

**SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL – COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE**  
**December 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. 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.</p> <p>Two Housing Options Advisers have resigned from the team and these posts are being advertised for replacements. An additional officer has been appointed via an agency for an initial three month period to support the team in meeting the current work pressures and dealing with the transition period as new staff come in.</p> <p>A Member workshop to discuss the current housing and homelessness pressures facing both CDC and SBDC and how to take forward a joint strategic response has now been scheduled for February 2016.</p>
<b>Bucks Home Choice</b>	<p>As at 10 September 2015, a total of 423 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 176 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 has continued to be low compared with the number of households registered with Bucks Home Choice. Since 1 April 2015, an average of just two 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>For properties let in South Bucks via Bucks Home Choice since 1 April 2015 the average waiting times for an applicant to be rehoused have been:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 bedroom flat = 15 months</li> <li>2 bedroom house = 14 months</li> <li>3 bedroom house = 24 months</li> <li>4 bedroom house = No Lettings</li> </ul>
<b>Homelessness</b>	<p>To date in 2015/16 (since 1 April 2014), South Bucks DC has determined a total of 43 homelessness applications of which 35 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. The combination of this rising demand with a lack of available vacancies in the social housing stock has resulted in an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation. As at 9 November 2015, SBDC had a total of 57 homeless households in temporary accommodation including 24 in B&amp;B. Of the 24 households in B&amp;B, a total of 14 were households with/expecting children who had been in B&amp;B for at least six 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 as significant demand on 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 six 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>- In October 2015, SBDC commenced arrangements with L&amp;Q to utilise 4 vacant units of former student housing in Wycombe as temporary accommodation. Households were moved on from bed and breakfast and into this accommodation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private Sector Housing and DFGs</b></p>	<p>Since 1 April 2015 in the Council's DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) Capital Programme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 33 grants for adaptation works have been approved</li> <li>- 25 grants have been completed (some of these grants were originally approved prior to 1 April 2015)</li> </ul> <p>SBDC's Disabled Facilities Grant capital budget is on schedule to be fully committed before the end of 2015/16.</p> <p>The Housing Standards Team has established an inspection programme for HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) in South Bucks and is continuing to carry out inspections of these properties accordingly. Where necessary, improvements have been requested.</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 March 2015, L &amp; Q is reviewing its programme of further acquisitions in South Bucks in view of recent</p>

	<p>Government policy announcements that have impacted on the business plans of all Registered Providers (including the introduction of an extended Right to Buy and the requirement to reduce rent levels by 1% per annum). Discussions with L&amp;Q are ongoing on the future delivery of the acquisition programme and other affordable housing development opportunities in South Bucks.</p> <p>The Housing and Planning Bill was published in October 2015 and it includes provisions that will prevent local authorities from requiring developers to include affordable rented housing within larger private developments under Section 106 provisions. Instead, developers will be able to meet affordable housing requirements by delivering homes for sale at a minimum of 20% of market value. This will significantly reduce SBDC's ability to secure on-site affordable rented housing or to secure affordable housing contributions to fund schemes such a property acquisitions. In turn, this will create further pressure on the Council's housing options and homelessness service as clients of this service are unable to afford discounted home ownership.</p>
<p><b>Housing Related Support (Supporting People) contracts</b></p>	<p>The existing Supporting People contracts for housing related support services in Bucks were renewed for most suppliers for a further two years (2015/16 and 2016/17). Most suppliers have had a cut in their funding and have had 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>Bucks County Council is now reviewing how homelessness support and prevention services should be delivered after the existing contracts come to an end (i.e. at the end of 2016/17). Bucks CC has held initial discussions with District Council Housing Managers to consider what service provision will be required beyond 2016/17 and further strategic discussions are taking place later in November.</p>
<p><b>Licensing</b></p>	<p>Revised Gambling Act Statement of Principles to be published in December, ahead of coming into effect in January 2016.</p> <p>A Sub-Committee meeting has been arranged for 18 November to consider an application for a Private Hire Drivers Licence. This has been referred to the Licensing Committee rather than being determined by officers using delegated powers because the details provided by the applicant makes the decision as to whether they are a fit and proper person to be licensed complex and it is considered therefore that a Sub-Committee is best placed to determine this.</p> <p>Five year operators' licences and three year drivers' licences are now the standard durations issued as required by the Deregulation Act 2015. However, shorter licences are being made available on a case by case basis. A report is planned for the Licensing Committee to provide details of the take up of the longer licences.</p> <p>Joint Member Licensing Training took place at SBDC on 22 September – good attendance from Members and well received.</p>

	<p>Further work is continuing in relation to safeguarding vulnerable passengers who use taxis. Training has been arranged for licensed drivers in February 2016 and this is being supported by the Licensing Chairman who will be attending the two sessions giving the drivers an opportunity to discuss current issues. The training will be delivered by Bernados at no cost to the Council.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Health Shared Service</b></p>	<p>Work is well underway to prepare for the new joint service. This includes planning for and implementing the new service, allowing Officers to access both Councils' systems and information, back scanning old paper information and files and working with all team members to develop new procedures and leaner processes.</p> <p>The new team and new roles will commence from 1 December 2015.</p>
<p><b>Public Health and Nuisance</b></p>	<p>On going work includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing activity around partnership working on ASB             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community trigger review Victoria Crescent, Iver</li> <li>- CPN warning letter Denham</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Finalising report regarding odour from premises on Lent Rise Road Burnham</li> <li>• Continuing to work with BCC regarding flooding issues ahead of winter 2015</li> <li>• Working with Licensing and Housing relating to caravan site at Dudley Wharf</li> <li>• Working with PHE regarding food related incidents in Burnham</li> <li>• Prior approval requests for Crossrail work - made contact with contractors to establish advance notification of work through Christmas period and request quiet times</li> <li>• Investigating noise complaints around Khalsa School beginning to identify measurable issues</li> <li>• Air Quality U&amp;SA work being undertaken</li> </ul> <p>Developments at:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pinewood is continuing - officers in regular contact with the developers to minimise the impact</li> <li>• Mill Lane Taplow inspection of crusher for demolition and site clearance</li> </ul> <p>Working with Planning Policy to ensure mitigation of infrastructure impacts of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HS2 moving the Heathrow Express depot to Langley</li> <li>• M4 Smart Motorway Public Inquiry</li> <li>• Western Rail Access</li> <li>• Heathrow</li> </ul> <p>SDK approached to commence patrols in parks across the district identified by Parish and Town Councils.</p>
<p><b>Food and Health and Safety</b></p>	<p>Continuing long term sick leave has meant that the permanent team is still understrength and supported by a part-time agency worker to cover food</p>

	<p>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 has continued an upward trend with 93% of businesses achieving 3 or above on the FHRS.</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>The electric vehicle supplied by Nissan was used by officers to travel around the district and to help reduce our carbon footprint in travelling between offices in Chiltern and Aylesbury. Further activity around awareness raising and to identify opportunities for introducing Low Emissions Vehicles for council use and promoting them to the community at large is planned.</p> <p>Bucks County Council are leading on a Strategic Flooding Management Report for Bucks to capture the impact and issues associated with flooding and changes due to developments and climate change.</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:-                  201 burglary dwelling crimes down from 266 in 2014                  275 burglary non-dwelling crimes down from 376 in 2014                  Thefts from vehicles down 25.7%.                  Low incidents of ASB                  17.2% increase in violent crime (558 crimes) over the year including non-physical (i.e. bullying, threats). This is linked to the change in national recording standards and the increase has been seen across the Force.</p> <p>The Community Safety team has actively targeted local businesses in Beaconsfield to launch the Safe Place Scheme.                  The team has also supported the launch of a Dementia-Friendly Community in Burnham. This was a very positive event with approximately 25 different groups and businesses all identifying ways in which they can be more dementia-friendly.</p> <p>The winter burglary plan is now in action. The top repeat victim roads have been targeted with the Police and Community Safety team. Residents have been visited and offered crime reduction advice/timer switches and SelectaDNA.</p> <p>Halloween and Fireworks saw high levels of planning to raise awareness to reduce ASB incidents. A number of posters were distributed to vulnerable residents and shops (i.e. no flour/eggs). Local young people known to the Police were also contacted and warned in advance. Police have said that</p>

	<p>there was no increase in reports to them.</p> <p>The Community Safety Partnership has received a community trigger request for a case in Iver. The Panel is meeting on 11 November to review the case.</p> <p>A CSE Parents Evening was organised for South Bucks parents and hosted by Burnham Grammar in October. This was well received by the parents who attended.</p> <p>SBDC Community Safety have received £10,000 to spend on preventing violent extremism. Monies must be spent by February 2016 and a plan is being developed.</p>
<p><b>Community and Leisure</b></p>	<p><b>National Citizenship Service</b>                  We continue to support the National Citizenship Service (NCS) with Christine Gardner being a 'Dragon' in their Autumn programme. Four groups of twelve young people (17 year olds) pitched their ideas for community projects in the hope of receiving £80 towards their costs. The pitches were; 1) Fun day for learning disabled clients and their carers, 2) Inspirational mural for a rowing club, 3) Community workshop on refugees and 4) Party for dementia clients. The purpose of NCS is for young people to build self-esteem, confidence and budgeting skills through volunteering and implementing community projects. We will be looking for more 'Dragons' for next summer's programme.</p> <p><b>South Bucks and Chiltern Access Group Replacement</b>                  We are in the middle of setting up a replacement group for the 'South Bucks and Chiltern Access Group' which folded earlier this year as well as revamping the 'Chiltern Disability Focus Group'. From now on there will be one group which will be linked to BuDs and we are currently seeking new members for this group.</p> <p><b>Community First Responders</b>                  We are supporting this group by raising awareness of its existence and the need for more volunteers. A communication plan has been drawn up until the end of this financial year and meetings arranged. Further community groups in South Bucks and Chiltern are being added to this plan. A collection of aluminium cans, bottle tops, stamps and coins in SBDC has also been arranged to assist their fundraising exercise.</p> <p><b>Walking Football in Burnham</b>                  There are two possible providers for Walking Football but we are currently in the process of identifying the best venue and awaiting feedback from community stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Older People Directories</b>                  The Beeches edition is almost complete and the next one to be started is Wexham and Ivers edition. Parish Cllr Jennifer Woolveridge has also requested one for Gerrards Cross. Unfortunately, due to the County Council's recent moratorium on expenditure, the original LAF funding</p>

	<p>(£750 x 2) for the printing of these directories has been withdrawn. Other options are currently being investigated.</p> <p><b>Training for Voluntary Sector Groups and Parish Councils</b> Workshop content is still being planned but is likely to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Risk Assessments – an introduction including how to assess risk for projects and events</li><li>2 Committees – How to be an effective committee person, roles and responsibilities of management committees and where to find resources (e.g. funding advice), presentation skills, etc.</li><li>3 Chairmen – How to be more effective in the role including how to engage with service providers and local authorities, how to chair a meeting and time management skills.</li></ol> <p>Glynis Chanell will deliver the risk assessment training. All additional training will be delivered by CIB. South Bucks Workshop proposed for 17 February 2016 with risk assessment training in April. Venue to be confirmed.</p> <p><b>Active Bucks Funding</b> Keeping abreast of the different funding streams coming available under this programme and how they can be used for South Bucks projects.</p> <p><b>Wexham and Ivers Residents Survey</b> A joint survey with Bucks County Council is currently being carried out in the area to look at priorities for the next two years and identify specific issues and needs. The survey is live until 4 December 2015.</p> <p><b>L and Q West Neighbourhood Committee - 4 November 2015</b> A representative of the team attends this meeting to keep abreast of any community projects L and Q are either funding or implementing as well as feeding back any housing issues the Council needs to know about.</p> <p>Subscriptions and donations opening on 23 November, applications are open until 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p> <p>1,848 walks took place in the Simply Walks programme in July to September, an increase of 141 on the same period last year.</p> <p>Sports Club Forum took place in September. 24 people attended from various clubs.</p> <p>Indoor Rowing competition is scheduled for 1 and 3 March 2016.</p> <p>Rockets club continues to operate on Friday evenings at the Curzon Centre. Each class averages six attendees.</p> <p>Community Cohesion forum scheduled for 11 December. Dominic Grieve MP to chair.</p>
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