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Housing, Communities & Wellbeing Policy Development Advisory Group 11 JANUARY 2024

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

Apologies: Councillors: Chris Franke

Absent: Councillors: Philip Circus and Jay Mercer

Also Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke, Mike Croker and Roger Noel

9 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

10 CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST - NOTICE OF MOTION TO COUNCIL

The Group discussed the motion that was previously submitted to the Council meeting on 13 December. Members explored the role of Horsham District Council (HDC) in supporting those who are affected by conflict in the Middle East and the importance of partnership working was highlighted. The Council had an important role to signpost those who need support to key organisations, as appropriate. The district benefits from a strong voluntary sector, and the residents of Horsham had shown generosity, particularly in relation to the Ukrainian refugees.

Officers advised that there was ongoing work with the relevant team at West Sussex County Council (WSSCC). Issues surrounding access to medical help were identified, and it was suggested that WSSCC may be able to support. In relation to this, identifying individuals that may need support with their mental health as a result of the conflict was also highlighted.

The Cabinet Member advised the group that the Cost of Living Summit would take place at the end of January. There would be opportunities at the event to explore additional support that may be required, and to identify any barriers to accessing support, so that, where possible, these can be removed.

The importance of community was acknowledged, and the role of HDC in facilitating these communities was explored. It was suggested that a strategy could be developed to outline the support and actions that HDC would take to support refugees.

11 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND TOP UP

The Group received an update from the Director of Communities and the Head of Housing & Communities in relation to the Local Authority Housing Fund. The

Government had invited Local Authorities to bid for further grant funding. If grant funding was received, 4 additional homes could be provided. This would strengthen the temporary accommodation portfolio for those who are homeless, as well as provide housing for Afghan refugees. Members discussed the proposal and spoke in support.

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

It was noted that there were no items on the forward plan for the Housing, Communities & Wellbeing portfolio.

The meeting closed at 6.11 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN