

**SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL – COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE****September 2015**

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
<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 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 a total of 427 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 174 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. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, an average of just 2 properties per week have been available for letting and been advertised. Consequently, many applicants in South Bucks continue to face a long wait for accommodation.</p> <p>Since 1.4.14 a total of 47 properties have been 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 = 11 months</li> <li>2 bedroom house = 13 months</li> <li>3 bedroom house = 26 months</li> <li>4 bedroom house = No Lettings</li> </ul>
<b>Homelessness</b>	<p>To date in 2015/16 (since 1.4.14) South Bucks DC has determined a total of 29 homelessness applications of which 24 were deemed to be subject to the main homelessness duty (i.e. the duty to secure accommodation).</p> <p>This pressure on the housing options and homelessness service is evident in the continuing high demand for temporary accommodation for homeless households. As at 02/9/15, SBDC had a total of 50 homeless households in temporary accommodation including 21 in B &amp; B. Of the 21 households in B &amp; B, a total of 9 were households with/expecting children</p>

	<p>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 will have as significant demand SBDC's budget as the Council's Housing Benefit expenditure on B&amp;Bs is only partially offset by Government subsidy.</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 and South Bucks as temporary accommodation for SBDC clients pending their re-development or disposal.</li> <li>- Officers are finalising plans 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>Since 1/4/15 in the Council's The DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) Capital Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 26 grants for adaptation works have been approved</li> <li>- 19 grants have been completed (some of these grants were originally approved prior to 1/4/15)</li> </ul> <p>The Housing Standards Team has established an inspection programme for HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) in South Bucks and is carrying out inspections of these properties accordingly. 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><b>Affordable Housing</b></p>	<p>To date in 2015/16, no additional affordable homes have been delivered in South Bucks through new build or acquisitions. Further to the resolution of SBDC Cabinet on 31/3/15, L &amp; Q is continuing to a programme of acquisitions in South Bucks but has not yet been able to secure further purchases.</p> <p>Following changes to the National Planning Policy Guidance introduced in November 2014, the Council was no longer able to 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). However, a</p>

	<p>court challenge by Reading and West Berkshire District Councils which was determined on 31/7/15 resulted in the Government withdrawing these changes to the policy planning guidance. Consequently, the Council can now apply its Development Plan policies on affordable housing provision as it did prior to the changes. The Government has signalled its intention to re-introduce these changes in the future and officers are monitoring the situation.</p> <p>As a result of the budget and other Government policy announcements, a number of Registered Providers have temporarily halted their development programmes while they review their business plans. This is to take account of Government policy announcements that will directly impact on Registered Providers by reducing their asset base and income streams (including the introduction of an extended Right to Buy and the requirement to reduce rent levels by 1% per annum). The long term impact of this may see many Registered Providers become less willing to undertake new affordable housing schemes in the future and make it more difficult for the Council to secure additional affordable housing in South Bucks.</p>
<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. An initial strategy meeting between Bucks County Council and the District Councils is scheduled for October 2015.</p>
<p><b>Licensing</b></p>	<p>Joint Member Licensing Training at SBDC – 22<sup>nd</sup> September – good attendance is planned</p> <p>Deregulation act has brought in the requirement to issue 5 year operator and 3yr driver licences Consultation on the 5 year Operator fees currently undertaken – these will be in place as of the start of October as required.</p> <p>Premises hearings or licensing sub-committees are held as required throughout the year. There are no expected Sub-Committees at the moment, although objections have been received on one application it is expected that officers will be able to resolve this through discussions with the applicant and objectors.</p> <p>Online DBS checks are now live simplifying the process for applicants and reducing processing costs, this prevents errors by applicants when completing the forms, which can cause a significant delay in their application, and the process is cost neutral.</p> <p>Follow the Louise Casey report into Rotherham the team is working across Bucks to develop opportunities to improve controls and raise awareness</p>

	<p>amongst the trade and public of CSE. The Licensing section has recently reviewed where the service is now following 18 months since becoming a shared service, and has identified a lot of success and also some further improvements that we will be seeking to make to improve the service further.</p> <p>Licensing together with the Communications team has recently held a meeting with local press to proactively raise the public's general awareness of what the licensing service deals with and how it may be able to help.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Health shared Service</b></p>	<p>Staff currently undergoing Expression of Interest stage in the Shared Service with appointments being made to the new roles by 1<sup>st</sup> October.</p> <p>The shared Uniform database is now live enabling storage and retrieval of information on the single shared system reducing future uniform costs and enabling the document management system and mobile working platform to be implemented</p>
<p><b>Public Health and Nuisance</b></p>	<p>On going work includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation of an alleged fly nuisance impacting on residents in Richings Park which has been traced to secondary sources in the area and is not currently connected to the Thames Water treatment works.</li> <li>• Assessment of compliance with abatement notice served on the owner of premises, Lent Rise, Burnham.</li> <li>• Current partnership action to address residents' concerns in Victoria Crescent, Iver.</li> <li>• Response to the BCC Overview Committee on flooding 2013/14.</li> <li>• Response submitted to the Environmental Audit Committee on the Airports Commission Report in relation to Carbon emissions, air quality and noise inquiry.</li> <li>• Supporting the development of the countywide Healthy eating strategy</li> </ul> <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 roll 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</b></p>	<p>Continuing long term sick leave has meant that the permanent team</p>

<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<p>is still understrength and supported by a part time agency worker to cover food inspections. Temporary staff are also in part time posts to ensure responses to nuisance/public health requests are completed within time.</p> <p>The food team are maintaining good progress towards 100% of food inspections completed within their risk based deadline and regulatory compliance remains at 92% for 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. Of 500 premises currently 92% are achieving or exceeding full compliance, while 3 premises representing less than 0.6% are recorded as '0' poor standards.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Environment and Sustainability</b></p>	<p>A response has been submitted to the Airports Commission review of the proposal for additional runway capacity at Heathrow and work is being considered to establish an environmental baseline for South Bucks to assist with developing informed responses to a range of major infrastructure projects threatening the South of the district.</p> <p>Joanna Faul has been leading a project to introduce the concept of low carbon motoring to South Bucks with the support of Nissan UK. A trial of electric vehicles is proposed for work within the authority and a demonstration for staff and councillors with opportunities to test and sign up for discounts on electric vehicles.</p>
<p><b>Community Safety</b></p>	<p>South Bucks is considered very safe with low levels of crime current figures for the rolling 12 month period;</p> <p>197 burglary dwelling crimes down from 294 in 2014                  277 burglary non-dwelling crimes down from 391 in 2014                  Thefts from vehicles down 22.5%                  Low incidents of ASB                  6.7% increase in violent crime (524 crimes) over the year including non-physical (bullying, threats).</p> <p>The Council and Community Safety Partnership have been notified of the requirement to undertake a Domestic Homicide Review following the murder of a resident who was temporarily residing in Wycombe. The lead responsibility to undertake the review rests with the Community Safety Partnership in which the victim resides. In consideration of the very short term nature of the victim residing in Wycombe it has been agreed that the Chiltern and South Bucks Community Safety Partnership will lead the Review but share cost with Wycombe District Council. The estimated £5k cost of the review and admin support will be met within existing budgetary provision.</p> <p>The Community Safety team has actively targeted local businesses in Iver and Iver Heath and Gerrards Cross to launch the Safe Place Scheme. We have also organised a Health and Wellbeing event for the residents of The Orchards Residential Park in Iver.</p>

	<p>A crime reduction event was held in July in Burnham Beeches in partnership with the Police.</p> <p>A number of bike marking events across the District have been held.</p> <p>Community Cards ended with one school from Burnham winning first prize – a trip to Legoland for the class.</p> <p>A crime reduction event was also held at the Wyevale Garden Centre in Beaconsfield.</p> <p>We have met with Burnham Parish Council to see how we can launch the dementia friendly toolkit. Meetings with Denham and Iver are being booked in.</p>
<p><b>Community and Leisure</b></p>	<p>Applications have been received for £12,570 in relation to the Community grants fund</p> <p>Applications have been received for £9,280 in relation to the remaining funding for Subs and Donations. Subs and donations will open at the end of the year for 2016-17 funding.</p> <p>13 groups attended the Funding Fair on 21<sup>st</sup> July held at SBDC offices.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction at the Beacon Centre is currently 92.4%, with Evreham at 81.3% against a target 80% this will be measured again in February/March 2016</p> <p>Olympic legacy programme –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Games in the park ran during the summer holidays across the district with 104 children taking part.</li> <li>• Summer Rockets club took place in Beaconsfield for children with disabilities, 24 children took part.</li> <li>• Riding lessons were available for children with disabilities at Fulmer Riding for the Disabled association, 12 children took part with a total of 47 visits.</li> <li>• The Sports Club forum is taking place at Evreham Sports Centre on 24<sup>th</sup> September, clubs are invited to attend, share best practice and receive guidance and support from LEAP. Women’s Rugby World Cup winner Rochelle Clark is giving a talk to the clubs.</li> <li>• The Indoor rowing competition will continue again this year; it usually takes place in February with secondary schools in the district.</li> </ul> <p>11 young people from the National Citizenship Service (NCS) project visited the council and presented projects to the ‘Dragons Den’ panel. In supporting the NCS Summer programme we hosted a professional visit to the council led by Cllr Egleton and involving talks from Bob Smith and Jackie Hills. Eleven young people with one supervisor took part in the visit and presented to the panel a pitch around the subject of “Domestic Violence Against Men”. A second professional visit was aborted because the young people got lost on their way here. We also supported the programme by sourcing community projects for the young people to work with and by recruiting the following “Dragons” for the Dragons Den part of</p>

	<p>the programme: Alan Goodrum, Trevor Egleton, Steve Archibald of Carers Bucks. Feedback from NCS was extremely positive and they have requested our support for the Autumn programme.</p> <p>Working with the Disability Focus group to deliver the Disability Film project. Launch event took place in July at Pinewood Studios attended by Dominic Grieve MP.</p> <p>Over £5k Sportivate funding awarded to GLL for projects in SBDC, including Golf, Mountain biking, gym and Basketball.</p>
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