

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (SBDC)

Meeting - 14 September 2017

Present: P Kelly (Chairman)
Dr W Matthews, D Pepler and D Anthony

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

17. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held 13 June 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

Having considered the advice of the PAG in relation to item 15 on the previous minutes the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that an additional Member be appointed to join the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Leisure Advisory Board.

18. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

The PAG received a written update from Cllr Matthews on the Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee which could be seen attached to the agenda pack. Cllr Matthews advised that a paper was being produced setting out the Committees recommendations following its recent inquiry into Adult Social Care.

19. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Healthy communities presented the update report which could be seen attached to the agenda pack. The PAG received and noted the report.

20. NEW CIVIL PENALTIES IN RELATION TO HOUSING ENFORCEMENT

The Housing Manager presented the report which advised Members of the implications of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 in respect of enforcement options against private sector landlords; sought delegated authority for the Head of Healthy Communities to enforce the provisions of the Act and ask that the Scheme of Delegation be amended accordingly; sought Members comments on the draft amended housing enforcement policy and sought delegated authority for the Head of Healthy Communities to agree the final policy with the Portfolio Holder.

Following a discussion by the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that:

1. That the new provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 be noted.
2. That Cabinet agree to give delegated authority to the Head of Healthy Communities to enforce the provisions of the Act and the Scheme of Delegations be amended accordingly.
3. That Cabinet authorise the Head of Healthy Communities to agree the final Housing Enforcement Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, having regard to members' comments and the regulations in respect of Banning Orders, once published.

21. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTION PLAN**

The Housing Manager presented the report which was set out to consider how the Council may seek to end the long term use of B and B and private rented nightly let accommodation. The PAG were advised that the impact of homelessness on the Council's budget was unsustainable and a range of solutions were being explored to increase the overall supply of affordable housing for both emergency and longer term affordable housing. The solutions being explored were outlined in the report attached to the agenda pack.

The Housing Manager advised the PAG that the recent National Audit report recognised the national increase in the number of homelessness coming out of private rented accommodation which then proved a challenge when moving people on from B & B / self-contained accommodation. The Bucks Homechoice waiting period for a two bedroom property was 23 months. The significant welfare reform was also identified as potentially having a negative impact.

The PAG was advised that Project Groups had been established for a number of the schemes and work was ongoing with Planning Policy to ensure affordable housing forms part of Local Plan discussions. During the discussion that ensued members were advised that Government had provided a clear steer to accommodate people as close as possible to their links so any move out of area would likely be to adjoining authorities.

A Member questioned the use of Wyeth Laboratories in Taplow which was a business premises but was now residential but was thought to fall between authority boundaries (Slough and South Bucks). The Housing Manager advised that he would look into this and report back to the PAG.

Following a discussion by the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that:

1. Cabinet considers the theoretical business case for the acquisition of residential properties for use as affordable housing and seeks a further report.
2. Cabinet comment on the Affordable Housing Action Plan in seeking to end the long term use of nightly let and B & B accommodation for homelessness.

22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business at this point.

23. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 following item of business is not for publication to the press or public on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act."

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular persons (including the authority holding that information).

24. **COMMUNITY GRANTS UPDATE**

The PAG received a report which provided an update on the delivery of the community grants in partnership with Heart of Bucks. The Portfolio Holder advised the PAG that there were funds unused from this financial year. The PAG were in agreement that if worthy causes were to come forward the remaining funds would be used.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the main reason for application refusals was the application form having not been completed correctly. There will be advice provided on form completion moving forward.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, taking into account that the use of remaining funds unused from this financial year would be explored, the Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** that Heart of Bucks continues to deliver the grants programme until 2019/20 with match funding.

25. **EMERGENCY HOUSING UNITS FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - BATH ROAD DEPOT**

The PAG received a report inviting comments on a number of recommendations that were to be made to Cabinet in respect of an interim development opportunity for temporary housing for use as emergency accommodation at the Bath Road Depot. Detailed information was available to the PAG in the report provided.

It was explained that the temporary units would be built off site and be delivered to site fully fitted ready for occupation and had a lifespan of 60 years. During discussion, it was explained to members that the plans were for 12 units based on pre-application advice due to the land being in the Green Belt and therefore subject to certain policy restrictions. It was to be assessed whether each unit required two parking spaces due to the proximity to the closely linked retail park and good transport links. The planning permission would be temporary for 5 years due to the site being of employment use.

The £2.7m figure was an estimated cost used for the purpose of the report. It was clarified that costs could not be confirmed at this stage. Members queried the management fee, subject to negotiation of 50% rental contribution and the PAG was advised that it would be the housing association who would manage the risks of tenants' not paying, damage to the property and dealing with daily issues that arise. The PAG asked that this level of management fee be looked at carefully before committing.

Note: Cllr Matthews left the meeting at 6.45 p.m.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, and taking the above comments into account the Portfolio Holder **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that:

1. Proposals to design, build and install temporary accommodation units at Bath Road Depot for a period of 5 years be agreed.
2. Subject to contract, the Council purchases 801 Bath Road, Taplow and adjacent land, using money available from the approved capital programme and the Head of Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Portfolio Holder for Resources to be authorised to finalise the terms and conclude the purchase.
3. It be noted that Management Team has agreed an exception to the Contract Procedure Rules to appoint a Project Manager or other consultants through the Scape framework to undertake a feasibility study to design, build and install the temporary

accommodation units at Bath Road Depot.

4. Subject to planning consent and the final business plan it be delegated to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Healthy Communities and Resources the authority to proceed with the development of temporary units for use as emergency accommodation on the Bath Road depot site including authority for the Head of Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to negotiate and conclude any necessary agreements to allow the development to proceed through to completion.
5. The appointment of a Registered Provider to manage the emergency accommodation provided on the Bath Road site and any adjacent land for a period of up to 5 years on terms to be agreed by the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Healthy Communities and Resources be authorised.
6. The Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities be authorised to draw down up to £2.7m of s106 funding to enable the Bath Road temporary housing project to progress.

26. **GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES AND CAB SUPPORT**

The PAG received a report which was provided to ensure that Members were aware of the ongoing issues on the former Bucks County Council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites and the actions being taken in response to these issues. Following the sites transfer to private ownership, SBDC had to refer the housing benefit claims to the Valuation Office Agency Rent Officer for a determination. As a result of this many residents had a significant shortfall between their Housing Benefit award and the cost of their pitch fees.

The Council had utilised Discretionary Housing Payments for some residents to make up the shortfall between the Housing Benefit award and the rent/pitch fee. A proportion of these payments was being met from the DCLG's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), supported by the Council commenced a project at the beginning of August 2017 to provide one-to-one support to residents to find a long term solution. An internal steering group had been set up and the PAG would be kept informed of happenings.

Following discussion, the PAG **NOTED** the position regarding the Gypsy and Traveller sites formerly owned by Bucks County Council and the actions being taken to mitigate the risk of residents becoming homeless.

The meeting terminated at 7.15 pm