

Housing and Public Protection Policy Development Advisory Group
22 AUGUST 2016

Present: Councillors: Philip Circus, Andrew Baldwin, Toni Bradnum, Nigel Jupp, Paul Marshall, Mike Morgan and Jim Sanson

Apologies: Councillors: Alan Britten, Matthew French, David Skipp and Ben Staines

Also Present: Councillor Leonard Crosbie

9 **TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The group approved the notes of the meeting of 11 July 2016.

10 **HOUSING STATISTICS - A YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISON**

The Housing Services Manager briefed the group about housing statistics consequent to the request of the group at the meeting of 11 July. The housing needs register had increased to 609 households from 532 and 466 in the previous two years. This was due to the introduction in August 2015 of an online application process which provided a wider access to the list than the requirement for applicants to attend the council during office hours. There were 59 homeless applicants in 2016, an increase on the 44 applicants in 2015 but a decrease on the 76 applicants in 2014.

Members queried:

- The average turnover rate for stays in temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation;
- The qualifying criteria for housing need by virtue of employment in the district;
- The role of the Y Centre in Horsham.

The Housing Services Manager responded:

- That the average stay in temporary accommodation was 36 weeks and 3 weeks in bed and breakfast;
- That the employment qualification for the housing register and the employment qualification for Band A status should be the same;
- That the pathway for young adults leaving care was the Y Centre.

Members heard that negotiations were ongoing with Saxon Weald Housing Association for the council, subject to funding, to take on Saxon Weald's housing transfer list for households in the Horsham district only with a housing need. One of the benefits of this would be to support a improved picture of housing need in the district.

Variations to Allocations Policy

The Housing Services Manager explained that the statistics demonstrated the consequential need to make minor variations to the Allocations Policy which had been adopted in 2013. Such a change would be a non-key decision and the constitution provided for the Cabinet Member to make such a decision. Notification would be sent to all-members and the decision would be published, subject to call-in provisions.

11 **AIR QUALITY MONITORING**

Members received a report detailing the results of air quality monitoring undertaken in 2015 across Horsham District which had been prepared in accordance with the guidance issue by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Local Authorities across the United Kingdom are required to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives set by the Government are likely to be achieved. The main source of air pollution in the district were road traffic emissions from major roads, notably the A24, which intersects the district north - south, A264 to the north of Horsham, A272 and A281 at Cowfold; and A283 at Storrington. Two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared in the district, in the town centres of Cowfold and Storrington; both for the exceedences of the annual mean objective for NO₂.

In 2015, the council completed and adopted the Planning Advice Document: Air Quality and Emissions Reduction Guidance; had expanded the “Energise” electric vehicle charge point network by adding two rapid eV charging points in Storrington and Billingshurst); and had leased three electric vehicles, procured with the support from a successful bid from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles under Phase Two of the ULEV Readiness Project.

Members discussed:

- Air quality monitoring at Storrington and Cowfold;
- Changes in air quality due to improved vehicle technology and driver behaviour;
- The impact of diesel cars on air quality;
- Software and data connectivity issues of the Low Emission Zone trial in Storrington;
- The role of West Sussex County Council with regard to traffic flow management; and
- District wide measures to encourage alternatives to the car and the development of an alternative fuel strategy.

The group supported the council's activity on air quality management and noted that the Annual Status Report would be published on the council's website in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995.

12 **DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

The Environmental Health Manager explained how adaptations to homes helped to deliver health benefits to residents and contributed toward the district priority *Support our Communities*. The council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy required amendment and a draft report was provided to the group which would recommend to Cabinet that funding for *Moving Home Assistance* be increased and that discretionary 'top up' funding be made available to mandatory grants.

Members noted:

- That funding was provided through the Better Care Fund administered by the Health and Wellbeing Board at the County Council;
- The requirement for occupational therapist assessment in order for grant to be considered.
- The comparative position of other district councils.

The Cabinet Member was advised that the group supported the proposals as set out in the draft report.

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

The group noted the matters on the Forward Plan for the Housing and Public Protection portfolio. No guidance had been issued by the government to inform the council's Housing Strategy response to the July 2015 budget and the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

The meeting closed at 18:50

CHAIRMAN