

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (SBDC)

Meeting - 30 November 2017

Present: Dr W Matthews (Chairman)
P Bastiman, D Pepler and M Bezzant

Apologies for absence: P Kelly and D Anthony

27. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr D Anthony and Cllr P Kelly.

28. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

29. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

30. **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS**

The PAG received and **NOTED** the following written updates:

1. Cllr W Matthews – Bucks Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee.
2. Cllr D Pepler – Buckinghamshire Health Trust

During discussion, the PAG was advised that a further Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee had taken place and it was agreed to be followed up that the Council's representative on the Adult Social Care Transformation Board provide regular feedback to Members.

A further meeting of the Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust had been held on 29 November and Cllr Pepler advised that he would provide a further update report to Members.

31. **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UPDATE REPORT**

The Head of Healthy Communities provided a verbal update to the PAG. Key points raised were as below:

- Older people's guides had been completed and were ready to print for distribution. These guides were unique to each locality and provide a wide range of information and contact details for residents.
- 601 tickets had been sold for the first draw of the Chiltern and South Bucks Lottery with 35 good causes signed up. This exceeded the predicted sales of 500. With this level of performance the lottery would raise up to £18k. Members were encouraged to spread word of the lottery to local charities and good causes and advised of the level of funds that could be raised.
- Chiltern District Council approved recommendations to adopt the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy at its Council meeting in November 2017 which meant the two Councils now had similar policies in place. The PAG was advised of a recent case at Chiltern District Council

Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group (SBDC) - 30 November 2017

where at appeal a driver's licence was reissued following revocation due to new information being provided at the hearing. The Judge had agreed that the Council had been right in its initial revocation. A report would be brought to a future Licensing Committee on this matter.

- Three premises remained closed in the South Buckinghamshire area and would re-open when hygiene requirements were met. Legal cases were ongoing. Notice had also been served on Fulmer Mosque to ensure drainage issues at the site were rectified.
- Two developments which were providing affordable housing had been completed on Institute Road in Taplow. One scheme had properties already let with the other due to let properties shortly. Larger schemes in Denham and the Old Mill site in Taplow were due to be online toward the end of 2018.
- On current trends it was predicted that there would be an upturn in homelessness applications where the Council accepted full housing duty. Disabled Facilities Grants had increased on 2016/2017 due to a higher demand and an increase in referrals from Occupational Therapy.
- Consultation on the proposed Gerrards Cross development would start the week commencing 4 December 2017. Display boards would be available in reception at Capswood and letters had been issued to adjacent properties. 40% was the target for affordable housing on this site.

The PAG **NOTED** the update from the Head of Healthy Communities.

32. **PORTFOLIO BUDGETS 2018/19**

The Head of Finance presented the report which provided Members with information on the draft revenue budget for 2018/19, including the context of the overall financial position facing the Council for the coming year. The report provided summary information on the budgets and highlighted issues for consideration. The accompanying booklet presented detailed information to assist Members in their decision making.

Key points raised during discussion included:

The revenue support grant from central government would be zero in 2018/2019. There had been no increase in budgets unless essential. Page 16 of the reports pack detailed how the budget had differed from the previous two financial years. There had been an overall increase in this portfolio of £34k which was mainly due to a change in the cost share calculation. The Joint Committee had agreed a standard cost split of CDC 58% / SBDC 42% which would be used for all joint services excluding Revenues & Benefits and Waste. The way the cost shares had changed meant there was a £64k increase in this portfolio although overall there was a 9k saving to the Council.

Full budget proposals could be seen in appendix 1 (pages 21 – 50 of the reports pack). The PAG were advised that the increase in the homelessness budgets was mainly related to the receipt of the flexible homelessness support grant and new burdens funding. It was clarified that the trailblazer funding for the connexions resilience service was not included as this was separate funding from Government. With regard to the anticipated trend, the PAG were informed that on current statistics homelessness applications and applications where housing duty was accepted by the Council had increased year on year although was dependant on a range of factors which is why the Council continued to look at opportunities to ensure a supply of affordable housing to avoid B&B and nightly accommodation costs. Potential interest increases and the introduction of universal credit were recognised as potentially having an effect on homelessness.

It was suggested by the PAG that future budget proposals should differentiate the fees and charges so that it was clear which were statutory and which could be set by the Council. The Head of Finance agreed that this would be taken in to consideration for next year's budget proposals.

The PAG were advised that a risk analysis would be carried out during the process and actual income from this financial year and previous years had been looked at in detail.

Following a discussion, the PAG **AGREED** that the following items be approved for onward submission to Cabinet:

1. The 2018/19 revenue budget.
2. The 2018/19 fees and charges.

33. PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME

The Housing Manager presented the report which sought approval to enter into an agreement with Paradigm Housing to deliver a Private Sector Leasing Scheme. The scheme was one of the options being worked on by the Council to generate affordable housing and could be seen in the reports pack (pages 51 – 58). The scheme was a model that was already working in other Local Authorities particularly in London Authorities.

During discussion the following points were noted:

The PAG were advised that the Council would pay Paradigm a weekly management fee while the property is occupied. Any issues with tenants not paying rent would be dealt with by Paradigm and the debt would sit with them rather than the Council. Subject to Cabinet approval the delivery of the scheme would commence around April 2018.

In response to a question on how long any agreement with Paradigm would last, the PAG were advised that Paradigm would lease the properties for a 3 – 5 year period and the Council would be contracted to the agreement for that period on a property by property basis. In terms of how long families would spend in the accommodation, it was anticipated that this would approximately be six months, dependant on individual circumstances.

The PAG were informed that were the scheme to be approved, Paradigm would look to procure properties in South Buckinghamshire and in adjacent authorities with the aim to find properties as close to the district as possible.

The level of savings would be dependent on the number of properties Paradigm was able to deliver. Paradigm had reported that they would be able to provide approximately 40 properties which would result in the region of £200k savings. The budget was cautious in predictions due to other potential impacts such as the homelessness reduction act.

The PAG requested regular progress updates through meetings of the PAG so that the schemes progress could be monitored. A full detailed report would be brought back before members in 12 months.

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

1. The Council agrees to the implementation of a Private Sector Leasing Scheme by Paradigm Housing to deliver temporary accommodation to meet the Council's statutory homelessness duties.
2. Delegated authority is given to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to enter into an agreement with Paradigm Housing for the delivery of the Private Sector Leasing Scheme.
3. It be noted that Management Team has agreed an exemption from the Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council Contract Procedure Rules for the Agreement between the Council and Paradigm Housing for the delivery of the Private Sector Leasing Scheme.

4. A further report is brought to Members in 12 months to update them on the progress of the scheme and its impact on the delivery of the Council's statutory homelessness duties. In addition to this report, regular updates would be provided at PAG meetings.

34. GREENHOUSE GAS REPORT

The Environmental Health Manager presented the report which outlined the key outcomes from the Greenhouse Gas reports for both Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils.

The PAG were advised that the Council were continually looking at measures to make energy savings. The report had been submitted to the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) for residents and interested parties to view.

Following discussion the PAG **NOTED** the Council's Greenhouse Gas report, the close link between Chiltern District Council's and South Bucks District Council's Greenhouse Gas reports, the publication on the SBDC website and notification of completion to Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC).

35. HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT PRESENTATION

The PAG received a presentation from the Housing Manager on the implications of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Members were taken through what the Council's current duties were; how these would change; the impact on the Council and how the Council were preparing for the changes.

During discussion, the below points were raised:

- All clients would get the same level of advice and assistance and all would have an action plan. At the assessment stage, questions of intentionality and priority need would not prevent there being an action plan, although the plan would reflect this. Becoming homeless within 28 days was previously the trigger for the Council's duty to undertake an assessment, under the new act this was now 56 days.
- The Housing team would be required to complete an initial check to ensure that the client would indeed be homeless within 56 days. DCLG estimated that the initial meeting with clients would take approximately two hours, varying dependant on client circumstances.
- Based on homelessness applications for the current year (2017/18) application numbers and cases where full duty was accepted had increased on last year.
- Homelessness Prevention Duty and Homelessness Relief Duty were clarified to the Committee as outlined in the presentation. A key part of these was cross partnership working with agencies such as social care. The target of these additional duties was to prevent as many people as possible from reaching the Main Housing Duty stage (by preventing or relieving their homelessness)
- If at the end of the 56 day period of the Homelessness Relief Duty suitable accommodation had not been secured for at least six months the Main Housing Duty would be decided and at this point priority need would be assessed. This included assessing whether the applicant had local connections.
- DCLG had estimated a 26% upturn in homelessness applications and assessment work and casework to prevent or resolve homelessness would likely be more extensive. All duties would be subject to review so these too may increase.
- Staffing implications would be assessed on an ongoing basis. Standardised forms and templates were also being prepared for officers. The Housing Manager was closely assessing best practices from other Local Authorities.

Healthy Communities Policy Advisory Group (SBDC) - 30 November 2017

- Members were advised of good partnership working already in place which would be key to working with clients. Much had happened already such as the successful countywide bid for DCLG Homelessness Trailblazer funding which was being delivered by Connection Support to offer one to one floating support with a focus on preventing homelessness and sharing direct referral links with partner agencies. Further preparations were outlined in the presentation.
- External risk factors such as universal credit were recognised which could result in delays to benefit payments.
- DCLF funding support figures could be seen within the presentation. Members were advised that there were specific calculations completed when New Burdens funding was being allocated which took into account South Buck's limited indices and deprivation. The reason only three years had been accounted for was because the idea was for any costs incurred by the Council under the duties in the new Act to be offset from savings made through early intervention.
- It was not presently monitored what happened to those clients where housing duty was not accepted, although in cases where clients were placed in temporary accommodation reasonable time was given for them to move on.

The PAG thanked the Housing Manager and the team for their continued commitment in an ever changing environment.

36. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business raised at this point.

The meeting terminated at 7.25 pm

This page is intentionally left blank