

BUSINESS AND HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Attendance:

Councillors
Weir (Chairperson)

Bronk
Craske

Scott
Horrill

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Fern, Isaacs and Radcliffe

Other members in attendance:

Councillors Learney, Clear, Cutler and Tod

[Audio and video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies were noted as above.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30 November 2021 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Light and Mr Chafe on behalf of Tenants and Council Together (TACT) attended the meeting and made contributions regarding several agenda items. They advised that TACT welcomed the additional staff being employed in the Neighbourhood Services team and were keen to understand further details on this. Reference was made to a recent tenant satisfaction survey and when outcomes were to be shared with TACT. Regarding the Homelessness funding

report (BHP029), TACT welcomed the spending plan and hoped that funding would remain in place to enable these services to continue.

Officers advised that they had scheduled a meeting with TACT in March 2022 and that it was intended to expand further on these points at that time.

6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management) and the Corporate Head of Housing introduced the report, ref: BHP28 which set out proposals for the “Neighbourhood Services Engagement Programme” and was available on the council's [website here](#).

The committee was recommended to comment upon the proposed role and remit of two additional officers within the Neighbourhood Services team and was asked to highlight collaborative opportunities for community engagement across council teams to avoid duplication of services. The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised.

- expanding on the management of estates, for example, the responsibility for reporting and/or clearing graffiti.
- the better integration of students in neighbourhoods.
- further information regarding the meaning of “community opportunities”.
- the working patterns of the neighbourhood services team and the ability to operate outside of the “normal” working day.
- plans for the remainder of the budget.
- whether a pattern of visits could be established to enable residents to plan their attendance.
- methods of reporting back issues to other council departments
- the city centre patrols and their position within the organisation
- the scheduling of community engagement officers with wards/areas and ward councillors.
- the monitoring of logged reported defects to ensure resolution
- ensuring community engagement officers remain focussed on the role.
- focussing on digital inclusion whilst many residents prefer the more “traditional” methods of engagement
- Ensuring resilience and backup plans within key staffing roles.

These points were responded to by Councillor Learney, the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Manager and the Corporate Head of Housing accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposals within the report were welcomed,
2. That digital inclusion be considered as key activity of work
3. That officers consider the findings of the Winchester Vision report regarding the use of community centres
4. That officers consider all the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the item.

7. **WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL - LANDLORD LETTING POLICY**

Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management) and the Corporate Head of Housing introduced the report, ref: BHP27 which set out proposals for the Winchester City Council - Landlord Letting Policy which was available on the council's [website here](#). The committee was recommended to comment upon the review and proposed changes made to the policy.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised.

- the priority afforded to families in flats.
- the de-regulation of sheltered housing and issues for existing tenants
- the demand for 2-bed flats, the proposed criteria change and reasons for the reduction in interest.
- the age restrictions policy concerning older persons' housing (as per para 2.13).
- how an individual with previous behavioural issues could demonstrate positive change
- how to provide proof of identity if no passport or driving licence
- the operation of the local lettings policy for those working in the area
- the inclusion of councillors as part of the future review process

These points were responded to by Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management the Corporate Head of Housing, the Service Lead - Strategic Housing and the Tenancy Services Manager accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That officers consider all the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the item.
2. That the committee recommended a future all-member briefing be undertaken on the subject.

8. **THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT – SPENDING PLAN 2022/23**

The Service Lead - Strategic Housing introduced the report, ref: BHP029 which set out proposals for the Homelessness Prevention Grant – Spending Plan 2022/23 which was available on the council's [website here](#).

The committee was recommended to:

note that a report seeking formal approval of the Spending Plan would be considered by Cabinet in June 2022.

review and provide comment on the Homelessness Prevention Grant – Spending Plan 2022/23, and in particular consider and comment on:

- a) The overall approach supporting the Council's Homelessness Prevention service;
- b) The detailed proposals of the spending plan
- c) Proposals for managing the existing reserve

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised.

- engagement with hard to reach residents
- the process of undertaking the rough sleeper count
- the district domestic violence refuge
- the impact to services as a result of future Hampshire County Council spending reductions
- the flexibility of resources to deal with out of hours needs, particularly around winter holiday times
- the measurement and assessment of organisations such as Trinity Winchester and The Winchester Beacon
- measuring the success of the Mental Health Step Out programme

These points were responded to by Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management), the Corporate Head of Housing and the Service Lead - Strategic Housing accordingly and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee provided comments regarding the overall approach, the detailed proposals of the spending plan and the proposals for managing the existing reserve.
2. That officers consider all the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the item.
3. That the committee recommended a future all-member briefing be undertaken on the subject.

9. **SHOP APPY**

Councillor Tod (Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery) and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism introduced the report, ref: BHP26 which set out details of the Shop Appy platform and was available on the council's [website here](#). The committee was recommended to note the progress made on the delivery of this programme. The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions around the following matters were raised.

- the lessons learnt from the programme
- whether the results justified the use of the platform and whether the platform provided value for money for the council and businesses.
- measuring the performance of the Winchester Shop Appy platform to other districts and other platforms.
- the methodology of calculating future transactional value.
- attracting more residents to use the platform.

These points were responded to by Service Lead - Economy & Tourism and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. The committee welcomed the update and noted the progress made.
2. The committee asked that officers consider all the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the item.

10. **DIGITAL TASK FORCE**

Councillor Tod, Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism introduced the report, ref: BHP24 which set out the progress of the Digital Task Force which was available on the council's [website here](#).

The committee was recommended to:

1. Comment on and endorse the “A Digital Winchester District” Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) report, at Appendix 1
2. Note the key findings in the report which would be used to influence relevant policies and strategies across the council and beyond

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report, in summary, questions on the following matters were raised.

- overcoming local concerns with 5G masts
- demonstrating the differences between what service providers say residents would receive and what residents actually receive.
- the locations of the 6% who can't access superfast broadband
- whether residents in areas of poor connectivity were able to “tap into” a better connection through a local organisation's connection ie a school or business.

These points were responded to by Service Lead - Economy & Tourism and were noted by the cabinet members present at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the committee:

1. Endorsed the “A Digital Winchester District” ISG report, at Appendix 1
2. Wished to encourage further activity around digital inclusion especially relating to the homeless agenda and hard to reach groups.
3. Ask officers to consider all the committee's comments raised during the discussion of the item.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.10 pm

Chairperson