

HOUSING & HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Perry Cole (Chairman)

Cllr. Harrison (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Bulford, Clack, G. Darrington, Edwards-Winsler, Gustard, Hudson, Lindop and Streatfeild

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Cathy Morgan

Cllrs. P. Darrington, Purves, and Skinner were also present.

15. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

17. Actions from Previous Meetings

The Action Sheet was noted.

18. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, and Chairman, gave an update on the services within his portfolio. Quercus Housing had purchased the 17 new homes delivered by the Council-led development at 27 - 29 High Street, Swanley for affordable housing use. The number of residents in temporary or emergency accommodation had been reduced to 89 in August 2023, compared with 139 in March 2022. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis and the Homes for Ukraine and Afghan Resettlement schemes on the budget continued to be monitored.

The Housing Team had migrated to from Locata to the HUUME system, which incorporated the Housing Register and Housing Application, to streamline the process for customers in the District and across Kent. The Council had recently signed up for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, and was looking to adopt their established standards. The Gypsy & Traveller Allocation Policy was improved by Members in July 2023, and works to refurbish three pitches at the Hever Road site were underway. Energy efficiency measures were installed in 14 low-income homes that were unconnected to the gas grid, as part of the Home Upgrade Grant. Further funding of over £1.2 million had been secured as part of Phase 2 of the grant, which would be used to deliver energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades to 60 houses over the next two years.

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The HERO team had supported around 90 customers with the cost of living over the last three months. They further attended a number of community groups across the District to provide outreach support.

The Health & Wellbeing Partnership had met in July, focusing on mental health provision and joint projects. The Edenbridge Medical Centre was due to open in November. The Council had secured external funding to appoint two One You advisors to the centre to provide wellbeing support. Kent Public Health had recently confirmed its annual funding of the One You programme, and an additional officer had been recruited to deliver the Why Weight management service. The One You programme also organised walking groups, and, in conjunction with the Communities team, would run two programmes to assist families with cooking and food budgeting. The Dartford, Gravesham, and Swanley NHS Health & Care Partnership had funded the Council to deliver a community development programme in Swanley and other northern parishes, centred on community health and wellbeing.

19. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

20. Sevenoaks District - Homes for Ukraine and Asylum Seeker Dispersal Update

The Head of Housing presented the report, which updated the committee on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Areas, and the Refugee Resettlement Schemes.

The officer explained that the Homes for Ukraine scheme had received 555 host applications since launching in March 2022, with 471 guests arriving. The accommodation was provided for at least 6 months to better allow for integration. Three housing options - rematching to a new host, sole occupancy, or shared accommodation - were available for guests that were unable to continue staying with their first host. 107 homeless applications had been received from guests accommodated through the Ukrainian Refugee Schemes since February 2022, of which 41 homeless duties had been accepted. 5 households were placed in temporary accommodation and 27 guests had been accommodated in the private rented sector. A Lettings Negotiator had recently been appointed to assist in bringing guests into private rentals.

The committee heard that nearly £3 million of capital funding had been secured through the Local Authority Housing Fund, for the provision of 16 housing units for Homes for Ukraine and one 4 bedroom unit for the Afghan Scheme. Six of the units for the Homes for Ukraine scheme had already been delivered at the 27 - 29 High Street, Swanley site. A further £297,898 had been received from central government, which would be used to support guests into private accommodation and employment.

All local authorities were required to participate in the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme, as more asylum seekers continued to arrive in the UK. The South East

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Strategic Partnership for Migration were working with local authorities to and had put forward a place-based approach to the Home Office to address the issue. Through the place-based approach Sevenoaks was expected to receive 86 asylum seekers before 31 December 2023, though this figure had not been approved and could change. The Home Office's contractor would acquire the properties and work with stakeholders to ensure sufficient infrastructure was in place to support the asylum seekers once they were in place. The officer outlined the other settlement schemes the Council participated in.

In response to questions, the officer explained that the Refugee Settlement schemes were coordinated by Kent County Council (KCC), and that forecast figures for arrivals were unknown. Five families were housed in the district under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and six were housed through the Afghan Resettlement Scheme. The Council had an internal officers group working across the Communities and Housing services to ensure support was provided for guests coming into the district. The teams continued to have weekly meetings with KCC, and worked proactively to address issues before they arose. A consultation event was held in March 2023 with hosts and guests, offering advice and support to find alternative accommodation and other areas in which they required further support.

The officer explained that the Council had not been approached by the Home Officer to accommodate Asylum Seekers through the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Scheme and did not have the details of the offers that would be available to landlords who let their properties through the Scheme. The Council faced a demand for social housing that outweighed the available stock, and land and property prices made it difficult to deliver more. The Council attended numerous government events and outlined the additional pressure on these services that resettlement schemes would create. The Chief Officer for People and Places outlined the Landlord Incentive Scheme in place to encourage landlords to house homeless people, but explained that uptake was low. Owners of empty homes were approached directly regarding the scheme, but few owners were willing to participate.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

21. Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre

The Health Team Leader presented the report, which set out the work undertaken to include the One You Kent Service in the delivery of the Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre, set to open in November 2023. The centre would work on a model of integrated care and would address the social, health, and wellbeing needs of residents. Two full-time One You advisors would be based in the premises to provide lifestyle and weight management services.

In response to questions, it was explained that the One You staff would be funded from a yearly grant from KCC, which would be renewed subject to review. This was because the central government budget was renewed annually. The replacement of the hospital with the health centre was decided by the NHS and Primary Care Network. The Council may monitor planning applications for similar proposals, for

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opportunities to replicate this in other parts of the district. The scheme had significant support from GPs and local healthcare professionals. The Health Centre did not include facilities for overnight stays, but the One You staff would be able to signpost patients to council services such as the Disabled Facility Grant to aid in and expedite their discharge.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

22. 'One You' Programme Update

The Health Team Leader outlined the report, which updated the committee on the provision of the One You services for 2022-23. The officer delivered a [presentation](#) on the performance of the service and future developments. These included expanding the provision of online programmes, improving signposting to other services, and reinstating the Health Walk programme.

In response to questions, it was explained that participants had to be adult residents of the District. The service was funded by KCC, and although there had recently been delays in its receipt the Council were working with them to ensure the situation was managed. Public Health England, who provided the funding to KCC for the service, received multiple benefits from it and thus it was expected that funding would remain. Uptake had been consistent across the district, and the team actively targeted all areas to increase engagement, such as through holding face-to-face workshops in Swanley and Westerham. The service proactively targeted residents that were motivated to make lifestyle changes, but it was acknowledged that around 60-65% of Sevenoaks residents were overweight or obese, and that this motivation was not widespread. Expanding the provision of service to unmotivated residents would not yield results and subtract resources from helping those that were motivated. Follow-up data was scarce, as only roughly 10% of participants responded to the team's attempts to gather feedback.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

23. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted, with the following additions:

23 January 2023

- Dartford, Gravesham, and Swanley Health and Care Partnership funding update

June 2024

- Review of Allocations Policy
- Housing standards in the private rented sector
- Sevenoaks District Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2024/25

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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.44 PM

CHAIRMAN