

Housing, Communities & Wellbeing Policy Development Advisory Group
7 MARCH 2024

Present: Councillors: Sam Raby (Chairman), Sam Bateman, Jon Campbell, Claudia Fisher, Liz Kitchen, Colin Minto and Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillors: Tony Bevis

Absent: Councillors: Philip Circus, Chris Franke and Jay Mercer

Also Present: Councillors: Dennis Livingstone and John Trollope

13 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 11 January were received.

14 **COST OF LIVING SUMMIT**

The Cabinet Member advised the group that the Cost of Living summit was well attended and thanked Officers for arranging the event. The key issues affecting residents in the district were highlighted and ideas for how to help those residents were developed. The Communities Team were analysing the feedback, with a view to developing a policy.

The Head of Housing & Communities explained that collaborating with organisations to provide solutions was a priority, as well as increasing the volunteer database. It was important to ensure that access to services was improved, and that community projects were supported.

An analysis of the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) database was being undertaken to understand how the Council could offer support. It was acknowledged that basic needs were not being met for some residents, and that support to achieve a higher quality of life needed to be provided. Initiatives that were already offered were noted.

The Group discussed ideas in relation to actions that the Council could take to support residents. This included:

- Mapping current services, and areas of need, across the district
- Providing information in plain English, or pictorial format, particularly in relation to support that residents seek from the Council
- Working with the Parish Councils to rebuild the volunteer network
- Providing access to job fairs in rural parts of the district
- Sharing knowledge between Parish Councils in relation to community fridge initiatives

Health and wellbeing were also discussed, in relation to the cost of gym memberships, mental health first aid and providing training on healthy, low-cost

food. The Train the Trainer model was discussed. The challenges around the cost of meeting basic needs such as laundry were discussed, and potential courses of action explored.

The Cabinet Member concluded by confirming that he would welcome any further ideas.

15 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE HOUSING, COMMUNITIES & WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

It was noted that the Drill Hall item on the forward plan had been moved to the Local Economy and Place portfolio.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN