

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Ms. Lowe (Chairman)

Cllr. Mrs. Clark (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Ayres, Mrs. Ayres, Ms. Chetram, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cook, Eyre,
Mrs. George, Mrs. Parkin and Towell

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Gaywood and Raikes

12. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

14. Actions from Previous Meeting

There were none. With reference to looking for accommodation for the Food Bank, the Chief Officer Communities and Business advised that the requirements were very particular and whilst storage could be found it was more difficult to find any accommodation meeting their needs. Officers would continue to look.

15. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder's report was noted.

16. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

a) Disabled Facility Grants – Cabinet 5 June 2014, Minute 12

This was dealt with under Minute 15 as part of the Portfolio Holder's report, and the response to Cabinet agreed.

17. Presentation on Young Carers

Fiona Watkins, Hub Manager for Kent Young Carers (KYC) gave a [presentation](#) to the Committee outlining the main activities and work of the Kent Young Carers Scheme run by Voluntary Action in West Kent (VAWK), which was also celebrating its 50th anniversary. The District was fortunate to have chill clubs in Edenbridge Sevenoaks and Swanley. Swanley was funded from BBC Children in Need funding. Chill clubs gave the opportunity for the children to relax and make friends with children in similar situations. The KYC

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scheme was funded for another two years and hopefully funding would be found to continue. Members were welcome to visit.

The Committee were impressed with the comprehensiveness of the service offered and thanked her for attending.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

With the Committee's agreement agenda items 10 (a) and (b) were considered before item 7, and item 11 taken before the work plan.

18. 'A Home of your Own' Scheme (DIYSO) - Proposed Round 2

The Housing Enabling Officer presented the report which advised that decision to approve funding for Round 2 of the "A Home of Your Own" scheme (Diyso) and any associated variations to the scheme, rested with the Housing & Community Safety and Local Planning & Environment Portfolio Holders. However the view of the Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee was sought regarding the continuation of the scheme into Round 2 with four proposed variations, so as to be able to inform the Portfolio Holder decision.

The Scheme had been very successful with 9 completed purchases to date. The proposed variations were a controlled attempt to extend the parameters of the scheme in order to attract more existing housing association tenants.

The Chief Housing Officer reported that it was an award winning scheme and had been runner up in the national housing awards. Along with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, they had met the Deputy Mayor for London as the Sevenoaks pilot scheme was being launched by a number of London authorities.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the proposed continuation, with proposed variations, of the "A Home of Your Own" scheme (Diyso) Round 2 be endorsed and supported.

19. Variations to the 'A Home of your Own' Scheme (DIYSO)

The Housing Enabling Officer presented the report which advised that decision to approve funding for Round 2 of the "A Home of Your Own" scheme (Diyso) and any associated variations to the scheme rested with the Housing & Community Safety and Local Planning & Environment Portfolio Holders. However the proposed variations 1 and 2, due to the potential amounts involved, were 'Key Decisions' for Cabinet to agree.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

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Resolved: That the following proposed variations be recommended to Cabinet for adoption:

'Variation 1. For applicants who are housing association tenants, the value of the home to be purchased may be up to £350,000. This enhanced value cap would only apply where the applicant is assessed by Moat as suitable for a 3 or 4 bedroom home and the applicant is actually buying this size of home. The enhanced value cap would only be applied to a maximum of 3 purchases

Variation 2. For all applicants, the minimum initial share of the home to be purchased is reduced to a 35% share.'

20. Local Air Quality Monitoring

The Chief Officer, Environmental and Operational Services, presented the report which advised how the air quality management service could be pared down, clarified the legal position of what the Council was required to do, air quality management projects the Council was developing and whether existing projects could be ended. He pointed out that the budget was £58,000 and rarely fully spent as the bare minimum was already carried out, with savings made in previous three years of £97,996.

Cllr. Firth, Deputy Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources, advised that she had looked at all the relevant legislation and EU regulations with the Chief Officer, Environmental and Operational Services, and was satisfied that the service was not undertaking any additional work than what was required other than the 'Air Alert Scheme'. However this was a free service which was externally funded. She had also visited the continuous air quality monitoring station at Greatness and met one of the scientists. Again only the minimum requirement was being monitored.

She pointed out to the Committee that for the last three years, as mentioned, a saving had been made of over half the budget. Whilst she acknowledged that money was required in case of work arising from reviews and the three yearly updating and screening assessment, she believed that the budget should more accurately reflect the true cost and requested that the Committee consider a reduction in budget suggesting £28,000 in years one and two with £60000 in year three, which for accounting terms would be averaged out.. It was noted that savings could be discussed under the Budget item later in the agenda.

The Chairman used her discretion and allowed Mr Morrison to address the Committee. He expressed his concern with regards to air quality in the area especially Sevenaks High Street, and felt that particulates should be monitored due to the health risks associated with them and that th Council should be doing more than the minimum. He believed that the Council could at least influence what was happening in the District, for example with the proposed new Buckhurst 2 car park.

In response he was advised that particulates were monitored, particularly at the Greatness monitoring station and that it formed part of the London not Kent network. It was also pointed out that the cost of the service did not affect the quality of the service offered. With regards to the response to the DEFRA consultation, the SDC view was not that monitoring should not be carried out, but that it would be more appropriate for it to

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be carried out by the Highways Authority. The Committee merely believed that it was not appropriate to be paying for something for which it had no control over.

The Chief Officer, Environmental and Operational Services advised that there was not a lot the Council could do to affect air quality from traffic, but the monitoring carried out did feed into the larger national picture which eventually led to improvements such as the new HGV engines and improvements to the motorway network. Particulate matter did inform planning decisions as Environmental Health comments were sought.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

21. CCTV Service

The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services presented a report which followed the presentation to the Committee on 15 October 2013 by Cllr. Ayres on behalf of the CCTV Members Working Group. It addressed the issues the Committee requested to report back on, including options to reduce costs and/or increase income. The report also outlined the key role the CCTV service provided in fulfilling the Councils statutory duties in relation to crime and disorder and community safety, and detailed current budgets and performance information.

The Committee agreed that the CCTV Service provided a key role in the Council fulfilling its duties for crime and disorder and community safety, and that options should be explored to reduce costs by the use of wireless transmission or secure wifi options. Members also agreed with the suggestion that where cameras needed replacing they were replaced with digital cameras; that fixed term contract discounts be explored with BT, but with the caveat that did not want to be tied if able to move forward with wireless/wifi options; and investigations into the possibility of Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council sharing a single control room, continue. Members also discussed and agreed that the Police should be asked to contribute, and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner be lobbied. The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services advised that this may be more effective if carried out via the CCTV Network for Kent.

Resolved: That the report be noted and Officers asked to pursue savings and improvements as discussed above.

(Cllr. Eyre did not participate in any conversation relating to any licensing discussions as a DPI)

22. Budget: Review of Service Plans and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report which set out updates to the 2015/16 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report presented proposals that had been identified which the Committee considered and agreed.

Following on from the discussion during Minute 20, Cllr. Eyre proposed, and it was duly seconded that the budget for air quality monitoring be reduced and consolidated to £40,000 a year (£120,000 over three years). This was put to the vote and the motion was lost by virtue of the Chairman's casting vote.

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Members further discussed the reduction of the budget but whilst in agreement that it should be reduced were divided as to the amount of the reduction.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that

- a) the growth and savings proposals identified in Appendix C to the report, be agreed; and
- b) an additional saving be made on the budget for local air quality monitoring with a reduction to either £40k per year (an ongoing annual reduction of £18k), or £45k per year (an ongoing annual reduction of 13k).

23. Modern Slavery

The Committee watched the television campaign advert by the Home Office to raise awareness of modern slavery in the UK. The Chief Officer Communities and Business followed this with a [presentation](#) on the Modern Slavery Bill which was due to be discussed at the Public Bill Committee on Tuesday 14 October 2014 and expected to be in place by April 2015. She advised that she would like to introduce training for frontline staff and Members from January 2015, and further advised that Kent Police had been quick to comment that there were no 'hotspots' in this District.

24. Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014

The Chief Officer Communities and Business gave a [presentation](#) on 'The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014' which had received Royal Assent on 13th March 2014 and would take effect from 20th October 2014. The Act replaced nineteen pre-existing measures with six new measures for tackling anti-social behaviour and provided protection for victims and communities. The community trigger and community remedy would empower victims and communities giving them a greater say in how agencies responded to complaints of anti-social behaviour, and out-of-court sanctions for offenders. With reference to the community trigger, the Chief Officer Communities and Business advised that she would like to have Member involvement at the review stage, possibly the Portfolio Holder or one of the Deputies.

25. Housing Energy Retraining and Options (HERO) Project Update

The Chief Housing Officer informed the Committee that MOAT had withdrawn from the scheme and were now running their own similar scheme but had thanked HERO for an excellent service. The HERO Officers still supported and operated surgeries for West Kent Housing and some KCC Childrens' Centre. It was felt that the project had reached its peak in its current form and therefore a different direction was being looked into such as providing support for KCC Gypsy & Traveller service, or entering the private sector and

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tenancies. The HERO scheme was completely externally or income funded, and the Committee would be updated in the new year on HERO Plus.

26. Work Plan

The Committee considered the Work Plan. It was agreed to remove the Modern Slavery Update from the next meeting as it had already been received. Cllr. Mrs. Cook gave her advance apologies for the meeting in March but advised that she would submit a report. A HERO update was agreed for the March meeting.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.41 PM

CHAIRMAN