

SUBJECT	UPDATE
<b>Shared Housing Service</b>	<p>The working arrangements of the shared housing service are being continuously reviewed to identify opportunities for improved service delivery and sharing of resources across the two authorities.</p> <p>The service is continuing to operate surgery sessions at the SBDC offices on Wednesdays and Fridays for customers who have to see an officer (e.g. a homelessness case) and cannot attend the CDC office. These meetings are by pre-arranged appointment. The service continues to work closely with the SBDC Customer Services Team and to provide training and support to ensure that Customer Services can provide an effective initial point of contact for those customers who still contact the SBDC office direct with Housing queries</p>
<b>Bucks Home Choice</b>	<p>As at 27 May 2015 a total of 439 applicants were registered with South Bucks District Council for Bucks Home Choice and were entitled to express interest in vacant social housing tenancies. A further 165 applicants were registered as Housing Options cases meaning that they have applied to Bucks Home Choice but do not qualify for the scheme and cannot express interest in vacancies. Applicants who are assessed as Housing Options cases will have received advice on their alternative housing options via the Bucks Home Choice website.</p> <p>The availability of properties to let via Bucks Home Choice remains limited in comparison with the number of households registered with Bucks Home Choice. Over the 10 week period up to 27 May 2015, an average of just 2 properties per week were available for letting and being advertised. Consequently, many applicants in South Bucks continue to face a long wait for accommodation.</p> <p>Overall in 2014/15 (1.4.14 to 31.3.15) a total of 229 properties were let in South Bucks via Bucks Home Choice and the average waiting times for an applicant to be rehoused were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 bedroom flat = 17 months</li> <li>2 bedroom house = 36 months</li> <li>3 bedroom house = 25 months</li> <li>4 bedroom house = 33 months</li> </ul>
<b>Homelessness</b>	<p>During 2014/15 (1.4.14 to 31.3.15) South Bucks DC determined a total of 75 homelessness applications of which 47 were deemed to be subject to the main homelessness duty (i.e. the duty to secure accommodation). This represents a</p>

	<p>significant increase of 60% on the number of applications received 2 years ago (47 in 2012/13) and is an indicator of the increasing pressure on the Council’s homelessness service.</p> <p>This pressure is evident in the continuing high demand for temporary accommodation for homeless households. As at 26/5/15, SBDC had a total of 42 homeless households in temporary accommodation including 14 in B &amp; B. Of the 14 households in B &amp; B, a total of 5 were households with/expecting children who had been in B &amp; B for at least 6 weeks. Officers are working actively to move these households on to alternative accommodation.</p> <p>The increased demand for temporary accommodation and use of bed and breakfast is having a significant impact on SBDC’s budget. During 2014/15 SBDC incurred net costs of at least £60,000 on bed and breakfast placements.</p> <p>Officers continue to look at securing additional and alternative temporary accommodation provision including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SBDC continues to utilise 6 properties owned by Thames Valley Police as temporary accommodation (located adjacent to the Police Station on Oxford Road, Gerrards Cross) via Bucks Housing Association. It has been agreed that SBDC can continue to utilise these properties as temporary accommodation during 2015/16 until such time as Thames Valley Police progresses the disposal of the properties.</li> <li>- Officers have been utilising several Paradigm-owned properties in Amersham as temporary accommodation for SBDC clients pending their re-development.</li> <li>- Officers are in negotiation with L &amp; Q to utilise 4 to 6 vacant units of former student housing in Wycombe as temporary accommodation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private Sector Housing and DFGs</b></p>	<p>The DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) Capital Programme budget for 2014/15 was fully committed. During the year, SBDC approved 55 DFGs for adaptation works. Works were completed at 40 properties (including wet floor showers, stair-lifts/through floor lifts, access ramps and extensions).</p> <p>Government subsidy for DFGs in 2015/16 (£262,000) has been paid to Bucks County Council through the Better Care fund. This funding has been transferred by Bucks CC to SBDC.</p> <p>The Housing Standards Team has been undertaking a review of HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) in South Bucks and carrying out inspections of these properties. Where necessary, improvements have been requested.</p> <p>The Council is continuing to work with CDC, National Energy Foundation and Lakehouse Services Ltd to deliver energy improvements to solid wall (hard to treat) homes</p> <p>The board of Directors of Green Deal Together, later rebranded Green Homes Together, the LA owned company resolved on 22th May 2015, to wind up the company. The company despite considerable investment in trying to make the Green Deal operate locally and later diversifying to deliver householders access to insulation and boiler discount schemes was</p>

	<p>unable to operate at a profit. Resources were not available from partners to continue to invest in the project until the Government had reviewed the Home Energy Efficiency market and adopted urgently needed revisions to the market place. A report on lessons learnt will be presented at a future meeting of the PAG.</p>												
<p><b>Affordable Housing</b></p>	<p>During 2014/15 (1.4.14 to 31.3.15) a total of 16 additional affordable homes were delivered in South Bucks through new build (6 x properties by L&amp;Q at Hanbury Close in Burnham and 10 x acquisitions by L &amp; Q). These new build and purchased properties also generated an additional 7 vacancies within the existing social housing stock by allowing tenants to move on.</p> <p>There are no new build affordable housing schemes currently on site. The L &amp; Q programme of purchasing existing properties (supported by SBDC commuted sum funds) is continuing and has completed 20 purchases so far. Further to the resolution of SBDC Cabinet on 31/3/15 the Council has committed a further £800,000 to support the continuation of this purchase programme.</p> <p>As at 26/5/15 the position for commuted sums received since January 2011 was as follows:</p> <table data-bbox="784 630 1635 774"> <tr> <td>Sum received</td> <td>=</td> <td>£4,931,259.13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sum spent</td> <td>=</td> <td>£3,133,642.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Committed funds (not yet spent)</td> <td>=</td> <td>£1,345,358.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Uncommitted funds</td> <td>=</td> <td>£459,259.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>Following the amendments to the National Planning Policy Guidance introduced in November 2014, the Council can no longer seek any affordable housing contribution (either on site or financial) on any development of 10 units or less (with councils able to set a lower threshold for all planning obligation types of 5 units or less in designated rural areas)</p>	Sum received	=	£4,931,259.13	Sum spent	=	£3,133,642.00	Committed funds (not yet spent)	=	£1,345,358.00	Uncommitted funds	=	£459,259.00
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<p><b>Housing Related Support (Supporting People) contracts</b></p>	<p>The existing Supporting People contracts for housing related support services in Bucks are being renewed for most suppliers for a further two years 2015/16 and 2016/17. However, most suppliers have had a cut in their funding and will have to review and reduce their services accordingly. The services affected in South Bucks (i.e. that currently have SP contracts) are Padstones and Bucks Floating Support.</p> <p>The District Councils are continuing to work with Bucks County Council to review and monitor these contracts and to start planning for the delivery of housing-related support services beyond 2016/17.</p>												
<p><b>Licensing</b></p>	<p>The shared Licensing service is fully based at CDC and continuing to make service improvements through the use of e-forms, public access and the shared Uniform IT database. The service is continuing to move to the use of online applications and following the first year of the shared service 85% of SBDC applications were made on line. Currently 95% of licences for both Chiltern and South Bucks Districts have been dealt with online.</p> <p>Fees for the functions of the service have recently been reviewed and harmonised fees are now in existence across both Councils.</p> <p>Training for members across both councils is being provided during June and July</p>												

	<p>Enforcement action and compliance checks have increase across both districts with night time enforcement operations increase across both districts. Action has been taken to revoke 2 drivers licences with a prosecution resulting against 1 driver.</p> <p>Premises hearings or licensing sub-committees are held as required throughout the year.</p> <p>The team is progressing with online DBS checks simplifying the process for applicants and reducing processing costs.</p> <p>Follow the Louise Casey report into Rotherham the team is working across Bucks to develop opportunities to improve controls and raise awareness amongst the trade and public of CSE.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Health shared Service</b></p>	<p>Shared Service Review has now been completed and the project has moved to the Implementation stage. Staff consultation over the new structure is currently being undertaken, following consideration and approval of any changes appointments will be made to the new roles by 1<sup>st</sup> October. The shared Uniform database and IDOX document content management system will be live July enabling storage and retrieval of documents.</p>
<p><b>Public Health and Nuisance</b></p>	<p>The Joint Countywide Pest Control and Dog Control Contracts have now been mobilised by SDK and will operate until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. Charges for treatments are designed to be at the market rate with a subsidy for those in receipt of benefit. A report is presented detailing future options for the Council. Currently the tender has delivered savings to SBDC of £4,000 with no reduction in service specification or quality.</p> <p>In preparation for an Ebola outbreak the Council reviewed its emergency planning process and worked with neighbouring authorities across the Thames Valley (Thames Valley multi-agency desktop exercise) to train Environmental Health staff in their possible role. The website was also updated to provide information and links to agencies for the public.</p> <p>Development at Pinewood has begun to be visible and complaints have already been received in relation to the intensification of use of the North and West portions of the site. Officers are working with both the production companies and developers to minimise the impact.</p> <p>The project to tackle raise awareness of the anti-social nature of dog mess on public open spaces is underway Parishes including Beaconsfield Iver Farnham Royal and Dorney have begun to make use of the posters and banners. A further role out of the materials and increase in the publicity campaign is planned supported by uniformed wardens from SDK carrying out patrols in the district.</p>

<p><b>Food and Health and Safety</b></p>	<p>Measures have been put in place to address what is currently a reduced team with long term sick leave and staff vacancies, resulting in 3 out of 5 permanent employees in post. The team is using a part time agency worker to help cover food inspections. Temporary staff have been employed to assist manage the nuisance/public health case work and support is provided as required from CDC.</p> <p>100% of food inspections undertaken in 2014/15 achieving regulatory compliance by 92% of higher risk businesses.</p> <p>The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is continuing to be used to drive up the standards in poorer premises resulting in an increase in requests for revisits and appeals.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Environment and Sustainability</b></p>	<p><b>Rail</b> The Iver area of SBDC is heavily threatened by transport projects including Heathrow airport expansion, Western Rail Link, and The Cross Rail project which has now begun to have direct impact. EH and Planning Policy continue to monitor developments and respond to relevant consultations.</p> <p>The Environmental Health Manager at SBDC continues to work with colleagues at SBDC and CDC through the HS2 Officer Steering Group and with local members. The main issues for SBDC are around noise, visual impact and the impact of the viaduct on the Colne Valley Park. However SBDC supports the route wide issues led by CDC.</p> <p><b>Aviation</b> Airports Commission recent Consultation on Air quality responded to.</p> <p><b>Air Quality</b> The team continue to monitor the impact of major transport routes on local Air Quality. With an AQMA co-terminus with the 3 motorways we are always looking for means to address the impact- however there is limited scope for influence. Connect Plus has recently issued an environmental Strategy and comments will be put forward in due course to identify positive improvements.</p> <p><b>Land Quality</b> The Contaminated land strategy has been recently reviewed and re-launched. The majority of contaminative use is in the</p>

	<p>form of gravel extraction and historic land fill. The benefits of wholesale investigation and site cleanup are negligible in terms of health impacts and the economic and social impact of such investigations is high. Sites are identified and improvements through planning logged.</p> <p><b>Strategic Flood Management</b></p> <p>The EH Manager supports Cllr Naylor at the Bucks Strategic Flood Management Committee and attends the Technical flood management group. Most issues are a result of high ground water and the standards of Thames Water and BCC infrastructure both of whom are being lobbied to improve standards.</p>
<p><b>Community Safety</b></p>	<p>South Bucks and Chiltern are considered very safe with low levels of crime in last 12 months;          379 burglary dwelling crimes down from 629 in 12/13          504 burglary non-dwelling crimes down from 753 in 12/13          Thefts from vehicles down 27%          Low incidents of ASB          7% increase in violent crime (858 crimes) over the year including non-physical(bullying, threats) 480 and physical 378 reports</p> <p>The Community Safety team continues to support local residents – we have recently worked closely with Trading Standards to raise awareness of rogue traders and doorstep sellers in Beaconsfield. An evening was held in Stoke Poges for local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to raise awareness of financial fraud and cyber scams. A number of crime reduction events have been carried out across South Bucks Garden centres to raise awareness of spring related crime including shed breaks. We have also had a stand in Burnham High Street to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation. The CSI newsletter is still being produced bi-monthly and the distribution lists to reflect new Councillors are currently being created so all Members will receive this regular update. Community Cards has been issued to year x pupils of all local schools, an initiative widely welcomed by schools and the police.</p>
<p><b>Community and Leisure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Community grants fund of £15k is available for capital projects delivered by community groups</b></li> <li>• <b>Subs and donations of £20,981 have been awarded with £1,019 available for future applications in 2015/16 and publicised on website</b></li> <li>• <b>Funding Fair on 21<sup>st</sup> July to be held at SBDC offices</b></li> <li>• <b>Annual throughput in both Leisure centres is 131,461 visits</b></li> <li>• <b>In 2014/15 the net income of running both leisure centres was £5,559 (-£67665 Evreham/+£62070 Beacon Centre.</b></li> <li>• <b>Customer satisfaction at the Beacon Centre was 92.4%, Evreham was 81.3% against a target 80%</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Olympic legacy programme - total attendances was 8,599, with 4019 young people attending.</b></li><li>• <b>Community officer currently working on a project with National Citizenship Service (NCS) to support young people in to apprenticeships.</b></li><li>• <b>Working with the Disability Focus group to deliver the Disability Film project</b></li><li>• <b>£10k Sportivate funding awarded to GLL for projects in SBDC</b></li></ul>
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