale on the open market. The Cabinet had agreed to allocate a further £320,000 to the scheme and to date 5 properties had been acquired under the scheme at a total cost of £300,000.

The report, after pointing out that market conditions had increased the cost of purchasing properties particularly in the District, set out two options for the future operation of the scheme:

On being asked which of the two options they preferred, the PAG indicated support for option 2 on the understanding that the assessment undertaken by L&Q was on a case by case basis. The PAG also supported the proposals as set out in the report to (1) extend the existing scheme to purchase properties outside the District and (2) explore Acquisition Schemes with alternative Registered Providers.

Having considered the advice of the PAG the Portfolio Holder AGREED to RECOMMEND to Cabinet that	
1.	in recognition that market conditions have increased the cost of purchasing property on the open market the Council's contribution to the Acquisition Scheme be increased to a maximum of £80,000 per property and that the total available funding for the Acquisition Scheme be increased to £1,545,000.
2.	arising from the above <ul style="list-style-type: none">• on case by case assessment the Acquisition Scheme be broadened to enable London and Quadrant to purchase properties outside the district in less expensive areas to maximise the delivery of affordable housing units.• officers be requested to explore similar Acquisition Schemes with alternative Registered Providers operating outside the district and report back to Health and Housing PAG the result of any negotiations.

30. BUCKS HOME CHOICE - UPDATE

In response to the increased flexibilities introduced by the Localism Act 2011, the BHC Partnership (comprising the four District Councils in Bucks and the four main stock transfer Registered Providers - Paradigm, L & Q, Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust and Red Kite) had carried out a review of the allocations policy with the formal consultation exercise running from April 2013 to 2nd June 2013.

A final version of the revised policy had been prepared by the Partnership and the PAG received a report summarising and inviting it to comment on the proposed revisions the main ones of which related to:

- Local Connection Qualification;
- Local Connection Definition;
- Housing Need;
- Owner Occupiers; and

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- Bedroom Requirements

Since the final version of the policy had been drafted the DCLG had released its consultation document entitled “Providing social housing for local people - Strengthening statutory guidance on social housing allocations.” The report went on to address the implications of the proposals in the Guidance on the revised policy particularly in relation to:

1. Residency Test
2. Other Qualification Criteria
3. Special Circumstances
4. Housing Options
5. Information

The PAG noted the view of the Bucks Home Choice partnership that, although there some additional wording would be required to reflect the DCLG consultation on strengthening the statutory guidance, there was no need to make any amendments to the key revisions.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, which raised supported the revised policy, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that authority be delegated to the Head of Health and Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing, to make any necessary amendments to the draft Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy prior to adoption, having regard to the final statutory guidance referred to in the DCLG consultation paper and subject to Aylesbury Vale, South Bucks, Chiltern and Wycombe District Councils also agreeing to these necessary amendments.

31. HEALTH PROFILES 2013 UPDATE REPORT

Following publication by Public Health England of Updated Health Profile for all District Councils, the PAG received a report summarising the findings and highlighting areas of concern for the District which included early deaths from cancer (where there had been a slight increase) and numbers killed or seriously injured on the roads.

During the discussion a member suggested that schools should take a more proactive role in helping to identify obesity amongst children. Referring to road injuries Members indicated their intention to raise the issue at the Workshop with Bucks County Council (Highways) on 26 November to see if they could receive more information on why the numbers killed in South Bucks were higher than the England average.

Following a request it was agreed that coloured copies of the Profiles be circulated to all members of the PAG.

32. HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

The PAG received an oral update on the Housing Service Action Plan and particularly noted that the Housing Services joint review was the subject of consultation with implementation due on 1 April 2014.

33. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The PAG received a report providing an update on the Environment Health Improvement Plan and was pleased to note that the traffic lights for all the aims were at green.

The PAG supported the suggestion that the environmental implications of the Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH) should be added to the Plan.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dog Fouling

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Community PAG would be considering options for tackling Dog Fouling and at the invitation of the Portfolio Holder the PAG asked that the report address/investigate the following issues:

- Implications of introducing a new by-law instead of relying on the Dog Fouling of Land Act;
- Potential for involving Police Community Support Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices;
- Identify the worst areas for dog fouling;
- Organise swoops in the worst areas;
- Improve signage; and
- Hold a fresh publicity campaign using amongst other things social media and Parish Councils to get the message across

The meeting terminated at 7.06 pm