

RESIDENTIAL AND WELLBEING SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 July 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Pendleton (Chair), Mrs Cooper, Daniells, Mrs English, Hughes, Worne (Substitute for Needs), Yeates, Thurston (Substitute for Catterson) and Tilbrook (Substitute for Gregory)

Councillor English was also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

[Note: The following Councillors were absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters detailed in the Minutes indicated – Councillor Worne – Minute 164 to Minute 166 (Part) – and Councillor Thurston – Minute 169 to Minute 172 (Part)].

158. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members of the Committee, the Public and Press, other Members and Officers participating in the evening's second meeting of the Residential and Wellbeing Services Committee under the newly adopted Committee structure and the first in person since the easing of restrictions. The Chair noted that by the Council holding its meetings in the Civic Centre again it was setting an example and showing itself as ready to face the future.

159. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence had been received from Councillors Gregory, Catterson, Needs and Hamilton.

160. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

161. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 June 2021 were approved by the Committee.

162. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items.

163. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from members of the public who had submitted their questions in advance of the meeting in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The Chair confirmed that six questions had been submitted. These were read out by the Committee Manager and responded to by the Chair.

*(A schedule of the full questions asked and the responses provided can be found on the meeting's webpage at: [Agenda for Residential and Wellbeing Services Committee on Thursday 22 July 2021, 6.00 pm - Arun District Council](#))*

The Chair then drew Public Question Time to a close.

164. FLAXMEAN SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME

*[Councillor Worne left the meeting during this item and returned from the beginning of Minute 167.]*

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Neighbourhood Services Manager presented her report explaining that it sought guidance from Members on which options regarding the site's future it wanted to be researched in greater detail by Officers and brought back to Committee at a later date for a final decision to be made.

Members (and a non-Committee Ward Member given permission to speak by the Committee) then took part in a full debate on the item where a number of points were raised including:

- the impact on the residents of both Flaxmean House and the bungalows in the different options
- the time scales involved
- the overprovision of sheltered and older peoples' housing in the district
- Flaxmean House being the only example of sheltered housing with shared bathing facilities
- whether current residents would be given first choice to return after decanting for refurbishment
- what sheltered housing accommodation is needed (studios, one or two-bed flats etc.)
- the option of a hybrid approach of semi-permanent renovation before future disposal of the site
- the significant sums of money involved and the possibility of delivering less for less expenditure
- the sums of money mentioned in the report being guestimates due to variables yet to be determined
- concerns for the future of the residents in the bungalows on the site
- doing nothing not being an option
- whether vacant units were being re-tenanted
- fears residents in other sheltered housing accommodation may now have of being moved should they raise concerns in the future

- the Council's duty to provide decent accommodation
- the need that whatever must be done must be done sensitively – these are residents' home
- the Council needing to retrofit all accommodation (insulation etc.) in future so if the site was retained there would be a need to retrofit anyway
- the Council's duty to maximise its assets
- a lack of communication with residents of the site, residents of the area more widely and Ward Members

The Neighbourhood Services Manager and Director of Services provided Members with answers to all points raised during the debate. It was confirmed that 12 residents with shared bathing facilities had been consulted and the majority wanted to move out. Only 3 residents wanted to stay with shared facilities in a slightly remodelled way. The need was for one-bed flats, and without full refurbishment the studios would still be sub-standard and below the quality of Arun's other sheltered housing stock. This report only included indicative costs for illustrative purposes. A consultant would need a specific remit in order to properly estimate the costs involved which could be considerably more as the Council would want to bring up the standard of the accommodation in all aspects, and any spend would need to be approved by Full Council. If the site was sold, the profits would be ring-fenced in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Neighbourhood Services Manager and Director of Services stressed that they were keen on an inclusive approach and as such a wide range of stakeholders would be consulted.

Following a vote on each option, options 4 and 5 were determined to be the preferred options of the Committee. Councillor Pendleton proposed an amendment to the first recommendation in the report changing the options from '3 and 4' to '4 and 5'. This was seconded, and following a vote was declared CARRIED.

The substantive recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. Detailed proposals for Options 4 and 5 be developed by Officers;
2. An options appraisal for the remaining sheltered housing stock be commissioned.

165. INFORMATION & ADVICE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Community Wellbeing presented his report to the Committee. The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. Arun District Council (with West Sussex County Council and the other West Sussex District and Borough Councils) procure a Community Advice Services contract for the provision of an independent and comprehensive information and advice service for up to seven years from 1 April 2022: and
2. A funding contribution of £120,550 uplifted annually in line with the consumer price index calculated on the anniversary of the agreement, subject to satisfactory service reviews in line with Arun's Priorities and the availability of Arun District Council funding be provided.

166. ARUN WELLBEING PROGRAMME UPDATE

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Communities & Wellbeing Manager presented her report and highlighted particular successes with the weight management programme, stop smoking service and pre-diabetes programme. She noted changes to delivery necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the involvement of Arun community champions to better support work in marginalised communities.

The Chair commended the team for their enthusiasm and then Members took part in a full debate on the item where a number of points were raised including how and where some of the statistics mentioned in the report are determined, the South Downs National Park and social prescribing, social media campaigns to support the service, engagement with local schools and churches and the possibility of a programme involving narcotics.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. The report be noted; and
2. The Committee support targeted work in Arun's areas of significant health inequalities and need.

167. OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chair confirmed that there were a number of Outside Bodies that reported into this Committee and that it would be nice for the Committee to have reports from Members when they had attended a meeting. The Chair then proceeded to provide verbal updates on two Outside Bodies she had attended – the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) and the Sussex Police and Crime Panel. Written reports by the Chair were circulated to Members after the meeting.

168. WORK PROGRAMME

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Director of Services presented the Work Programme and asked Members to email suggestions for inclusion in future iterations to Committee Services. The Chair raised the need for a complete review of the Council's sheltered housing stock. The Director of Place confirmed that this would be dealt with by the second recommendation approved earlier in the meeting during the Flaxmean Sheltered Housing Scheme item [Minute 164].

The Committee then noted the Work Programme.

169. EXEMPT INFORMATION

*[Councillor Thurston left the meeting at the beginning of this item.]*

The Committee

RESOLVED

That under Section 100a (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the items.

170. COUNCIL TAX INSOLVENCY WRITE OFFS OVER £5,001

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Senior Revenues Assistant presented this report which sought Members' approval to write off outstanding council tax charges which were subject to insolvency action.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That Committee write off the outstanding council tax charges totalling £6,937.10 which are subject to insolvency action, which prevents the Council from pursuing the debtor for payment.

171. BUSINESS RATES INSOLVENCY WRITE OFFS OVER £10,001

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Senior Revenues Assistant presented this report which sought Members' approval to write off outstanding business rate charges.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That Committee write off outstanding business rates charges totalling £27,106.30 which are included in the insolvency action.

172. BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF - 2021/22

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Senior Revenues Assistant presented this report which sought Members' approval to award Discretionary Rate Relief for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 as per the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That Discretionary Rate Relief totalling £3893.16 for the applications for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 be awarded.

(The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm)