

FOR: COUNCIL MEETING
14th JULY 2015
AGENDA ITEM 6
(GREEN ENCLOSURE)

REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

PRESENT:

Councillors Leytham (Chairman), Rayner (Vice Chairman), Mrs Allsopp, Bamborough, Mrs Banevicius, Mrs Bland, Mrs Boyle, Mrs Constable, Mrs Evans, Salter and Warfield.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were received from Councillors Mrs Baker and O'Hagan.

(In accordance with Council Procedure No. 17 Councillors Greatorex and Pullen also attended the meeting.)

County Councillor D.S.Smith also attended the meeting to as the County Council's representative from the Health Staffordshire Select Committee

Councillor Cox also attended and participated in Item 6 – Impact of the Housing Allocations Policy (Homes Direct)

At the meeting of the Community, Housing and Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee held on 3rd June 2015 the following matters were considered:

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.1 Members were reminded of the Terms of Reference for the Community, Housing and Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee. It was noted that there had been a change in Cabinet Members since the elections.

2. STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Committee received the minutes of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee meetings held on the 24th March 2014 and 8th April 2015. County Councillor Smith joined the meeting. Referring to the proposal from the North Staffordshire CCG to change the eligibility for hearing aids for mild to moderate hearing loss, he reported that the Select Committee had been disappointed their previous views along with those of the community had been disregarded. It was noted that there had been a meeting with the relevant Director and that the Committee were prepared to contest the proposals wherever possible.
- 2.2 County Councillor Smith then reported that the Select Committee had considered a performance report for the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and were found to have concerns especially after the merger of services. The report highlighted that there had been a drop in performance in Staffordshire but an improvement in the rest of the West Midlands.

- 2.3 Members asked for an explanation about changes to the on-board drugs policy, especially as ambulances now tend to transport patients greater distances. . Councillor Smith agreed to seek clarification on this matter.
- 2.4 It was noted that as part of the Community, Housing and Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee Chairmanship role, Councillor Leytham would now be the LDC representative on the Select Committee so Member's queries could be channeled through him.
- 2.5 The information received was noted.

3. PROCEDURES OF LOW CLINICAL VALUE

- 3.1 The Committee received a verbal report from the Strategic Director for Community, Housing and Health, Mrs Helen Titterton, regarding a local policy to restrict the availability of certain procedures. It was reported that the Procedures of Low Clinical Value (PoLCV) policy had been put in place to ease budgetary demands and financial pressures. It was noted that although the policy had only recently been issued, it brought together similar policies which had been inherited from the Primary Care Trusts in existence prior to NHS reorganisation. The policy is applied across Staffordshire and the Black County.
- 3.2 The Committee were grateful that Councillor Mrs Evans had raised concerns about the introduction of the policy after being handed a leaflet detailing it at the Samuel Johnson Hospital. It was noted that the CCG had been advised that scrutiny was required because the approach described in the policy was not a substantial change or variation on previous practice.
- 3.3 County Councillor Smith reported that there would be a meeting this municipal year solely to consider matters regarding the Burton NHS trust and he agreed to raise concerns about the policy on this occasion.
- 3.4 Members felt that patients could be shocked and worried when receiving the leaflet and that it was important to be able to offer some reassurance. It was noted that the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Evans would be meeting with the Interim Chief Operating Officer of the CCG to seek further information about the policy and its implications.
- 3.5 The information received was noted.

4. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW 2014/15 FOR THE COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HEALTH DIRECTORATE

- 4.1 The Committee received a report on the progress against the relevant activities and projects set out in the District Council's One Year Action Plan for 14/15. Targets for proposed activity and performance indicators for 2015/16 were also reported.
- 4.2 The report provided statistical data comparing performance activities from 13/14 and 14/15. It was reported that income received from the Old Mining College had increased and Members noted that the number of statutory homeless had reduced but expenditure on bed & breakfast had increased.
- 4.3 Members asked if it would be an achievable target to decrease the number of customer visits in person for revenues and benefits service and it was reported that through the Channel Shift programme, it was planned to create other ways of contacting the Council.

- 4.4 Members then asked why income for the community transport service had increased even though usage was down and it was reported that this was the impact of the ring and ride service which had been delivered by Burntwood Town Council from September 2014. Although Burntwood residents had asked for the service, the actual take up was not that high and therefore not sustainable. It was noted that all options for community transport were currently being investigated.
- 4.5 Members asked how Service Level Agreements (SLA) worked, with specific reference to the Jigsaw project at Dimbles Lane. It was reported that the Council had been able to reduce the impact of the Fit for the Future Phase 1 by entering into a SLA with Fusion Credit Union to maintain the services provided at Jigsaw. It was noted that the SLA was due to end in March 2016 however there were no current concerns about the SLA and Fusion appears to be making a success of the arrangement.
- 4.6 It was noted that Disabled Facilities Grants were now delivered on the Council's behalf by Revival and this change had impacted on the delivery of grants made during 14/15. It was anticipated that the position would improve now that the new contract was embedded.
- 4.7 It was noted that Work Clubs would continue into the future, albeit without the previous financial support provided by the District Council. The ongoing delivery of the work clubs is being facilitated with assistance from Bromford Housing and Support Staffordshire.
- 4.8 The report and comments made were noted.

5. IMPACT OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY (HOMES DIRECT)

- 5.1 Members received a report on the impact and outcomes of the housing allocations policy that was currently being operated with the choice based letting system Homes Direct. The report also informed the Committee about new statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities called Right to Move and the implications for Lichfield District Council's allocation policy. The guidance aims to assist local authorities to take advantage of provisions in the Localism Act 2011 in particular new flexibilities to ensure that social homes go to people who need and deserve them and better reflect local circumstances.
- 5.2 It was noted that people leaving the Armed Forces were now a Band A priority.
- 5.3 Members asked if there was a locality based criteria which would help people to remain living in their local village / ward. It was reported that 96% of lettings were to local people who originated from or had a connection to Lichfield District but a more localised (eg. parish) connection was not taken into account within the current policy (although there is scope to introduce local lettings plans in specific areas or for new developments, subject to the need being evidenced.) Members were advised that need for a locality criteria could be investigated further although were this criteria to be applied, it could increase the length of time that people in the highest housing need would be required to wait for a property. It was noted that there had been a Member Task Group which had considered this issue and had decided to continue with an open register with the only local connection criteria being to Lichfield District. The matter had also been discussed with Bromford Housing and it was concluded that implementing a locality connection criteria could be difficult to manage and resource.

- 5.4 Councillor Cox joined the meeting as a non Committee Member and shared his concerns at there was no provision made to help residents remain in their local (village /ward) area and close to their support system including family or carers. Data for lettings in the Armitage with Handsacre area were provided and Members noted that there are currently 42 active applicants on the register who live in Armitage with Handsacre (3% of the total number registered). In 2014/15, 3 out of the 10 lettings of Armitage with Handsacre properties (30%) were to applicants who lived in the village and 9 out of the 10 were let to applicants that had a local connection to Lichfield District.
- 5.5 Members again noted that there was a shortage of housing for band A priority applicants alone without taking into account the other bandings however if there was evidence of a need to bring in a local connection priority, officers would investigate further.
- 5.6 The report and comments made were noted.

6. CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV)

- 6.1 The Committee received a report advising them that the current contract for monitoring the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in Lichfield and Burntwood was due to expire in October 2015. Given the public profile of CCTV, Members were invited to consider whether it would be advantageous to establish a short life Member task Group to assist the Cabinet Member to review current partnership arrangements and future procurement options.
- 6.2 Councillors Salter, Mrs Bland and Mrs Evans volunteered to form a task Group with Councillor Rayner as its Chairman. It was noted that a progress report would be brought back to the Committee in September.
- 6.3 It was agreed that a Member Task Group consisting of Councillors Rayner as Chairman and Salter, Mrs Bland and Mrs Evans be established to assist the Cabinet Member to review current partnership arrangements and future procurement options.

7. BURNTWOOD HEALTH CENTRES

- 7.1 The Committee received a verbal update on the health centres in Burntwood. It was noted that this had been a standing item to keep the profile of the subject high and the Committee agreed for it remain a standing item on the work programme for the same reasons.
- 7.2 It was reported that there had been a recent meeting between Local Plan officers, NHS England, NHS Estates and the Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss future District wide health provision needs in readiness of the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It was noted that the Council were still pushing for a new health centre in Burntwood.
- 7.3 The information received was noted.

Councillor Mrs Constable left the meeting at this point.

8. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

- 8.1 Members received a verbal report from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health on the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel. A background to the Panel was given and it was then reported that due to the elections, there had been a large gap between meetings. It was noted however that there would be a meeting on the 8th June 2015 to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) proposed appointment for Chief Constable.
- 8.2 It was then reported that there would be a reformatting of the Neighbourhood Watch OWL service with greater use of social media and a more interactive experience for users. It was noted that these proposals were out to consultation. Members welcomed this information and agreed that the service was very useful.
- 8.3 The information received was noted.

9. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

- 9.1 Members discussed the Work Programme and noted that a report on PREVENT would be considered at the September meeting as this is a new statutory duty for Local Authorities.
- 9.2 When asked, it was noted that the Forward Plan item for Acceptance of Better Care Fund was a procedural report to allow the Council to accept the funds from Staffordshire County Council as it would be over £50k and so requiring Cabinet approval.
- 9.3 The Work Programme and Forward Plan was noted and it was agreed that it be amended where necessary.

D. Leytham
Chairman
Community, Housing and Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee