

**COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HEALTH  
(OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

**27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Smedley (Chairman), Warfield (Vice Chairman), Mrs Woodward (Vice-Chairman) Mrs. Bacon, Mrs. Evans, Isaacs, Pearce, Ms. Perkins and Salter.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Mrs Allsopp, Mrs Arnold, Mrs Constable and Leytham.

(In accordance with Council Procedure No. 17 Councillors Greatorex, Pritchard Mrs Stanhope and Wilcox also attended the meeting.)

The Committee was notified that County Councillor Finn would be in attendance at all the Committee meetings as a Staffordshire County Council Health Scrutiny representative and would be permitted to speak and, if necessary, vote on matters relating to services commissioned or provided by the NHS. The Committee welcomed County Councillor Finn to the meeting.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Evans declared a personal interest for any reference to the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Councillors Mrs Bacon and Isaacs declared a personal interest for any reference of the South East Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011 were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011 be approved as a correct record

**INTEGRATION OF SERVICES BETWEEN STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL & STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST**

The Committee received a presentation by Paula Furnival, Director of Integration, Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust, on the delivery of integrated care. It was reported that the new Trust would bring together the 'provider arms' of the three Primary Care Trusts in the area and Adult Social Care from the County Council along with their budgets. It was also reported that the main aim of the new Trust was to make access to services easier and ensure users get the right type of care, making more use of community based services and avoiding unnecessary use of acute care.

The Committee asked for assurance that social care services would not be marginalised within the new arrangements. Ms Furnival emphasized that although health services are likely to account for a substantial proportion of the budget, Commissioners would monitor overall expenditure and ensure that needs are met.

Concerns were also raised relating to potential loss of jobs. It was reported that all front line staff from the PCTs had transferred to the new Trust and the same would be the case for Adult Social Care frontline staff.

It was asked how the Trust and changes to access to services would be publicised. Members were advised that there would be a comprehensive communications strategy as well as reassurance to existing patients that support would be available and a minimal amount of disruption to their care.

It was also asked how the District Council would be involved in the future and it was noted that existing partnerships would be built upon.

**RESOLVED:** That the information received be noted and an update on progress be given to the Committee in six months.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN LICHFIELD DISTRICT**

### **a) Policy Development**

The Committee received a report advising of the changes in the future delivery of affordable housing including the introduction of affordable rent and the new Affordable Homes Programme 2011-15.

It was reported that 200 applications to join the housing register are received each month and in 2010-11 there were 312 lettings with a third being made to households who are statutorily homeless.

It was noted that the District Council had a good record for the delivery of affordable housing and work is currently underway to provide evidence upon which future need (and ultimately housing numbers) can be based and incorporated within the new Core Strategy. It was noted that a joint meeting between the Community, Housing and Health and Environment and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committees will take place in the autumn to debate this matter in greater detail.

### **b) Bromford's Perspective**

The Committee received a presentation by Nick Cummins of Bromford Housing regarding the 'Future Development of Affordable Housing in Lichfield District' and it was noted that the future landscape would be challenging, particularly given substantial reductions in the level of government subsidy for new housing.

In order to adapt to these pressures, Bromford will review its existing assets with a view to considering development potential. It will also be necessary to build more properties for outright sale, low cost home ownership or affordable rent and explore more cross subsidy in order to maximise the number of units which can be delivered. Other avenues being considered include renovation of the existing housing stock and identifying other public sector assets, particularly land availability. As the District Council does not have capital or land available for the development of affordable housing, working in partnership with Bromford Housing and other Housing Associations is critical to the achievement of corporate aspirations to increase affordable housing supply.

The New Homes Bonus Scheme was discussed and Councillor Mrs Woodward proposed that this source of funding should be ring fenced for future investment in housing. This proposal was supported by the Committee. Bromford Housing were thanked for their attendance and their presentation.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and presentation be noted and a recommendation made to Cabinet that any money received via the New Home Bonus Scheme be ring fenced for housing purposes only and not integrated into the wider Council budget.

## **FUNDING THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR: INTERIM REPORT FROM TASK GROUP BY COUNCILLOR MRS WOODWARD**

The Chairman of the Funding the Community & Voluntary Sector Member Task Group, Councillor Mrs Woodward, gave the Committee an update on progress to date.

She reported that there had been three meetings since the establishment of the Member Task Group in June 2011 and after being provided with a wide range of evidence and data, the Group identified preferred investment priorities. It was noted that consultation then took place through the Council's on-line 'Voice It' tool and through the postal Citizens Survey. The responses received supported the Task Group's five preferred priorities.

A concern was raised that community and voluntary organisations may feel they need to amend their 'rules' in order to fit the Council's requirements. Councillor Mrs Woodward advised that the Task Group had focused on the outcomes / results which the District Council wished to achieve through the commissioning process and had not given any consideration to specific organisations at this stage.

Councillor Greatorex expressed his appreciation for the work of the Task Group and the helpful composite view that had been provided. He advised he would be taking a second look at the proposed priorities before forming a final view to be considered by the Cabinet.

The Committee ratified the recommended priorities for funding as agreed by the Task Group and supported by consultation responses, and noted these would be considered by the Cabinet at their October meeting and, subject to their approval or amendment, tendering would commence in October 2011.

**RESOLVED:** That the information received be noted and the priority area for funding as agreed by the Task Group be endorsed.

## **COMMUNITY TRANSPORT: INTERIM REPORT FROM TASK GROUP BY COUNCILLOR WARFIELD**

The Chairman of the Community Transport Member Task Group, Councillor Warfield, gave the Committee an update on progress to date.

He reported that the Task Group had met twice since its establishment in June 2011 and they had agreed a set of actions to explore further including additional uses, gas conversions, reduction in costs and use of taxis. It was also reported that providers would be invited to the next meeting.

It was noted that Staffordshire County Council were consulting in the area on their own Community Transport

**RESOLVED:** That the document be noted.

## **THE FUTURE OPTIONS FOR INVESTIGATION OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND IN LICHFIELD DISTRICT**

The Committee received a progress report on the investigation of previously used land undertaken to date. Members were advised of recent change in the availability of Government grants and the implications for the Council's Strategy.

It was reported that it was a statutory duty for the District Council to identify previously used land which poses an unacceptable risk and ensure that remediation of such land takes place. It was also reported that 1632 previously used sites have been identified with 55 needing intrusive investigation, 18 of which have been completed.

Owing to a limited in house budget, sites are prioritised for investigation. In circumstances where more detailed work is needed, the District Council has been very successful in attracting grants from Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Environment Agency. It was noted that the availability for grant funding had significantly reduced and the District Council's most recent application had not been successful.

Members considered the options for undertaking future investigations including the advantages and disadvantages of each. Members agreed that given funding constraints, sites should be considered one at a time. In circumstances where a house sale was affected because of its location on previously used land, advice would be provided to individual homeowners about the options open to them.

It was agreed that the Committee could write to the local MPs expressing their concern at the reduction and change in criteria related to Government funding and draw attention to the implications.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the District Council investigates one site at a time within the existing budget (in accordance with the priority ranking previously identified) and concludes each investigation before commencing any further investigations;
  - (2) That where remediation is required, the options are considered on a site by site specific basis and further reports be brought for consideration as necessary; and
  - (3) That the Committee write to the local MPs voicing their concern at the reduction and change in criteria of Government funding.

## **FEEDBACK FROM STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY AND 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2011**

The Committee received the notes from the Staffordshire Health Scrutiny Committee meetings held on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 25<sup>th</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011.

Councillor Mrs Woodward noted that the Davy Unit at Cannock Community Hospital (which provided social care for elderly people) had recently been closed and services transferred to Great Wyrley. She commented that consultation about this closure had been inadequate and that Burntwood residents had been adversely affected as a result.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports be noted.

**WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**

The Work Programme and Forward Plan were considered.

**RESOLVED:**  
That the Work Programme and Forward Plan be noted.

(The Meeting Closed at 8:27pm)

CHAIRMAN