

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL – COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE**April – June 2016**

SUBJECT	UPDATE
Shared Housing Service	<p>Two new Housing Options Advisers came into post in February 2016 meaning that the Housing Options section is now fully staffed again. A recruitment process was also undertaken for a temporary Housing Options Adviser to provide additional capacity in response to the current high workload demands. However, a suitable candidate was not identified.</p> <p>Following the Member workshop on 3rd February which considered the current and future housing and homelessness pressures facing both CDC and SBDC, officers are progressing work to develop a proposed joint SBDC/CDC Housing Strategy. The report elsewhere on the agenda on the proposed joint Private Sector Housing Strategy is the first element of this.</p>
Bucks Home Choice	<p>As at 19th May 2016, a total of 443 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 204 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 reduced further during 2016. During the first four months of 2016 (1st January 2016 to 30th April 2016) only 20 properties were let (an average of just 1.1 lettings per week). Out of this total, 14 of the lettings went to homeless households who were subject to the Council's statutory housing assistance duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Consequently, many applicants on the Bucks Home Choice scheme face a lengthy wait for a potential letting and have limited prospects of being re-housed.</p> <p>For properties let in South Bucks via Bucks Home Choice during this period (1st January to 30th April 2016) the average waiting times for an applicant to be rehoused were:-</p> <p>1 bedroom flat = 35 months 2 bedroom house = 31 months 3 bedroom house = 9 months 4 bedroom house = 30 months</p>
Homelessness	<p>In 2015/16 (since 1 April 2015 to 31st March 2016), South Bucks DC determined a total of 87 homelessness applications of which 66 were deemed to be subject to the main homelessness duty (i.e. the duty to secure accommodation). The main reasons for homelessness for those households who were deemed to be subject to the main duty were:</p> <p>Eviction by family or friends (30 cases) Private landlord ending a tenancy (13 cases) Fleeing violence (8 cases)</p>

	<p>This demonstrates the continuing high level of demand for homelessness assistance and is an increase on the figures for 2014/15 (when South Bucks DC determined 75 applications of which 47 were subject to a duty to secure accommodation).</p> <p>The combination of the high demand for homelessness assistance and the lack of availability of social housing tenancies for applicants to move on to (see above) is causing an unprecedentedly high demand for temporary accommodation. As at 19th May 2016, SBDC had a total of 66 homeless households in temporary accommodation including 37 in B&B. This represents a significant increase on the numbers from 12 months previously (19/5/15) when there were 43 households in temporary accommodation including 13 in B&B. In particular, the number of households in B&B has tripled.</p> <p>Of the 37 households in B&B, a total of 14 were households with/expecting children who had been in B&B for at least six weeks. Officers are working actively to move these households on to alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Officers continue to look at securing additional and alternative temporary accommodation provision including:-</p> <p>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 until Thames Valley Police TVP is disposes of the property in 2016/17</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In October 2015, uses 4 vacant former student housing L+Q units in Wycombe as temporary accommodation.</p>
<p>Private Sector Housing and DFGs</p>	<p>Disabled Facilities Grants</p> <p>In 2015 -16 (1/4/15 to 31/3/16) SBDC received 75 enquiries for DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) funded adaptations, an increase on the previous year, with 37 of these (49%) from L&Q tenants.</p> <p>We approved adaptations to 49 properties (to a value of £313,000) and completed works at 42 properties. The total value of the completed jobs was £279,000 representing an average grant of £6,450, the same as the previous year.</p> <p>Works to L&Q properties accounted for 64% of the overall adaptation programme in terms of numbers of properties adapted and 56% of expenditure, an increase from the previous year.</p>

The types of work completed were as follows:

	L & Q	Other	Total
Showers	19	7	26
Stairlifts/through floor lifts	6	6	12
Ground floor bedroom/bathroom extensions	2	2	4
Ramps/Access/other	6	6	12
Total	33	21	54

Resources

Capital resources for expenditure on adaptations in 2015-16 was as follows:

Resources	£
Government subsidy	£262,000
SBDC Capital	£ 85,000
Total	£347,000

0.8 FTE members of staff are employed in the processing of grants.

Performance

Average processing times for Disabled Facilities Grants applications (enquiry to approval) was 82 days, a significant improvement on the previous year.

South Bucks District Council has a performance target to approve applications for adaptations within 30 working days of receipt of a full application. In 2015-16, 98% of applications were approved within the target.

SBDC has started recording data on ethnicity of applicants. From the data collected at least 11% of applicants were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Customer Feedback

South Buck DC carries out a customer feedback questionnaire on completion of adaptation works.

Analysis of 2015-16 responses indicates that customer satisfaction is high with 95% of respondents rating the service as either very good (25%) or excellent (70%). 100% stated they were satisfied with the quality of the work carried out and many favourable comments were received about both the builders and the Council Officer.

	<p>FHIL (Flexible Home Improvement Scheme)</p> <p>South Bucks DC is now a member of FHIL which provide low cost loans to homeowners over 60 years of age to assist with home improvements (targeting works to make properties safer and warmer)</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Strategy</p> <p>There is a report elsewhere on the agenda putting forward draft proposals for a joint SBDC/CDC Private Sector Housing Strategy</p>
<p>Affordable Housing</p>	<p>There is a report elsewhere on the agenda regarding Affordable Housing Contributions and supporting the delivery of affordable housing schemes in South Bucks.</p>
<p>Housing Related Support (Supporting People) contracts</p>	<p>Bucks County Council has completed a restructure of its service commissioning team. It is progressing a review of prevention services that are currently funded by Bucks CC and how they should be delivered after the existing contracts come to an end (i.e. at the end of 2016/17). The overall budget for Prevention Services is being reduced from £4,878,000 to £2,878,000 by 2018/19. Therefore, many services are facing reductions in their funding with Bucks CC likely to focus on services which help reduce the need for clients to access full Adult Social Care services. The District Councils continue to be in discussions with Bucks CC on their proposals.</p>
<p>Licensing</p>	<p>Taxi and private hire policy has been agreed for consultation by Licensing Committee. Consultation due to run 12 weeks between 1st June – 24th August. Consultation responses will be reported back at Licensing Committee for consideration before policy is finalised.</p> <p>Barnardo’s CSE training pilot has finished, but we are in discussion with them around further training sessions for existing drivers and new applicants for the future. It is intended to charge attendees in the future so that costs of providing training are covered</p> <p>No significant issues or ongoing cases in South Bucks currently relating to premises or taxis</p>
<p>Environmental Health</p>	<p>The shared service is now operational across both councils and all data has been migrated to the shared Uniform database enabling remote access to information and documents. IT issues have been ironed out with using the shared network at Capswood.</p> <p>Team building and development is currently being undertaken to deliver a single team culture and procedures.</p> <p>Business Support & Public Protection Functions:</p> <p>Statutory returns to the Food Standards Agency, Health and Safety Executive and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health are being compiled. 96% of food businesses that were due an inspection were inspected and 96% of food businesses were broadly compliant with food legislation.</p> <p>On going work includes:-</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints of flies from Iver De-Watering Plant have been received from residents. Discussions held with Thames Water and an Abatement Notice served by Slough BC to abate the nuisance. Working closely to monitor compliance. Thames Water to have a meeting with residents. • Beaconsfield Fair taken place with limited complaints received • Starveacre Wood – complaints of burning and dumping of waste material – BCC served notice to stop activity and no further complaints received. • Corporate Enforcement Policy being developed for all enforcement work • New harmonised procedures written for responding to planning applications with contaminated land implications, and Search requests. <p>Strategic Environment Functions Working with Planning Policy to ensure mitigation of infrastructure impacts of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS2 moving the Heathrow Express depot to Langley • M4 Smart Motorway Public Inquiry • Western Rail Access • Heathrow • Further work required on GIS upgrades, Historic maps need to be purchased for SBDC. • The contaminated land risk rated sites for South Bucks have now been mapped. • Team members have completed EMAQ Air Quality & IPPC training • 100% of IPPC inspections for 2015/2016 have been completed. • Annual Status Report for Air Quality being prepared to submit to Defra in June 2016 • Report being prepared regarding air quality in Iver. • The 2015/16 IPPC Statistical Returns have been submitted to Defra for CDC, SBDC & WDC.
<p>Community Safety</p>	<p>Whilst South Bucks remains a very safe place with low levels of crime there has been an increase in crime - current figures for the rolling 12 month period:-</p> <p>224 burglary dwelling crimes up 6.7% from 210 in the previous 12 month period</p> <p>314 burglary non-dwelling crimes up 14.6% from 274 in the previous 12 month period</p> <p>388 thefts from vehicles down 5.1% from 409 in the previous 12 months</p> <p>Continued low incidents of recorded ASB</p> <p>679 all violent crimes (including non-physical i.e. bullying, threats) up 33.4% from 509 in the previous 12 months. This is understood to be linked to the change in national recording standards and the increase has been seen across the Force.</p> <p>The winter burglary plan is being evaluated but anecdotally it is showing that the streets that we focused on had a reduction in burglaries (or no burglaries) compared to previous years.</p>

	<p>Community Cards – 32 schools signed up – the scheme ends mid June with a trip to Legoland for the winning school.</p> <p>Domestic Homicide Review, the 1st draft report has been produced which will be the subject of review before submission to the Home Office. The case has been heard at Reading Crown Court with 2 offenders being found guilty of murder and the third – guilty of manslaughter.</p>
<p>Community and Leisure</p>	<p>120,000 leisure centre visits at Beacon and Evreham leisure centre for 2015/16. Also, commissioned the replacement of the air conditioning system and main reception doors at Beacon.</p> <p>Appointed Strategic Leisure to help support officers are preparing the SBDC brief to consider the future leisure needs of the district to enable options to be considered in relation to the Evreham Centre.</p> <p>Supporting the annual Chairman’s Community and Volunteering Awards 2016 http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/Chairmansawards</p> <p>Safeguarding policies agreed and updated, training being rolled out to staff and later Members</p> <p>Held the Community Cohesion Forum which considered the impact of Doorstep Crime on the vulnerable and the challenges faced by the Welfare Benefit Changes</p> <p>Commissioned Strategic Leisure to undertake a joint Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space strategy. Works commenced 9th May to map out various sites, undertake site inspections and evaluate quality and access issues.</p> <p>Four activities (see below) secured £10k to enable four outreach programmes delivered as part of the by the ‘Active Bucks’ Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Football in Burnham • Young people activities in Beaconsfield • Yoga and Pilates in Gerrards Cross • Activities in local parks for Wexham and Iver <p>Indoor Rowing competition successfully delivered on the 1st and 3rd March 2016. The events attracted pupils from both main stream and special needs schools.</p> <p>Delivered two training events enabling SBDC Voluntary Sector Groups and Parish Councils to on ‘<i>what do management committees do</i>’</p> <p>The Wexham and Iver Residents Survey A joint survey with Bucks County Council identified the priorities as being;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and HGV implications on Major infrastructure projects • Parking issues • Footpath Improvements • Reducing social isolation for the elderly and vulnerable • Fly tipping

	<p>The team working with CIB and BCC on Good Neighbour schemes in Iver and Denham following feedback from the 'Prevention Matters' project.</p> <p>Dementia Communities – working with the countywide partnership to create dementia communities in South bucks with launch events in Iver, Denham and Burnham</p> <p>Supporting the community clean in celebration of the 'Clean for the Queen' campaign</p> <p>Delivering the 2016 National Citizenship Service programme in the district building on the success delivered in 2015.</p> <p>Supported the Burnham Health fair, providing information to attendees including the M4 Money credit union, Community Safety, Active Bucks and First Respondent.</p>
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