

Housing and Public Protection Policy Development Advisory Group
20 NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors: Kate Rowbottom (Chairman), Andrew Baldwin, Matthew French, Nigel Jupp, Paul Marshall, Jim Sanson and David Skipp

Apologies: Councillors: Alan Britten, Roy Cornell and Mike Morgan

11 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 21st August 2017 were received.

12 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENT**

The Head of Housing Services presented details of a report on affordable housing investment that would be considered by Cabinet on 23rd November 2017.

The report highlighted how changes to Government legislation in 2015 had resulted in a reduction in the number of affordable homes being built by Registered Providers. However, 2017 had seen a number of initiatives announced by the Government aimed at the provision of affordable housing. The details and legislation to translate these initiatives into action were awaited.

The report summarised how the Council planned to make the best future use of commuted sum funding for the delivery of affordable housing by continuing to work with Registered Providers and delivering additional units of temporary accommodation for those facing homelessness.

Looking ahead, a number of possible options for the Council to hold its own stock of permanent affordable homes had been identified. However, in light of the recent Government announcements regarding affordable housing, the commissioning of an expert appraisal of the various options was proposed.

Members discussed the implications of the various recent Government announcements and specific locations for

Members discussed the report, which they considered gave a good insight into the challenges of providing an adequate supply of affordable housing, and supported the proposed approach to affordable housing investment.

13 **IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIL PENALTIES UNDER THE HOUSING AND PLANNING ACT 2016**

The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing presented a briefing note on new provisions in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 for dealing with rogue

landlords, including the introduction of civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution. A report was being submitted to Cabinet on 23rd November 2017 asking them to adopt the new powers and to approve the proposed scheme of penalties.

The main benefit of the use of civil penalties was that it would result in a speedier resolution of issues than the use of prosecution proceedings.

Members expressed their support for the proposal.

14 **PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE SCOPE OF DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing briefed Members on a proposal to be considered by Cabinet on 23rd November 2017 for the adoption of a more flexible approach to the use of discretionary disabled facilities grants (DFGs) in order to help and improve the health and well-being of disabled people and make more use of additional resources that were available. This proposal had been put together by a County-wide project working group for adoption by all West Sussex local housing authorities.

Members discussed issues including delays in obtaining West Sussex County Council occupational therapy assessments and the proposal to allow referrals from privately practising occupational therapists.

The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing clarified that whilst the funding for DFGs was paid to the County Council, the statutory duty rested with local housing authorities and the monies were therefore allocated to each relevant authority as directed by the Government.

Members supported the proposal and congratulated the Head of Environmental Health and Licensing on his work on the scheme.

15 **THE FUTURE PROVISION OF THE PEST CONTROL SERVICE**

The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing submitted a briefing paper on the current provision of the Council's pest control service and proposals for its future delivery.

Members discussed the options that had been considered and supported the preferred option to outsource the delivery of the service with the Council retaining control of fees and charges and providing reduced fees to those in receipt of certain means tested benefits. Residents would still apply for the service through the Council and would be directed to its contractor.

It was noted that this would provide savings to the Council and that a similar system was already successfully operated by two other local authorities in West Sussex.

16 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract for Housing and Public Protection was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.22 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN