

Community and Wellbeing Policy Development Advisory Group
12 MAY 2020

Present: Councillors: Tricia Youtan (Chairman), Andrew Baldwin, Chris Brown, Frances Haigh, Colin Minto, Roger Noel, Kate Rowbottom, Jim Sanson, Ian Stannard, Belinda Walters and James Wright

Also Present: Councillor David Skipp

24 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 10 March were received the by Group.

25 **COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

The Head of Housing and Community Services, Community Development Manager and Community Safety Manager gave a presentation on the community response to the pandemic to date.

The presentation outlined the role of the Council in setting up and helping to run 27 Community Hubs across the district. The hubs offered practical and emotional support to residents in need, in particular those self-isolating with no nearby friends or family to help them.

The Group noted the number and type of requests received, some 8,700 via the HDC e-form and volunteer hubs. Approximately 2,500 potentially vulnerable residents had also been contacted by HDC to assess their needs. Of these, 392 had received support.

The presentation outlined the role of WSCC in supporting those previously identified as extremely vulnerable, and the extent to which other agencies were supporting those with social care and other needs, including those who had come to light because of the response to the pandemic. Volunteers had been sent guidance on referring more vulnerable residents to other agencies. There would be regular updates to help support volunteers.

The community response had been very positive, with 1,800 registering to volunteer. The hard work and commitment of the volunteers had made the running of the hubs very successful.

In response to central government's instruction to house rough sleepers during the lockdown, HDC has placed 19 rough sleepers in accommodation. The number was higher than the eleven identified in the 2019 annual rough sleeper count because the pandemic had caused those with insecure arrangements to become homeless. There had been some direct funding to support this work, but additional funding would be needed for ongoing work to prevent them returning to the street.

Members discussed the increased cases of domestic violence and noted that HDC regularly liaised with the police about those at risk.

The Director of Community Services confirmed that the CCG were aware of the need for additional resources to address the anticipated increased pressure on mental health services brought about by the lockdown.

The Director of Community Services advised that additional funding from central government would not compensate for the Council's loss of income during the lockdown.

The Cabinet Member, along with other Councillors, thanked staff for their swift and proactive response to the lockdown, their hard work and commitment, and said how impressed she was with everything the voluntary groups were achieving, and the community spirit shown throughout the district.

26 **HORSHAM DISTRICT COMMUNITY LOTTERY**

The Head of Housing and Community Services updated the Group on the Community Lottery, which had been launched in 2019 with a view to providing a regular stream of funding to good causes in the district. Seventy-eight local causes had registered to receive funds from the lottery which is on target to raise £56,000 in the first year.

A report would be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 23 July recommending that the Community Lottery continue in its current form. The Cabinet Member stated that the lottery had exceeded expectations and the Group gave unanimous support to its continuation.

27 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE COMMUNITY MATTERS AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract was noted. The Head of Housing and Community Services advised that the proposed Housing Strategy would be brought to the next PDAG before being considered by Cabinet on 23 July.

The meeting closed at 6.48 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN