

HOUSING & HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020 commencing at 5.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Maskell (Chairman)

Cllr. Coleman (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Clack, Perry Cole, Coleman, G. Darrington, Griffiths, Harrison, Parkin, Piper and Roy

52. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Health Advisory Committee held on 29 September 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

53. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

54. Actions from Previous Meetings

There were none.

55. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, reported that West Kent Housing Association (WKHA) had recently met and signed a new partnership agreement with a greater strategic focus. There was clearly a positive working partnership between the Council and WKHA who were clearly aware of previous committee concerns and keen to ensure the quality of service was improved.

The latest restructure of the housing teams would be in place in January 2021. Rav Kensrey has been appointed as the new Homelessness Prevention Manager. The new Housing Accommodation team would oversee the management of temporary accommodation, housing register and private sector offer and incentives. The landlords' incentive scheme would be relaunched with regards to access to private rented accommodation.

The rural local housing needs survey was underway in Eynsford Parish. This was the second local survey to be undertaken as part of the District Council's five year programme (Sevenoaks Weald launched the programme in September). As part of the survey process, local people who were in housing need but who weren't already on the Housing Register, were being encouraged to apply.

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HERO Officers had experienced an increase in customer referrals due to Covid-19 and were in receipt of Kent County Council (KCC) funding by way of an emergency assistance grant which had helped to provide much needed support.

The Council had successfully secured £468k funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Next Steps Accommodation Fund to support the impact of Covid-19, helping rough sleepers into move on accommodation. Some of this money would be used on a joint project with WKHA.

The Social Housing White paper details had been published and being looked at by the the Housing Policy Manager, who would provide a briefing to Members in due course.

56. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

57. Review of Homelessness Out of Hours Service

The Head of Housing & Health presented the report which provided a review of the pilot undertaken with Centra to provide the Council's homelessness out of hours service and also considered future delivery options for the service. The Council was required to deliver a dedicated service to customers facing homelessness outside standard office hours. The report provided Members with options for how the homelessness out-of-hours service was delivered.

Members asked questions of clarification concerning any possible contract with Centra such as whether there would be regular review meetings and whether there was enough capacity should it be required. The Head of Housing & Health advised that if a contract was entered into as set out in Option B, then there would be a service level agreement with performance indicators and regular meetings. There would also be scope to negotiate increased capacity should it be required. It was noted that a Council housing officer would also provide a back-up contact for Centra and CCTV, to support them with complex questions. Concern was expressed about putting extra pressure on existing staffing levels should Option C be considered.

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 to agree Option B as set out at paragraph 29 of the report, for the future delivery for the Council's homelessness out-of-hour service.

VOTE OF THANKS

The Committee gave a vote of thanks and round of applause to Hayley Brooks, Head of Housing and Health as it was her last meeting before leaving the Council.

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Members said she would be missed and thanked her for her hard work and dedication in all her roles during her 16 years at the Council.

58. Delivering affordable housing in the Sevenoaks District: Progress report (2020)

The Housing Policy Manager shared a [presentation](#) that differed slightly from the one included in the agenda papers, and updated Members on the progress made against the District Council's Housing Strategy (2017). Members took the opportunity to ask questions of clarification. All Members present indicated a willingness to be involved in any future workshops on the Housing Strategy refresh.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That the progress made in relation to the District Council's affordable housing work programme, be noted.

59. Work Plan

The work plan was noted with: the removal of the Paramount presentation; moving the housing register report to the summer meeting; and the addition of updates on 'One You' programme and empty homes, to the summer meeting.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 6.56 PM

CHAIRMAN