

**Housing & Public Protection Policy Development Advisory Group**  
**18 JANUARY 2022**

Present: Councillors: Tricia Youtan (Chairman), Chris Brown, Jon Olson, Louise Potter, Ian Stannard, Claire Vickers, Belinda Walters, Tony Hogben and Ruth Fletcher

Apologies: Councillors: Liz Kitchen, Mike Morgan, Kate Rowbottom and Jack Saheid

9 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 9 November were received.

10 **COMMUNITY LINK DIGITAL INVESTMENT**

Members received a presentation from the Principal Environmental Health Officer on the future proposals for Community Link.

Community Link provides assistive technology to residents in the district to help them maintain independence in their homes. Currently provided by analogue telephone lines these need to be changed to digital lines and equipment for the service to continue.

The service is currently supporting around 1700 vulnerable residents. Tailored to individuals' needs, users are provided with personal and smoke alarms, GPS trackers, bed sensors and much more which connects users to the call centre to get help when needed. Clients pay a monthly charge and there has been no price increase for 10 years.

From earlier this year digital equipment was being installed to new clients without landlines or requesting the new technology. It was proposed that from next year the Council would fully invest in digital equipment and users would pay an increase to cover the cost from July 2022.

There was general support for the proposal. Some concern was raised regarding the price increases especially in the current economic climate. The Head of Environmental Health & Licensing advised the group that the service was significantly cheaper than other comparable services offered. The group agreed it was a very valuable, bespoke service and profitable for the Council.

The report will be considered at Cabinet on 27 January.

11 **HORSHAM DISTRICT HOMES UPDATE**

The Head of Housing & Community Services gave an update on Horsham District Homes.

Four new affordable one-bedroom homes were recently acquired in Slinfold which was the second site completed in 2021. Properties will be allocated to households on the Council's Housing Register.

The next proposal was the re-development of Dukes Square where 17 units of accommodation would be provided to offer accommodation with the intention of improving facilities and offering a greater community focus.

This proposal would involve relocating QM Studios/Music Alliance to the north of the square.

Costings were currently being considered and a Business Plan would be presented through the usual committee processes before the end of the financial year.

12 **HOMELESS UPDATE**

The Head of Housing & Community Services updated the group on the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and Protect & Vaccinate provisions.

All councils were obligated to provide accommodation to rough sleepers should the temperature reach zero or below for three consecutive nights.

Horsham District Council had provided the SWEP provision after one night of zero and below temperatures and had accommodated eight people in the district since 30 November.

In conjunction with SWEP, the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities had announced in December a Protect and Vaccinate scheme which would help increase vaccination uptake with rough sleepers and move them into safe accommodation. Two further people had been supported within the district under this provision.

The Housing Team continued to work closely with Turning Tides with the joint goal that no one needs to sleep rough through having no other choice. An update was given on those homeless residents who had secured permanent accommodation and reported that the Housing Team are always exploring and pursuing longer term accommodation provision.

Housing were working to understand the vaccination status of rough sleepers in the district; some were vaccinated and for those unvaccinated a small budget provision was available to help accommodate a higher vaccination uptake.

Members found the update extremely informative.

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

The Forward Plan Extract was noted. The Community Link Digital Investment proposals would be considered by Cabinet on 27 January and full Council on 9 February.

*The meeting closed at 6.15 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN