

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 30 September 2019

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)
D Anthony, P Bastiman, Dr W Matthews and D Pepler

Also Present: J Jordan

Apologies for M Bezzant
absence:

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the Healthy Communities PAG held on 4 June 2019 were approved.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Pepler declared an interest in item 6 as a trustee of Burnham Youth Centre.

10. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Cllr Pepler reported that he had attended a meeting of the Buckinghamshire Health Care Trust held at the end of July and a report would be submitted to the Council meeting in November 2019.

11. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UPDATE REPORT

The Housing Manager provided an update to Members of the PAG and particularly made reference to the following information:

- The period of July and August saw significant turnover within the temporary accommodation units due to the completion of both the new temporary accommodation units at 1-12 Walters Court and the new affordable rented homes on the Denham Media Park development. This had helped to reduce the number of households that SBDC was placing in nightly booked accommodation. As a comparison in April last year SBDC had 36 households in nightly booked units and this had reduced to 10 households in August 2019.
- The new units at 1-12 Walters Court were completed and leased to Bucks Housing Association from August 2019. Lettings commenced during that week with the flats being occupied in phases over subsequent weeks. Two flats in 801 Bath road adjacent have been completed and will be available for temporary accommodation shortly.
- There were indications that SBDC was seeing an upturn in homelessness applications during the first months of 2019/20 which could be related to the measures introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act.

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- Denham Film Studios had provided 63 flats for affordable rent and 27 for shared ownership. 30 affordable rented flats were being advertised by Buck Home Choice in April 2019 and the remaining 33 were let during August/September 2019.
- SBDC and three other District Councils had jointly commissioned with Community Impact Bucks a Handy Helpers Scheme as a one year pilot to deliver minor repairs, adaptations and help with day to day tasks to older and vulnerable people. This Scheme was separate to the Disabled Facilities Grant. The Principal Leisure and Communities Officer also made reference to the Outreach Programme which provided additional support.
- In relation to Environmental Health, 509 people had registered to use the Noise App; 37 cases were under investigation, 246 were resolved and 19 pending a response.
- Legislation relating to Unauthorised Encampments was pending. The Council had agreed not to proceed with the use of injunctions last November. Wycombe District Council had applied for and tested an injunction for over 100 sites it owns. The partnership has agreed to take a watching brief on the impact of the injunction to consider whether a county wide injunction was practicable for the new Buckinghamshire Council.
- The Leisure and Community Manager referred to the small grants application process; there had been a record number of 38 valid applications following the deadline being extended to 30 September 2019. All wards had attracted at least one application with some wards such as Iver attracting very high numbers. The next step would be to decide which applications were to be allocated funding.

Members asked a number of questions and the following points were noted:-

- London and Quadrant Housing had paused new development because of the downturn in the housing market. There were still developments in the pipeline but they were not looking at future development. The Council had a liaison meeting with L&Q later this week and would have more detail on their business plans. However, the Council were not concerned about this issue. The Housing Manager reported that there were a number of alternative providers who were active in Buckinghamshire such as Paridigm and Hightown.
- A Member made reference to the topping up ceremony which was being held for the redevelopment of Gerrards Cross Police Station Site on 4 October 2019 which included 14 affordable homes.
- In relation to the Noise App, Members noted that pre-registration was required to capture data on the Noise App although residents could still record without registering. Some residents would have downloaded the Noise App for future use; it did not necessarily mean that there were cases to investigate. The Noise App made it easier for officers to close down cases quickly that could not be resolved by the Council.

- A Member referred to the interventions in unauthorised encampment sites in South Bucks and the number of incursions which wasted officer time. The Housing Manager referred to the county-wide injunction above which would be discussed along with other options in the work streams for the new Buckinghamshire Council. Reference was made to the incursion into the Council's car park, near Sainsbury and travellers accessing the car park despite the height barrier.
- With regard to grant applications Members noted that if some wards did not have enough valid applications for their area then some of the funding could be transferred to other areas but this would need to be decided by Members.

Cllr Bastiman entered the meeting at 6.30pm.

12. **COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW**

The PAG received a report on the positive work being undertaken through the Council's Community and Wellbeing Plan during 2018/19 which was adopted by the Cabinet in May 2017. The Leisure and Community Manager outlined the diverse range of projects which had been delivered in partnership with town and parish councils, the voluntary and community sector and partners such as GLL, Thames Valley Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

With reference to the 50 plus programme at the Beacon Centre the Leisure and Community Manager agreed to check whether this was also available at the Evreham Leisure Centre.

A Member asked a question on the Flexible Home Improvement Loan Scheme which remained available for local residents although no new loans were approved during 2018/19. The Housing Manager reported that this was a Thames Valley wide scheme and there was no specific budget for South Bucks. Funding would be drawn down by the individual client and the Council paid an annual membership fee. A Member asked whether this Scheme was publicised and the nature of the Scheme. In response it was noted that this scheme provided a low interest rate for residents who were asset rich but who did not have access to any significant savings who may not be able to pay for any major repair work. Members were also reminded of the Disabled Facilities Grant which could also help finance adaption works; however this would be means tested. Following a question the Housing Manager agreed to check whether there was a minimum or maximum amount available for the loan. The loan would be secured against the property.

Members made reference to the work of the Citizen's Advice Bureau which had supported 2,253 clients and prevented 127 people from being homeless and securing £195,986 in benefits. A Member asked about legal aid and was informed by the Housing Manager that they would be directed to specialist legal advice on housing and other areas.

With reference to the World War One Special Small Grants Scheme a Member referred to VE celebrations in 2020. The Principal Leisure and Communities Officer reported that he would look at the budget to see if any funding could be made available to local organisations.

Members congratulated officers on the number of projects which were wide ranging and met the aims of the Plan.

13. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA IN IVER UPDATE

The PAG received a report which sought Members views on the draft Air Quality Action Plan, which set out how stakeholders would work to improve air quality in the Iver Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The Action Plan would be subject to public consultation over a 12 week period via the website, local and social media. Included in the document was a source apportionment calculation which identified the main sources of the pollution, which was road traffic. The main source of Nitrogen Dioxide on Thorney Lane South was HGVs, whilst HGVs and Diesel Cars have shared responsibility on the High Street.

Members noted that the key plan elements included the uptake of cleaner vehicles, minimising the impact of the National Infrastructure Projects on Iver, improving car parking provision in Iver and to introduce car parking restrictions on the Highway, carrying out a feasibility study for a Clean Air Zone in Iver and developing a relief road that would take HGVs away from the High Street. They also noted the update on the two air quality projects.

Some Members expressed concern that these actions were not enough to address pollution. The relief road would only impact on one zone but could increase traffic elsewhere and make the air quality worse and there were no powers to get vehicles to use cleaner fuels which would impact on small businesses. The Senior Environmental Protection Officer reported that they working with Bucks County Council to include this in their Freight Strategy and had already met with a number of businesses to offer assistance where possible. The Environmental Health Manager reported that all these actions put together would reduce pollution. This Action Plan could be built upon once information was available on which measures were successful. Having an AQMA did provide the Council with some power and there was a legal responsibility to implement the Action Plan with partners. DEFRA could also intervene if actions were not being implemented.

Another Member expressed concern that no action had been taken with regard to using the car park in The Swan to prevent double parking in the High Street. The Environmental Health Manager referred to discussions with Bucks County Council on improving car parking provision and introducing car parking restrictions and commented that he would pursue this. Members also mentioned the footway which was flooded which meant that pedestrians had to walk on the road, which was dangerous because of HGVs. There was also funding for a cycleway but this had been

withdrawn and the funding allocated to another area. A Member also commented that the walking crocodile to Iver Infants School had been cancelled and it would be helpful to see if this could be reinstated.

Reference was made to a recent announcement from Sajid Javid for additional funding for road infrastructure and whether any bids could be made. Members noted that bids would be submitted through the Lead Growth and Strategy Officer at Bucks County Council.

Members agreed that the draft Air Quality Action Plan should be sent out for consultation and if Members were not satisfied with the response from Bucks County Council they should invite a representative to attend the next PAG meeting. Members also asked for a refining of the priorities in the Plan.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** that the draft Air Quality Action Plan be approved for formal consultation and following consultation and feedback that the action plan be finalised for approval by Cabinet and DEFRA.

14. **FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN**

The PAG considered the joint Food and Health and Safety Service Plan and Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies for the year 2019/20. The Action Plans contained within the appendices highlight key areas which would be focussed on in the coming year to increase performance standards. This included guidance on Brexit and preparing for the new Buckinghamshire Council.

Members noted that since the introduction of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, the percentage of all eligible food premises (rating of 3 or better) continued to increase and was currently 96% for Chiltern and 97% for South Bucks District Councils, higher than the national average of 95.3%. In 2018/19 significant enforcement activity took place and four food businesses were successfully prosecuted with fines being issued in the Crown Court of up to £33,000 and substantial costs being awarded.

Whilst health and safety remained a priority for the Government, there would be a reduction in inspections of businesses and officers would only inspect where there was a specific need, either due to local or national intelligence and the national strategic priorities. Therefore there were more food inspections. Members noted that there was one fatality a couple of years ago relating to someone who was working at a height. Other potential accidents included the use of inflatables and guidance had been produced to local businesses.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer reported that the policies had been slightly amended for Cabinet with reference to the Scheme of Delegation.

A Member referred to food labelling and chemical contamination and was informed that this was the responsibility of trading standards. Members also noted that Hampshire Scientific Services provided sampling.

Following a question it was noted that businesses were inspected according to the HSE's national priorities based on national accident statistics and locally identified concerns. Recent projects included guidance on inflatables, gas safety in catering establishments and bottled gas in pubs.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the joint Food and Health and Safety Service Plan and the Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies be approved.

15. **ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

The PAG received a report on the projects and activities supporting the Buckinghamshire Armed Forces Covenant over the last 12 months. The 2018/19 Buckinghamshire Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan detailed various projects and initiatives that South Bucks District Council had supported. The National Armed Forces Community Covenant action plan had five work strands that support four key objectives; Recognise, Remember, Integrate and Support. On Monday 24 June 2019 there was a joint 'Raising the Flag' ceremony which paid tribute to the British Armed Forces community during Armed Forces week.

A Member asked where residents should be directed if they needed assistance. The Active Communities Officer responded that they could contact their office and in addition there was the South Bucks Armed Forces Champion Councillor Duncan Smith. There was also a Covenant Steering Group meeting which included member organisations and military personnel.

PAG Members recognised the positive work undertaken over the last 12 months across South Bucks supporting the Buckinghamshire Armed Forces Covenant and noted the action plan.

The meeting terminated at 7.30 pm