

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of the meeting held on Thursday, 1st December, 2022 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr K. Dibble (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A. Adeola  
Cllr Gaynor Austin  
Cllr L. Jeffers  
Cllr Mara Makunura  
Cllr Marina Munro  
Cllr Sophie Porter  
Cllr S. Trussler

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Prabesh KC.

## **19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October, 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

## **20. COUNCIL TAX WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

Executive Director, Ian Harrison, provided a presentation on the work of the Council Tax Support Group (CTSG).

The Committee were apprised of the current scheme, which was managed locally, to help residents pay their Council Tax bill. It was noted that 4,778 households were currently in receipt of support for 2022/23, this figure included 2,821 households of working age and 1,957 households of pension age. The Committee were advised that the elected Member Group, would recommend to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 8th December, 2022, that the scheme remain the same for 2023/24, whilst mirroring the welfare benefits uplift. It was also noted that, a recommendation for a full review of the scheme during 2023/24, would be made. The review would look specifically at simplifying the scheme, ensuring the most vulnerable were protected and to ensure the cost, to the Council, was sustainable. Other local authority schemes would be considered during the review process.

The Committee reviewed the collection rates for Council Tax over the past four years for residents within the support scheme and those that were not in receipt of support. Collection rate percentages for those within the scheme averaged between 93-94%, and, over all the collection rate achieved each year had been in the region of 96-97%. In relation to arrears, it was noted that the majority (1,726), in receipt of

support, owed between £0-£200, 369 owed between £200-£500 and 200 owed between £500-£3,000.

Other funds available to support residents through the Cost of Living crisis were noted, these included:

- Discretionary Housing Payments - a cash limited fund, provided by the Government, to support people who required additional help with housing costs, not covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. To date £90,203 had been awarded to 249 recipients.
- Exceptional Hardship Payments – a fund agreed by the CTSG to provide additional support to those in receipt of Council Tax Support (CTS) who were experiencing financial hardship, the fund currently sat at £5,495, following awards made to the value of £16,505. It was advised that a recommendation would be made to the Cabinet, at its meeting on 8th December, 2022, that an additional £20,000 be added to the fund for 2022/23 from the earmarked reserve for Council Tax Hardship.
- Council Tax Energy Rebates – a Government package to help households with rising energy bills, aimed at houses in the Council Tax Band A-D. It was noted that 32,677 households in the Borough had received £150. In addition, 2,625 payments had been made from a locally managed, Discretionary Energy Rebate fund, totalling £134,550.
- Household Support Fund – a fund provided by Hampshire County Council (HCC) with specific instructions on who should receive support and in what form. Support had been provided to those in receipt of CTS and Pension Credit in the form of food vouchers, totalling £300,000 and an additional £42,000 had been provided for those in housing crisis, such as rent arrears and threat of eviction. Further funding was expected in late December, 2022, for a similar exercise.

In addition to the recommendations already set out above, it was noted that the CTSG would also recommend to the Cabinet, that the Council continue to work with partners in the locality to ensure sustainable solutions existed to assist with cost of living measures.

The Committee discussed the presentation and a request was made to share information on CTS arrears in the different bands (A-D).

The Chairman thanked Mr Harrison for his presentation.

## **21. SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN - UPDATE**

The Committee welcomed Emma Lamb, Community and Partnerships Manager, who was in attendance to provide an update on the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan.

It was noted that the Strategy and Action Plan was partner led, and helped to tackle inequalities and deprivation across the Borough. The Committee noted the four priorities, Economic Hardship, Young People, Physical and Mental Health and Connecting Communities. It was advised that a refresh of the strategy would be undertaken in January 2023 to take account of the impacts of the cost of living crisis.

The Committee reviewed some of the funding streams, the majority of which were from external sources. It was noted that support from the Council's earmarked reserve had totalled £71,000 to date. It was advised that the aim had been for projects identified, to be data led and community driven and financially independent from the Council.

The geographical location of the various different schemes within the Supporting Communities Strategy were shared with the Committee. In relation to support concerning cost of living, it was noted that schemes changed frequently and particular attention had been given to ensure information had been kept up to date.

An overview of some of the schemes had been provided, these included;

- Community Grub Hub – a wrap-around service which offered, not only a food bank facility, but also support in a range of areas including mental health provisions and energy and business support. The Grub Hub had been in operation for almost a year and had gained full independence, with support from Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS), in October 2022. Some key challenges for 2023 had been identified, these included stock levels of certain items, cost of living impacts, opening hours to target working households and development of a fundraising strategy to ensure financial stability going forward.
- PEBL (Prospect Estate Big Local) – a free health and happiness drop in had been ran through the PEBL scheme. It was noted that 150 health checks had been completed with the Farnborough Primary Care Network (PCN), balance, glide and ride classes had been undertaken with Year R and one children and physical activities and wellbeing walks had been held. Men's health sessions and a Men's Shed had also been established.
- Repair Café – this externally funded facility would be opening on 17th December, 2022 at the West End Centre, Aldershot. The independent organisation had been enabled by the Council with the support of RVS.
- Youth Engagement and Aspirations – The Committee noted that a Forum had been created to engage with young people, a number of students had visited Gulfstream for an aspirational visit, support had been provided at career events at the local secondary schools and a Climate Change competition had been held which had engaged with over 60 students and local company Fluor.

The Committee noted the work on support to residents through the cost of living crisis and the challenges it presented. Help and support information had been collated on one page on the Council's website and other methods of sharing

information were being considered, such as through the Arena magazine and A-Z cards. Partnership work continued with the doctors surgeries, police and other agencies to ensure people in need could be signposted to relevant help. A link to the web page could be found [here](#).

The Committee review what had worked well and the challenges ahead, it was noted that the partnership working had been key to the success of the strategy to date, and the Council would continue to work with its partners to enable projects and access to funding. Challenges included, digital inclusion, funding reductions and health inequalities.

Moving forward, it was noted that a refresh of the strategy would be undertaken to review priorities and data and target the approach accordingly. Work with health partners would increase to help tackle inequalities and an increase in reliance on external funding would be necessary.

The Committee discussed the presentation and expressed concern over the numbers of people requiring support in the Borough. A request was made to provide information, by ward, of the support available and to ensure that Members were kept up to date on what support was available Borough wide.

The Chairman thanked Ms Lamb for her presentation.

## 22. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee **NOTED** the current Work Plan.

A number of issues were raised for consideration by the Committee, these included:

- Fibre internet infrastructure (Toob)
- Highways – condition of the roads across the Borough, in particular potholes
- Management of mould and damp – monitoring the condition of all housing stock across the Borough
- Air pollution
- Partners involved with the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

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# POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday, 31st January, 2023 at the Titchbourne Suite, Princes Hall, Aldershot at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members**

Cllr Marina Munro (Chairman)  
Cllr Jessica Auton (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Jib Belbase  
Cllr C.W. Card  
Cllr M.S. Choudhary  
Cllr Jules Crossley  
Cllr Michael Hope  
Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo  
Cllr M.J. Roberts  
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr P.I.C. Crerar.

Cllr P.J. Cullum attended as Standing Deputy.

## **21. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November, 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

## **22. FRIMLEY INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM**

The Board welcomed Emma Boswell, Director of Partnerships, Engagement and Place, and Martha Earley, Programme Director for Partnerships and Communities, from the Frimley Health and Care, Integrated Care System. Also in attendance were, Cllr Sue Carter, Democracy, Strategy and Partnerships Portfolio Holder, Karen Edwards, Executive Director and, Emma Lamb, Community and Partnerships Manager.

The Board received a presentation, which set out the draft five-ten year Creating Healthier Communities Strategy. It was noted that the Integrated Care System (ICS) had utilised the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) Strategy, agreed in 2019, as a starting point for the refresh.

The ICS was described as a partnership of key partners, with representatives from the health and care system, local authorities, the voluntary sector and Frimley Park, amongst others. The ICS covered the following Places; Slough, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell, Surrey Heath and North East Hampshire and Farnham. It was advised that there were four key constructs to the ICS, as set out below:

- Frimley Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) – a platform to bring together over 90 partners to work on the long term strategy
- Frimley Integrated Card Board (ICB) – A replacement for the CCG, with a broader remit for health and care. It was noted that Executive Director, Karen Edwards, sat on the Board.
- Frimley Provider Collaboratives – With only one acute provider in the Place, the Collaboratives considered specific pathways i.e. pain management and mental health
- Place Based Partnerships – a focus on the geographical partnerships within the Place

It was noted that the workings of the ICS were set in law, with partners working together to make a difference. The programme of work had been influenced by politics, data and knowledge. In September 2022 an Assembly Meeting, had been held, at which six ambitions had been set, as set out below:

- Starting Well – to allow all children to get the best possible start in life
- Focus on Well Being – To allow all people to have the opportunity to live healthier lives, no matter where in the system they resided
- Community Deals – To agree with residents, families and carers how to work together to create healthier communities
- Our People – to be known as a great place to work, live and to make a positive difference
- Leadership and Culture for Improvement – to work together to build collaboration at every level across the system
- Outstanding use of Resources – to offer the best possible care and support where it is most needed, in the most affordable way

The Board discussed the Strategy refresh and raised a number of comments:

- Ensure there was a voice from the business community and young people
- Ensure a diverse partnership to represent all communities within the place
- Ensure that recruitment and promotion was inclusive and addressed equal rights

The Board were apprised of data held for the North East Hants and Farnham (NEHF) Place. It was noted that the three main health conditions in the Place were depression, hypertension and obesity. A request was made for some Rushmoor specific data to be circulated to the Board.

Ms Earley, advised on the joint delivery of three specific priorities during 2022/23 to galvanise existing, and to explore new, partnerships. The three priorities were hypertension, physical activity and mental health. The priorities proposed for 2023/24 were, healthy weight (a focus on tackling food insecurity for healthy, good nutrition, tackling obesity and preventing diabetes), stop smoking (a focus on tackling food insecurity for healthy, good nutrition, tackling obesity and preventing diabetes), and the cost of living crisis (a focus on tackling fuel and food insecurity).

The Board discussed the Place and raised a number of comments, these included:

- Ensure data was collected from a variety of sources, including warm hubs and foodbanks
- Ensure focus on early intervention
- Understanding access challenges across different communities
- Learning from what worked during the pandemic
- Ensure all services can be reached by all – consider digital poverty
- Drug prevention

In relation to the work being carried out by the Council, under the Supporting Communities Strategy and Action Plan, the ICS Creating Healthier Communities Strategy acted as an umbrella for the work. The team had been strengthening links with health partners, and continued to work together to achieve its goals.

The Board were asked to consider the Strategy and provide their thoughts. In summary, it was noted that;

- Early intervention was key
- Ensure the food provided at foodbanks was nutritional and healthy
- Consideration be given to the size of school lunches – are they enough to sustain a child?
- Consider group health checks for the BAME communities
- Consideration be given to issues relating to HIV and the Menopause
- Consideration be given to reinstating Well Man and Well Women clinics
- Focus on community work
- Consideration be given to a service that is right for young people to engage
- Statistic/trends/funding detail to be shared with Members

It was advised that Mrs Edwards would share a copy of the feedback with Members before sending to the ICS.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions.

## 23. **WORK PLAN**

The Board noted the current Work Plan.

It was noted that the focus of the Board meeting on 15th March, 2023, would be the Council Plan.

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

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