

HOUSING & HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

01 December 2015 at 7.00 pm

Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

AGENDA

Membership:

Chairman: Cllr. Lowe Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Parkin

Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Dr. Canet, Eyre, Gaywood, Halford, Horwood, Parson, Pearsall, Rosen
and Ms. Tennessee

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2015, as a correct record.	(Pages 1 - 6)	
2. Declarations of Interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Actions from Previous Meetings (if any)		
4. Update from Portfolio Holder	(Pages 7 - 8)	Cllr Lowe
5. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)		
6. To note minutes of the Health Liaison Board To note the minutes of the meeting of the Health Liaison Board held on 25 November 2015. (To follow)		
7. Work Plan	(Pages 9 - 10)	
8. West Kent Housing Association Update on the work of the Under Occupation Officer, Emerald Homes, Life time tenancies and anti social behaviour.	(Pages 11 - 14)	

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.)

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

HOUSING & HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Lowe (Chairman) (Chairman)

Cllr. Parkin (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Eyre, Gaywood, Horwood, Parson, Pearsall, Rosen and Ms. Tennessee

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Dr. Canet and Halford

9. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 June 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

10. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

11. Actions from Previous Meetings

There were none.

12. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder's update was noted.

13. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

14. SENCIO Presentation

The Chairman welcomed Jane Parish - Chief Executive, Adam Perry – Community & Centres Director and Sarah McDonnell – Marketing Manager from SENCIO who jointly gave a presentation to the Committee and answered queries.

In response to questions concerning future funding the Chief Executive, SENCIO, advised that within their strategic plan were key areas where potential growth had been identified and were constantly looking at efficiency savings and innovative ways to be as efficient and effective as possible. The Community & Centres Director encouraged members to contact him with regards to any help could be given to sports groups in the north of the district. With regards to marketing door drops were more costly and therefore carried out for specific issues such as targeting areas that would have been affected by the Fairfield Leisure Centre refurbishment. Some concerns were raised with regards to the customer experience at White Oak, which it was noted were being addressed. With regards to

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'gang' concerns and youth provision they were able to provide facilities and coaches and there were already activities aimed at these age groups, but other than that it was a KCC issue.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked them for attending.

15. Budget: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the report before the Committee was the second stage of the budget process and would be presented to all Advisory Committees. The first stage had been the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy' report which had been reported to Cabinet on 17 September 2015. The purpose of this report was to ensure that all Members of the Advisory Committees had a role to play in the governance of the Council and the budget decision making process and to make suggestions to Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within their terms of reference.

The main message was that this should be a significant step towards the Council becoming financially self-sufficient. The 10-year budget at Appendix F to the report, included no Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from 2016/17 and no New Homes Bonus (NHB) from 2019/20. In practice it was likely that some funding would still be received from these sources in the near future but the amounts were unknown. The Financial Prospects report had recommended that any amounts that were received were placed into the Financial Plan Reserve which could be used to support the 10-year budget by funding invest to save initiatives and support for the Property Investment Strategy. Using the funding for these purposes would result in additional year on year income that was not impacted by Government decisions.

Members had agreed the last 10-year budget in February and the changes that had been made since then included:

- Rolling the 10-year budget on for one year and updating base figures.
- Removing reliance on RSG
- Reducing the Council Tax increase assumption to 2% for all years
- Reducing fees and charges inflation to 2.5% for all years
- Reducing pay award inflation to 1% for 4 years
- Including income from PIS for the first time of £500k from 16/17, £700k from 18/19, £800k from 23/24
- Savings of £500k in 16/17 and then £100k pa for all future years

The current list of growth and savings proposals was £52,000 short of the £500,000 target (if all of the proposals were accepted), and Members were therefore being asked for further suggestions for growth and savings ideas. He further reminded Members that that £5.3m had been saved from 2011/12 to 2016/17 (113 items) and there had been over £10m of savings since 2005/06.

Members reviewed Appendix D which contained the growth and savings proposals put forward by the Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers, and the Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) in Appendix E. Members also considered and gave individual answers to the following five questions:

- a) What services should the Council invest more in?
- b) What services should the Council disinvest from?
- c) What services work well?
- d) What services don't work well?
- e) What issues would you like Cabinet to take into account?

The Chief Finance Officer summarised the views put forward and Members considered whether there was anything they wanted taken forward as potential growth or savings suggestions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the savings proposals identified in Appendix D to the report applicable to the Advisory Committee(SCIA16 – Housing Register, SCIA17 – Disabled Facility Grants, SCIA18 – Private Sector Lettings Scheme), be recommended to Cabinet;
- b) no further suggestions for growth and savings be recommended to Cabinet.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

With the Committee's agreement agenda items 10 and 11 forward for consideration.

16. Review of Disabled Facilities Grant process

Members considered a report which set out the findings of the evaluation of a pilot project undertaken by the Housing Advice and Standards Team to deliver all aspects of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in house. The findings supported a Portfolio Holder decision which was taken where it has been agreed that the pilot project was successful and the Council should continue to provide all aspects of works connected with DFGs in house.

Benefits of the in house service had been identified as:

- Improved ability to effectively manage DFG budget spend;
- A more responsive service for residents is provided with a high level of customer satisfaction;
- The generation of income for the Council;
- Positive benefits for the Council's reputation as the Council is identified by residents and their extended families as providing a valuable and much needed service.

The Advisory Committee expressed their thanks to the Housing Advice and Standards Team for their work on this project.

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Resolved: That the report be noted.

17. Health Inequalities Action Plan - End of Year Summary Report And Draft 2015-2018 plan

Members considered the 2014/15 annual summary report of the Sevenoaks District 'Mind the Gap' Health Inequalities Action Plan and the draft 2015-18 Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan which summarised the actions taken by Health Action Team partners. As a member of the Advisory Committee and the Chairman of the Health Liaison Board, Cllr Mrs Bosley advised that the Health Liaison Board had considered the same report and supported the recommendations made. Adoption of the new three year Plan was required to continue the work of reducing health inequalities across the District.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the 'Mind the Gap' Health Inequalities Action Plan be noted; and
- b) it be recommended to Cabinet that the Draft 2015 – 18 Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan be adopted.

18. To note minutes of the Health Liaison Board

The unpublished draft minutes of the meeting of the Health Liaison Board held on 16 September 2015 were tabled, which the Committee noted along with the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015, and the the Chairman of the Health Liaison Board highlighted key areas of note.

19. HERO Verbal Update (to include a short presentation on the initiative)

The Committee received a short presentation by the Chief Housing Officer, updating them on the HERO Project (Housing Energy Retraining and Options). A Member queried whether there was the possibility of working with the 'Welfare to Work' scheme, and agreed to pass on details of a contact.

20. Fuel Poverty - briefing note

Members considered a briefing paper which had been put together by the Housing Policy Team's graduate intern. Having recently completed an MSc in energy policy and sustainability, he had been asked to review the District Council's fuel poverty strategy and related work programmes and to give his thoughts and suggestions for service improvements. Members considered it an excellent report.

If Members had any comments or feedback they were asked to forward them to the Energy Conservation & Initiatives Officer.

21. Work Plan

The Chairman advised that all items bar the item on West Kent Housing to be moved to the next meeting, and that the meeting would close for a 'member level think tank' on the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment to which all members of the Council would be invited to attend. From that event the Housing Policy Manager would prepare a report to come back to Committee for recommendations to be made to Cabinet. There would therefore be some movement in the work plan between the 2016 March and summer meetings.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.40 PM

CHAIRMAN

Housing & Health Advisory Committee

1 December 2015

Portfolio Holders Report

Housing

Attended many meetings with West Kent Housing Association regarding anti-social behaviour and have been working with officers to devise strategies to clamp down on it. These will come forward for discussion by members at the strategy workshops.

Attended the West Kent Housing Association annual liaison meeting on Thursday 8 October, where I raised with members of the Board and senior management team SDC's desire to see them introduce fixed term tenancy agreements. The government is looking at forcing fixed term tenancies anyway – so this battle will probably be won by them.

Working closely with the Housing Team to plan the new Housing Strategy Workshops to be held later this evening and then to pull members ideas together into our new strategy. This is quite exciting we haven't undertaken brain storming before with Members and this will produce a joined up Housing Strategy capturing all the local issues.

Working with Cllr Pearsall on monitoring the new Housing and Planning Bill and have been writing to DCLG ministers with any comments or ideas (first letter attached).

Meeting with the two Sevenoaks MPS: Michael Fallon and Tom Tugendhat to update them on the strategy and raise our concerns with the new Housing & Planning Bill. As Gary Johnson only has one ward in the District I will update him by email.

Pav Pamewal and Pat Smith met with representatives from DCLG on 2 November and raised all our housing issues again. We will use all communication channels to make sure our voice is heard by DCLG.

We will be hosting a Housing Forum in the Spring to launch our new Housing Strategy and showcase our achievements such as HERO. WE have a commitment from DCLG Minister: Marcus Jones to attend but no fixed date yet.

Will be attending the No Use Empty Conference at KCC tomorrow (2 December)

Health and Leisure

I have had to stand down as a Trustee for Sencio as there is a conflict of interest with me as the Portfolio Holder. Cllr Pat Bosley agreed to replace me. This will keep the link between Housing, Health and Leisure.

Cllr Horwood, Deputy Portfolio Holder and Lead member on Leisure will be working with officers to devise a new Leisure strategy with members for the District to help us make better decision regarding Whiteoak, Wildernesse and other leisure issues.

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Had numerous meetings about Wildernesse and the state that KCC are leaving leisure facilities there as a result of the building works for Trinity School and now the new Grammar annexe.

Working very closely with the SDC Health Board, chaired by Cllr Pat Bosley (who attends Portfolio Holder Briefings), in order to tie together all the health initiatives across the District.

Attended a *Why Weight* session with Cllr Pat Bosley, Cllr Faye Parkin and Cllr Larry Abraham on 9 October to see how public health funded initiatives work in practice and whether they provide value for money.

Met with Andrew Scott Clark (in charge of public health across the county) on 2 October. Public health funding is being cut and KCC are looking at different ways to achieve health outcomes. KCC will be putting together public health deals with each district that will replace current arrangements in the Autumn 2016. SDC are looking to put together a holistic deal using all our tools as the main strategy and health programmes (where they can be externally funded or run for free) to support the strategy.

Met with Maria Heslop, Portfolio Holder for Health at Tonbridge and Malling, on 24 November.

We will be appointing a Mental Health Ambassador who will be either a member of this committee or the Health Board. They will report back either directly to this committee or indirectly through the Health Board.

Cllr Faye Parkin, Deputy Cabinet member and lead member for health, attended the Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse conferences to see the overlaps with health and how the council can develop a more holistic approach to tackling these issues.

In conjunction with the Health Liaison Board we have devised the following three health priorities for this District and will be looking into a holistic approach (using all the District's tools: Housing, licensing, planning, EH, leisure, Communications as well as various programmes) to tackle them:

- Tackling the rise of obesity (District's tools, communications and programmes)
- Mental health support including tackling dementia (Housing, Health & leisure)
- Communities for older people and tackling prevention of dementia development (Housing, health, leisure and community safety – including road safety)

Housing and Health Advisory Committee Work Plan 2015/16 (as at 09.11.15)

22 September 2015	1 December 2015	22 March 2016	Summer 2016
<p>Budget: Service Reviews and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)</p> <p>HERO Update (to include a short presentation on the initiative)</p> <p>Review of Disabled Facilities Grant process</p> <p>Sencio Presentation</p> <p>Health Inequalities Action Plan</p> <p>Health Board update – Cllr Pat Bosley</p>	<p>West Kent Housing Association to update on the work of the Under Occupation Officer, Emerald Homes, Life time tenancies and anti social behaviour.</p> <hr/> <p>WORKSHOP OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS:</p> <p>Housing Strategy objectives going forward</p>	<p>New SDC Housing Policy (based on the December workshop) for recommendation for approval</p> <p>Update on Right to Buy</p> <p>Health Priorities – Better Care Fund (including update from CCGs)</p> <p>Health Board update – Cllr Pat Bosley</p>	<p>Housing Needs Working Group Update</p> <p>Update on Climate Change Matters</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee Report on Leisure value for money across the district</p> <p>Role of the KCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) (Cllr Brookbank)</p> <p>Swanley as a Dementia Friendly Town (Cllr Searles)</p>

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Report To Sevenoaks Council Members and Executive

From Andrew Airey – Under-occupation Manager, West Kent Housing Association

Report Title: Small is Beautiful- 2015

1. Introduction and Background

The Small is Beautiful scheme is jointly funded by Sevenoaks Council and West Kent Housing Association to incentivise tenants to downsize when they are living in a home that is now larger than they need. The scheme aims to assist people to move so that we can make best use of our family accommodation to house new families from the housing register or who are homeless. The scheme also helps people who are affected by the spare room subsidy cap to move so they are no longer in danger of losing their home because they cannot meet the full rent. For older tenants not affected by the spare room subsidy issue, it is to encourage them into homes that are easier and cheaper to maintain.

Both organisations share the cost of the Under-occupation Officer and put in £20,000 per annum for the incentive payments.

2. Scheme Outcomes for 2015

Overall the Small is Beautiful scheme (SiB) has been running well this year, and is evolving over time. Demand continues to rise as the welfare reforms take effect on under occupiers.

By the 16 November, there have been 33 completed downsizes, which released 44 bedrooms at a cost of £52,000, or £1,181 per room. Three downsizes attracted the smaller grant to help facilitate a mutual exchange, to stop them requiring Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).

This is slightly less than the number downsized by this time in 2014, but last year saw the opening of Bonney Court, that enabled a number of residents to downsize as residents took up those new tenancies over a very short space of time. There has been no new build this year to assist people wanting to move.

In addition, there have been three West Kent residents who were under the age of 55 years who downsized via mutual exchange and received a smaller grant of £500 each. Each of these applicants was previously in receipt of DHP prior to the move (so saving the public purse).

Looking at the void properties released, these have been re-let through the housing register as follows; 6% let to band A applicants, 57% let to band B applicants, 18% let to band C applicants and 6% let to applicants from bands C and D. The remaining 13% are still to be re-let at the time of writing. Overall, 50% of the void properties released through the downsizing scheme have been let to homeless applicants from both bands B and C.

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2. Current Applications for the schemes

There are currently 76 live applications to downsize registered on the Sevenoaks District Housing Register (SDHR), which would collectively release 111 bedrooms when completed-including releasing a 6 bedroom, fully adapted semi-detached house in Eynsford. There is enough funding currently remaining to assist 19 to 25 applicants, depending on the size of property they are releasing. At this time in 2014, there were only 53 applicants to downsize, but demand appears to be increasing, partly fuelled by an increase in people finding it harder to maintain payments for their rent shortfall (due to spare room subsidy caps).

Of the 76 applications, the majority (56%) are from the north of the district, 28% from the centre of the district, and 16% from the south. This is a broad reflection of our stock density across the district.

3. Issues Impacting on the Scheme

There have been some policy issues that have had an impact on the Small is Beautiful scheme during the year.

Two applicants were ineligible to join the housing register because their income exceeded the current permitted limits. They both chose to remain in their current home and so we were unable to recover large, family sized homes.

We became aware of an applicant who having previously downsized from a 3-bedroom property to a 2 bedroom (receiving £1500), then wanted to downsize again to a 1 bedroom. This would have entitled them to another payment of £1500, whereas if they had gone straight from a 3 to a 1 they would only receive £2000. We have therefore tweaked the scheme by making the £1000 incentive payment a one-off, so from in future such applicants would only receive the additional £500 for releasing the second bedroom.

4. Case Study to demonstrate the Benefits of this scheme

Small is Beautiful is more than just a financial incentive scheme. In many cases, it genuinely changes people's lives. An example of this is Mr M, who was living in a two bed bungalow in Swanley. He had been the sole carer for his mother for over 20 years and in 2014 was referred to Small is Beautiful after she passed away and he fell into rent arrears after he became subject to the welfare reforms. He was depressed, and struggling to engage with daily life after his loss. The Under Occupation Officer helped him to access the housing register, and contacted him regularly to discuss suitable properties as they became available for bids. He also referred him to our Care Navigators, who helped him access some additional benefits. In May of this year he successfully bid on a 1 bedroom flat in Linden House, an Emerald Scheme in Sevenoaks, and West Kent received the keys to the bungalow back. The bungalow was re-let in June to a single parent with a child with high medical needs from Band B on the housing register. In July, Mr M received the cheque for his

downsizing incentive. He was a changed man, with a positive outlook, and he was very much enjoying exploring his new surroundings and having people around him, free from financial worries for the first time in over a year.

5. Conclusion

I hope from this report Sevenoaks Council members will feel that their support for the scheme is bringing value to the Council. Without this scheme we have potentially 33 families that would have remained in temporary accommodation or on the Register for a significantly longer period than they have.

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