

# ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 26th January, 2016 at Princes Hall, Aldershot at 7.00 p.m.

## **Voting Members:**

Cr. D.E. Clifford (Chairman)  
Cr. Sophia Choudhary (Vice Chairman)

Cr. M.S. Choudhary  
Cr. Sue Dibble  
Cr. D.S. Gladstone

Cr. G.B. Lyon

Cr. J.J. Preece  
Cr. L.A. Taylor  
Cr. D.M. Welch

## 270. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th November, 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 271. **THE COUNCIL'S CONSERVATION TEAM –**

The Panel received a presentation from Ms. Louise Piper, Planning Policy and Conservation Manager, and Dr. Paul Howe, Biodiversity Officer.

Ms. Piper gave an outline of the work of the Planning Policy and Conservation Team. In respect of planning policy, Ms. Piper gave details of the Team's work on the following areas:

- the Development Plan for Rushmoor
  - Core Strategy
  - New Rushmoor Local Plan
- the wide scope of planning issues
  - housing: employment; transport; design; Farnborough Airport; and, the town centres
  - conservation: heritage assets, conservation areas
  - natural environment: biodiversity; countryside; green infrastructure, Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area; water and flooding
- Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g. Buildings of Local Importance)

Ms. Piper advised Members of the work of the team in respect of conservation, trees and biodiversity. It was noted that, in 2011, a shared service had been implemented with Hart District Council. Rushmoor's officers remained employed full-time, but some salary costs had been recouped through time spent working at Hart. The shared service had impacted on the capacity of the Conservation, Trees and Biodiversity Officers at Rushmoor, however, the shared service had enabled Rushmoor to retain officer expertise and at less cost than previously and for less than employing consultants.

In respect of conservation of the built environment, Ms. Piper advised the Panel that work was carried out providing advice on planning applications and also on listings, amendments and advice on planning applications in respect of nationally and locally listed buildings and heritage assets. Advice was also given on pre-application enquiries (e.g. Cambridge Military Hospital and Louise Margaret Hospital).

Ms. Piper also gave an outline of arboricultural issues (Tree Preservation Orders, dealing with applications for tree works and providing advice and guidance at pre-application stage). Work in connection with biodiversity issues included dealing with sites of nature conservation value at local level (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and Local Nature Reserves), national level (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and international level (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area – advice on mitigation/Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace). Wherever possible, a partnership approach was adopted to protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Dr. Paul Howe, the Council's Biodiversity Officer, then gave a presentation on the Rushmoor Biodiversity Action Plan (B.A.P.) The Panel was advised that the B.A.P. 2009 – 2014 had been adopted in 2009 and had included an audit of biodiversity in the Borough and set out a series of actions. It provided a framework to deliver biodiversity enhancement and protection across Rushmoor. The actions had been delivered through partnership work, planning, volunteer groups and other Council departments. It was noted that the B.A.P. had four main delivery areas on which progress had been made over the five year Action Plan period:

- protect and conserve the biodiversity resource
- create new areas for wildlife
- education and awareness (external and internal)
- partnership work

Dr. Howe gave details of examples of projects that had been carried out by partners, including the Farnborough Community Centre pond, a Community Matters Partnership project, and Brickfields path creation.

The draft Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-21 was currently the subject of a consultation exercise, the closing date for which was 1st February, 2016. The document had built on the preceding Plan and had been updated in a few key areas to take account of: the National Planning Policy Framework Environment White Paper; actions designed to reflect current resource for

delivery; continued commitment to partnership working; focus on enhancement on Council sites; and, the importance of communication. Dr. Howe asked for any comments on the draft Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-21 to be sent to him for consideration for inclusion in the final document.

Ms. Piper and Dr. Howe then answered Members' questions in respect of the recording of the numbers and types of species in the Borough, the involvement of ward councillors, local groups and civic society groups, local businesses and neighbourhood groups in projects requiring volunteers, the use of the Arena magazine to publicise the need for support. It was also suggested that consideration could be given to the creation of a joint database of potential conservation projects.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked Ms. Piper and Dr. Howe for their informative presentations.

The Panel **NOTED** the updates on the work of the Planning Policy and Conservation Team.

## 272. **CONSERVATION BODIES – UPDATES –**

### (1) **Rowhill Nature Reserve Society –**

The Panel received a presentation from Mr. Roy Champion, Chairman of the Rowhill Nature Reserve Society. During the presentation, Mr. Champion advised Members that Rowhill Nature Reserve covered 55 acres and was now returning, in part at least, back into the working wood it had once been. Mr. Champion also made reference to the Society's work in monitoring species at the Nature Reserve and the upgrading of paths, including an accessible trail.

Mr. Champion answered Members' questions on fence making, volunteering by corporate groups and working with children.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked Mr. Champion for the Society's on-going and valuable work for the community. The Chairman thanked Mr. Champion for his presentation and extended an invitation to attend a future meeting for a further update on the Society's work.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation.

### (2) **Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership –**

The Panel received a presentation from Mr. Steve Bailey, Manager of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership. During the presentation, Mr. Bailey advised Members of the role played by the Partnership in co-ordinating projects and actions of all involved parties and stakeholders in the Blackwater Valley to increase sustainable usage of the Blackwater Valley, especially for informal outdoor recreation, and to ensure wildlife and landscape protection. Mr. Bailey spoke about the work of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust, a charity which had been set up ten years ago and supported the work of the

Partnership. Mr. Bailey advised Members of the sites managed within Rushmoor and gave examples of works carried out in Southwood Woodland and Wellesley Woodlands. Mr. Bailey also gave details of wider Blackwater Valley issues, including the Southwood Woodland extension, Farnham Quarry, North Camp recycling and Loddon Catchment Partnership.

Mr. Bailey answered Members' questions on engaging with local communities and Farnham Quarry.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked Mr. Bailey for the Partnership's excellent work in the community. The Chairman thanked Mr. Bailey for his informative presentation and extended an invitation to attend a future meeting for a further update on the Partnership's work.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation.

**(3) Basingstoke Canal Authority –**

The Panel received a presentation from Ms. Fiona Shipp, Manager of the Basingstoke Canal Authority. During the presentation, Ms. Shipp advised Members that the Basingstoke Canal was 32 miles long and was jointly owned by Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council. The Basingstoke Canal Authority had been established to manage the Canal on behalf of the two County Councils. During the presentation, Ms. Shipp advised Members of current work along the Canal: a tree-thinning project; the Ash Aqueduct inspection; a telemetry project to provide constant digital information on water levels; and, work to replace the cills at Ash Lock.

Ms. Shipp also spoke about wildlife issues, including the need for good management of vegetation to encourage a wide range of wildlife and the problems caused by crayfish. Volunteers were very important to the work of the Canal Authority and Ms. Shipp referred to examples of work carried out by volunteers. She was pleased to report that the number of volunteers had increased. In respect of future work, Ms. Shipp advised that refurbishment work would soon commence on the towpath between Ash Lock and Eelmoor Bridge and that work would be undertaken to turn Artillery Weir into a sluice which would help to manage water levels.

Ms. Shipp answered Members' questions on cyclists using the towpaths, the mooring of boats, dredging and drainage issues.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked Ms. Shipp for the Canal Authority's important and much needed work. The Chairman thanked Ms. Shipp for her informative presentation and extended an invitation to attend a future meeting for a further update on the Canal Authority's work.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation.

(4) **Friends of Brickfields Country Park –**

The Panel noted that, unfortunately, Mr. Mike Hatch, Chairman of Friends of Brickfields Country Park, who was to have given a presentation on the work of the group, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Mr. Hatch would be invited to attend a future meeting to provide an update.

(5) **Cove Brook Greenway Group –**

The Panel received a presentation from Ms. Hilda Anscombe, Chairman of the Cove Brook Greenway Group. Ms. Anscombe advised the Panel that the Cove Brook Greenway Group was an environmental group of local residents in Farnborough which looked after Cove Brook. It was noted that Cove Brook drained off the hills above Farnborough Airport and ran for 3.5 kilometres through Southwood Meadows and Cove to join the River Blackwater on Hawley Meadows. The Group held conservation working parties, litter picks and open meetings and worked with Rushmoor Borough Council, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, the Environment Agency and other parties.

During discussion following the presentation, it was suggested that Rushmoor could host an event to recruit volunteers for conservation groups.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked Ms. Anscombe for the Group's excellent work in the community. The Chairman thanked Ms. Anscombe for her presentation and extended an invitation to attend a future meeting for a further update on the Group's work.

The Panel **NOTED** the presentation.

273. **WORK PROGRAMME –**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme.

The Meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

D.E. CLIFFORD  
CHAIRMAN

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# LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 1st February, 2016 at the Council Offices,  
Farnborough at 7.00 p.m.

## **Voting Members**

a Cr. Liz Corps (Chairman)  
Cr. Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. T.D. Bridgeman  
a Cr. P.I.C. Crerar  
a Cr. K. Dibble

Cr. J.H. Marsh

Cr. A.R. Newell  
Cr. M. Staplehurst  
Cr. B.A. Thomas

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Crs. Liz Corps,  
P.I.C. Crerar and K. Dibble.

## **274. MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th November, 2015 were agreed  
as a correct record.

## **275. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICES -**

The Panel welcomed Ms. Sara Teers, Head of Libraries and  
Registration Services at Hampshire County Council (HCC), who attended the  
meeting to update the Panel on the HCC Library Strategy Consultation,  
which had ended on the 16th January, 2016. The Hampshire Library and  
Information Services consisted of a range of library facilities in the County;  
these included discovery centres, mobile libraries, community libraries,  
school libraries and an online/virtual library service. In 2015, the Service had  
a turnover of £14 million, received 6 million visits and issued 6.9 million  
books/items. It employed 525 staff (plus 150 additional members of staff at  
the registration service) and had over 1,000 volunteers.

Expenditure within the Service was noted and the Panel was advised  
that, to date, the Service had saved £5 million since 2009. However, a  
further, estimated, £1.7 million needed to be saved by 2020.

The Panel was made aware of the strategic aims to 2020 under the  
umbrella “delivering modern, comprehensive and efficient library services”.  
The aims were:

- Aim 1 – Support and encourage reading and literacy
- Aim 2 – Improve digital services and inclusion
- Aim 3 – Contribute to health and wellbeing of local communities

- Aim 4 – Provide access to trusted sources of information
- Aim 5 – Facilitate and provide learning

To assist in achieving these aims the Service had carried out a comprehensive needs assessment, which had looked at usage costs, location, catchment size, demographics, levels of deprivation and educational attainment. The outcome from the assessment helped determine community need and the importance of each library.

The Panel reviewed costings for the four main types of service provided: static, community, mobile and home. It was noted that the mobile library service cost in the region of £161 per active member (based on book issues) compared to £58 and £25 for static and community services, respectively. The home service, where books were delivered to individuals' homes, cost £120 per active user.

It was noted that a new operating model was being proposed to enable service modernisation and efficiencies. The model would categorise the existing range of libraries by size, services offered, opening hours and current performance. Through the creation of this new operating model not only would the core library offer of book lending, baby bounce and rhyme, public IT, inter library loans etc. be preserved, but the opportunity to continue to enhance the Service would be enabled.

The new operating model would mean that existing libraries would be categorised by tier. The proposed four tiers were:

- Tier 1 – the largest libraries, including discovery centres, it was noted that the offer in the bigger libraries would be improved to bring them more in line with discovery centres. Farnborough had been categorised as a tier one library
- Tier 2 – mid-sized libraries, Aldershot had been categorised in this tier but had potential to move up to tier one if an increase in footfall could be achieved
- Tier 3 – small/neighbourhood libraries, some with potential to move up a tier e.g. Hythe, Alton and Romsey or alternatively the lower performing ones could be closed or moved to tier four if the need and resource was available
- Tier 4 – community libraries run by volunteers

The Panel noted the proposed building rationalisation and improvement programme, part of which would consider selling property, re-locating libraries currently in unsuitable locations and releasing space to partners to reduce operating cost and increase footfall. It was advised that flexible use of the book fund could release £500,000 per annum over the next four years to be used for investment on the infrastructure of the service. It was then proposed that this money would then be reduced from the budget

as of 2020 on a permanent basis. In addition, it was advised that by the end of June, 2016 it was proposed that the high cost Mobile Library Service would be replaced with modern alternatives. If supported, this service could be replaced with the existing home library service.

It was explained that enhancements were proposed to the IT and digital systems. The management system would be upgraded, self-service provisions would be rolled out at suitable locations, public IT would be improved through faster broadband, online payment services investigated and implemented and Maker Spacers would be set up in two Tier 1 libraries. Maker Spacers offered space to assist business start-up and the availability of new technologies, i.e. 3D printing.

In summary, the consultation had received in excess of 5,750 responses, support had been strong towards sharing library buildings with partners, the removal of poorly used collections, the tier structure and investing £500,000 per annum over four years from the book fund. However, feedback had identified that moving specialist collections to other providers was not something users agreed with, neither was the suggestion to reduce the Book Fund by £500,000 per annum after 2020.

In general the closure of the mobile home service had been supported, although actual users of the services were against the proposal. With regard to alternatives to the Mobile Library Service, the strongest support from respondents was the Home Library Service followed by the new community library exchange service.

It was noted that Hampshire County Council's Executive Members would make a decision on the findings of the consultation in April, 2016 and strategy implementation would start in the summer of 2016.

The Panel discussed the presentation and a query was made on the timeline for the Farnborough Discovery Centre; it was advised that this would be dependent on opportunity and would most likely be part of the Farnborough Masterplan developments within the civic quarter.

A request was made for data on usage of the mobile library service by Borough, this information would be forwarded to the Head of Community and Environmental Services and circulated to the Panel.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Teers for her presentation.

## 276. **LIDO REVIEW UPDATE –**

The Head of Community and Environmental Services, Mr. Peter Amies, provided an update on the ongoing work of the Lido Task and Finish Group in relation to the Lido Review. It was noted that a meeting of the Task and Finish Group had been held in mid-January, 2016 at which there had been representatives from the Aldershot Civic Society and Friends of Aldershot Lido (FOAL) in attendance.



It was advised that at the meeting Members had considered a vision for the Lido, and the Panel noted the importance of future proofing the facility by working together. It was also recognised that the size and depth of the pool may need to be rationalised to enable heating a body of water and the heritage of the facility should be preserved in any proposed changes.

It was noted that all the Council owned leisure facilities were due for retendering in 2019, these included the Farnborough Leisure Centre, Aldershot Pools, Aldershot Lido, Alpine Snowsports and Southwood Golf Course. It was imperative that the best deal was secured for the Council, which could include either bringing all the facilities together under one contract or there may be interest in some facilities, such as the Ski Centre and Golf Course, from more specialist contractors. The retendering would provide an opportunity to work with a wide range of leisure providers on options to make the facilities more attractive and financially viable.

Consideration was also being given to soft market testing for the Aldershot Indoor Pools and Lido site, to identify what the wider market place believed would provide the most attractive and financially sustainable option. The findings from this could be used to help shape the retendering process.

The Panel noted that due to the poor summer in 2015, the annual cost of the Lido had increased by £15,000 in accordance with the profit share deal with Places for People (PfP). In addition, the season ticket scheme had not worked as well as hoped, and it was felt that poor weather throughout the season may also have had an impact on sales. However, the reduced entry price from 3.30 p.m had seen a significant increase in take up.

It was advised that representatives from FOAL, PfP and the Council would meet prior to the next Task and Finish Group meeting to discuss promotional ideas for the 2016 season, which would include use of social media.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Amies for his presentation.

## **277. LEISURE AND YOUTH BUDGET PORTFOLIO -**

The Head of Financial Services and Chief Finance Officer (Ms Amanda Fahey) attended the meeting to review the revenue budget portfolio relating to the Panel. The Panel went through the revenue budget by item and identified some potential areas for scrutiny, areas included:

- Community Leisure – play schemes and support to Rushmoor Healthy Living and the Healthy Adult programme
- Tourism – Grants to the Military Museum and Basingstoke Canal
- Public Hall and Community Centres – provision of facilities for educational , recreational, arts and social opportunities

- Special Events – support to and promotion of community event
- Community Schools – provision of community schools (Connaught)
- Town Twinning – encourage and facilitate educational, cultural and leisure links between Rushmoor and the twin towns
- Allotments – provision of allotment gardens

The Panel noted that the Capital Budget could be considered as a standalone item at a future meeting and would be discussed further alongside the areas identified at the next mid-cycle meeting.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Fahey for her attendance at the meeting.

278. **WORK PROGRAMME –**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme and was advised that the next meeting would be held at the West End Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

LIZ CORPS  
CHAIRMAN

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# COMMUNITY POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 4th February, 2016 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

## **Voting Members:**

Cr. M.D. Smith (Chairman)  
Cr. M.S. Choudhary (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. Sophia Choudhary	Cr. Jennifer Evans	Cr. S.J. Masterson
Cr. R. Cooper		Cr. M.J. Roberts
a Cr. Liz Corps		Cr. P.F. Rust

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Cr. Liz Corps.

## **279. MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th November, 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## **280. FIRST WESSEX – UPDATE –**

The Panel welcomed Ms. Carol Williams, Operations Director, to the Meeting and was introduced to Mr. Mark Batchelor, Property Services Director.

The Panel was reminded that during First Wessex's previous update, it had discussed welfare benefit changes, the impact that would have had on residents and predictions for the following year. It was acknowledged that First Wessex had not foreseen the introduction of 1% rent reductions and the implications of that over four years. Members heard that this would result in a £16million reduction in income over the four-year period and First Wessex would need to make £10million in savings to manage the loss. Ms. Williams advised the Panel that First Wessex aimed to continue to strengthen the association as a whole although it had been likely that some services provided to residents would be affected.

Ms. Williams discussed a number of ways in which the association aimed to reduce its costs and the Panel heard that it was necessary to close and sell its office building in Eastleigh. Future staffing reductions had also been considered and Ms. Williams explained that the association would try to do this through voluntary arrangements and natural turnover, where possible.

Another way First Wessex aimed to make savings was by extending the life span of their kitchens, bathrooms and boilers by up to three years. However, they had planned to work alongside their tradesmen to ensure that

the kitchens, bathrooms and boilers lasted those extra years and residents continued to receive a good service.

It was noted that the First Wessex offices based in Rushmoor had now closed their reception to the public, excluding those who had arranged prior appointments. It was heard that during the transition period, reception staff had been available to assist the public in using their digital services as they had not wanted their customers to be turned away. Ms. Williams explained how this change would help save money; a visit to the association had previously cost the association £12 per transaction, whereas a digital transaction only cost 5p each.

The Panel was advised that First Wessex had discussed its development programme and believed that the number of properties developed per year would have dropped from 6/700 to 400 units per annum. However, Members were reassured that the association had not wanted to end the development programme and had been considering ways to continue the programme on a smaller scale.

Ms. Williams updated the Panel on its Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) 'governance' rating, which had improved and was now G1. It was noted that the HCA had been pleased with progress and considered First Wessex as being more fit for purpose.

Ms. Williams and Mr. Batchelor answered questions from Members and the Chairman thanked them for their update.

The Panel **NOTED** the update.

## 281. **NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL STRATEGY – UPDATE –**

The Panel welcomed Ms. Debbie Whitcombe, Neighbourhood Development Officer, who had been invited to the meeting to provide Members with an update on the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Members had been provided with a brief background of the strategy which had recognised three areas, Cherrywood, North Town and Aldershot Park as needing significant improvements to address deprivation and reduce inequalities. It was heard that a priority had been set for the Borough, which aimed to ensure that none of the Rushmoor wards were placed in the bottom 20% of the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

It was noted that Cherrywood had been a priority area and that the closure of the Mayfield Job Club had caused concern, the partnership had responded to this and raised £4,000 to establish an Internet and Skills Café. Work carried out within the Café had helped some residents find employment. The PEBL (Prospect Estate Big Local) Partnership helped fund the Skills Café and had also arranged a family fun day which was attended by over 200 people.

The Panel noted that, since 2014, 73 people had completed the Skilled Up programme, of which 24 had found employment, 34 had moved onto

further education, 28 had passed the Construction Skills Certification Scheme tests and 30 had gained a Level One Health and Safety in a Construction Environment Certificate. Members were advised that this programme helped break cycles of inactivity and motivate those participating. Skilled Up projects had also been held in Aldershot.

A reduction in anti-social behaviour had been a key target for Cherrywood and it was noted that incidents had reduced by 32%. This had been achieved through an increased police presence in the area. Students from Grange Infant School had taken part in four Junior Warden sessions, where the children had had the opportunity to report issues and find out if those issues had been resolved.

Ms. Whitcombe informed the Panel that some work had been linked to the Health and Wellbeing Partnership work programme. Local sessions had been arranged, including drug and alcohol awareness sessions. Also, 'swim for £1' and street games basketball had encouraged a large number of children to partake in sporting activities. Other community facilities included the Friday Night Youth Club and Creating Futures, increased use of the Prospect Centre, a free bus pass scheme, Cove Brook cycle way and a completed consultation for Moor Road.

The Panel heard that while Cherrywood had been a priority area, similar projects had been carried out in Aldershot Park. Staff had been visiting the area one day per week and had arranged regular meetings in the community. An Active Families programme had also been set up that had provided a range of free sporting activities for local residents.

In September, 2015, the Index of Multiple Deprivation data was released and Members noted that it had been difficult to compare with 2010 as some indicators had changed. The data indicated that Rushmoor had only two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the bottom 20% of areas of deprivation in England, whereas previously, three LSOAs had been in the bottom 20%.

It was advised that while some issues had been specific to a small number of wards within the Borough, Borough-wide issues had also been identified, for example, income deprivation affecting children and older people.

To conclude, Ms. Whitcombe informed the Panel that a detailed review of the IMD data and IMD workshops had been planned. There had also been plans to respond to issues in priority neighbourhoods and continue delivery of the live actions in the rolling plan.

The Panel **NOTED** the update.

## 282. **HOUSING OPTIONS – UPDATE –**

Ms. Suzannah Hellicar, Housing Options Manager, was welcomed to the meeting. Members had received Report No. EHH 1603 'Housing Options Update 2015/16' which provided an update on the work and the performance of the Housing Options Team for the period of April – December 2015 and

focused on the challenges faced by the team as a result of the economic climate, there had been specific concern around rough sleepers, complex clients and advice and prevention work.

It was noted that the team comprised of 8.5 officers:

- Housing Options Manager
- Senior Housing Officer
- x 5 Permanent Housing Officer and x 1 Temporary Housing Officer
- 0.5 Housing Allocation Officer

The Panel was then reminded of the purpose of the Housing Options Team: 'to help people to solve their housing problem and to provide a suitable home to those in housing need'. The aim of the team was to prevent homelessness by working with customers to keep them in their existing homes. When this had not been possible, the team was able to explore a number of options:

- Renting privately
- Temporary accommodation
- Shared ownership schemes
- Social rented housing

It was heard that many residents had continued to seek advice in person as 2,338 different households had visited the reception desk to contact the team this year, in comparison to 2,437 last year.

Some challenges faced by the team had been thought to continue over the following years. These had included a limited supply of suitable accommodation for permanent housing, including those who require adapted properties, the complexity of vulnerable individuals' needs and those individuals that had fallen between services and cuts to Hampshire County Council's Supporting People budgets and the rationalisation of services. It was also noted that there had been an increase in the number of rough sleepers, particularly in Aldershot Town Centre.

The reduction in suitable accommodation had resulted in housing officers spending more time carrying out robust assessments and finding private rented accommodation. This meant that there had been less time spent on preventing homelessness in the area and households had spent longer in temporary accommodation or had become homeless.

Members noted that cuts to local services, including Hampshire County Council's Supporting People budgets, had left some vulnerable individuals without support. Those that had complex needs, such as, addictions, poor social skills or an offending history had been more difficult to find suitable accommodation, resulting in some being placed in unsuitable accommodation, which had often led to tenancies failing. The Panel was informed that the team had spent a lot of time supporting vulnerable people with complex needs.

However, this had been challenging as the team had not always had the right resources to meet those needs.

At a previous Panel meeting, Members had been updated on the homelessness in Aldershot Town Centre's High Street car park. Members heard that, in conjunction with the Council's Legal Team, the Community Safety Team and The Police, a proactive and legal centred approach had been taken to stop the anti-social behaviour associated with rough sleeping. For example, not drinking, not urinating in public, not entering certain areas of Aldershot and causing trouble. It was noted that other authorities, such as Surrey Heath and Basingstoke, had seen a significant increase in the number of rough sleepers.

A multi-agency pop up 'hub' had taken place last August in the Princes Hall, Aldershot, to address rough sleeping issues. It was noted that the purpose of this project had been to bring agencies together and look at different approaches used to deal with people for whom traditional models of service delivery had not worked. The 'hub' was supported by twelve services and delivered front facing services to the street homeless people from one location. The Panel heard that 24 rough sleepers / sofa surfers had accessed the 'hub' and eight had been accommodated as a result of the 'hub' in bed and breakfast accommodation (B&B). Members heard that of the eight placements, all but two had been lost.

While the 'hub' had been successful, it was noted that it had not resolved street homelessness in the Borough. The Panel was informed that there had been between twelve and fifteen entrenched rough sleepers and it had been difficult to resolve the needs of that client group. It was thought that a multi-agency approach would be needed to succeed.

The Panel noted that the number of people in the housing allocation pool had been consistent with the previous year and heard that the highest demand had been for one-bedroom accommodation.

Ms. Hellicar informed the Panel that the Housing Options Team had worked in partnership with local agencies and other advice givers, e.g. the Citizens Advice Bureau, to prevent people from losing their homes. This had been done by providing comprehensive advice and financial / debt assistance and by working closely with people to ensure that they had understood their obligations and the consequences of their actions to avoid losing their accommodation. It was noted that the main reasons for seeking advice and assistance had remained similar to previous years, e.g. eviction by family and friends and unsuitable properties due to medical circumstances.

Members noted that the number of rent bonds were likely to reduce by 20/30 due to the difficulty of securing private sector accommodation and the length of time spent in temporary accommodation increasing. Also, the Panel heard that the number of homelessness applications had increased and it had been likely that the next year would exceed the previous year by approximately 40 applications.

The Panel were advised that the Housing Options Team had worked hard to keep households out of B&Bs and the time spent in this temporary accommodation had reduced from five weeks to 3 1/2 weeks. It was heard that Clayton Court had helped reduce figures as it offered 45 units at no cost to the Council. It was noted that work was being carried out with Hyde Housing Association with the aim of beginning to use eight empty flats as temporary accommodation.

It was concluded that while the Team had faced a number of challenges, it had continued to meet statutory obligations to homeless people through partnership working and the exploration of new and innovative ways to support customers.

The Panel **NOTED** the update.

283. **WORK PROGRAMME –**

The Panel **NOTED** the work programme and work schedule.

The Meeting closed at 8.56 p.m.

M.D. SMITH  
CHAIRMAN

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# BOROUGH SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 8th February, 2016 at the Council Offices,  
Farnborough at 7.00 p.m.

## **Voting Members:**

Cr. Barbara Hurst (Chairman)  
Cr. A.R. Newell (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. T.D. Bridgeman  
Cr. D.E. Clifford  
a Cr. A.M. Ferrier

Cr. C.P. Grattan

Cr. S.J. Masterson  
Cr. M.J. Roberts  
Cr. D.M. Welch

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cr. A. M. Ferrier.

## 284. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th November, 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## 285. **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL AND POLLUTION UPDATE –**

The Panel welcomed Miss Helen Lolley, Environmental Health Manager who attended the meeting to update the Panel on a number of aspects relating to the service, including, air quality, mobile home sites, the Hart and Rushmoor Joint CCTV Service and the work of the Community Patrol Team.

### • **Air Quality –**

The Panel noted that there was a strategy in place to manage local air quality with a requirement to regularly review and assess air quality to ensure objectives were achieved. There were seven key pollutants, of which nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) was the foremost concern for Rushmoor, the main source of which was emissions from traffic. It was advised that air quality was monitored at 22 sites in Rushmoor and the results were used to inform annual reports, which were submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to demonstrate compliance in meeting air quality objectives. In addition to the monitoring work, the service reviewed planned developments and monitored Part B processes including, petrol stations, vehicle sprayers, small waste oil burners and dry cleaners to ensure there were no negative impacts on air quality.

It was advised that in 2000 and 2004 two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) had been declared relating to the M3. Since this time air quality had shown a steady improvement and was deemed good across the Borough.

The Panel discussed the arrangements for monitoring air quality and it was advised that TAG monitored air quality in relation to Farnborough Airport. New developments within the Borough, that met a certain criteria with regard to activity and impact on the number of vehicle movements, were required to carry out air quality assessments. A discussion was held, in particular, around the location of monitoring equipment and if some of these should be re-located to perceived “hotspots”. A suggestion was made to engage schools in the monitoring process.

A further discussion was held which focussed on electric cars and their use by services within the Council. It was suggested that an electric pool car could be acquired for use by Officers and that consideration should be given to replacing obsolete vehicles with electric versions in the future.

It was **AGREED** that a more detailed map of the monitoring sites would be provided with details of emission levels in those areas. The issues raised would then be discussed further at the next mid cycle meeting.

- **Mobile Home Sites –**

The Panel noted that there were four mobile home sites within the Borough: Brookside Park, Chiltern Farm Park, Hill Corner Park and Martin’s Park. All the parks were relatively small and were inspected annually to ensure compliance with licenced conditions. All had the benefit of a permanent licence under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960. In 2013, the Mobile Home Act had been enacted. The aim of the Act was to give greater rights to the residents of the sites. It was advised that each site had registered its site rules, which was a requirement of the Act, with the Council. The rules for each site were available to view on the council’s website. A number of changes had been introduced as part of the Act, which gave new powers to local authorities, including charging an annual fee for site licences and the introduction of compliance notices. It was advised that neither of these had been implemented to date as it was felt the annual fee costs would be passed to residents and, in cases where site conditions were not being complied with, the team endeavoured to work with the site owners to seek a resolution. However, it was noted that these powers would be used if necessary.

Future changes were also planned as part of the Act, including the provision of a “fit and proper person” appointed as manager of individual sites, increases in fines for offences under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act and offences by companies. The date these provisions might come into force was yet to be determined.

It was advised that the Environmental Health Team’s role had been to inspect sites on an annual basis to ensure compliance with the licence conditions, to respond to complaints and to signpost residents for advice.

In response to a query, it was advised that the “fit and proper person” would need to undergo such checks as a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, which would identify any criminal convictions and cautions for offences. It was also noted that complaints were generally dealt with within 3 - 5 working days although, this was dependant on the nature of the complaint and current workloads.

The Panel discussed the legislation, especially the issue that it had not been implemented in full from the start, and the repercussions this might have had on residents. It was suggested that the Government could be lobbied to implement the legislation in full. In addition, it was proposed that a task and finish group could be set up to look at the issues around mobile homes. However, it was felt that the Settled and Safe Initiative already covered mobile homes and this could result in a duplication of resources. Further discussions would be held on the issues raised at the next mid cycle meeting.

- **Hart and Rushmoor CCTV Service –**

The Panel noted that the Hart and Rushmoor joint service was launched in May, 2013 and was hosted at Rushmoor Borough Council Offices. A Joint Governance Group had been established, membership of the group consisted of Cabinet Members, Heads of Service and Environmental Health Managers from both sides, and the group met at key times, as required, to review budgets and performance reports. Furthermore, a three-year maintenance agreement with Baydale Control Systems had been secured; this had since been extended for a further two years and would end on 31st December, 2017. The agreement established between Hart and Rushmoor had set the expectations and arrangements for the service and in addition a Hart and Rushmoor CCTV code of practice had been drawn up in October, 2014.

The team consisted of the Environmental Health Manager, a team leader, four full time and one part time CCTV operators. The service was manned between 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m. Sunday to Wednesday and 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m. Thursday to Saturday. The team monitored 116 cameras, 47 in Hart and 79 in Rushmoor, recording 24 hours a day and recordings were held for one calendar month and then written over. Requests for footage could be made during this time. It was noted that four cameras were positioned in the reception area at Rushmoor to protect both internal staff and others working within the building. A panic button was also located in the Customer Services Unit. The team also filtered the out of hours emergency calls for both councils and provided lone worker support for Rushmoor staff working out of hours.

The service worked with a number of partners, in particular the police, by providing and reviewing footage for evidence, monitoring incidents as they happened and alerting the police to on-going and developing crimes. The aim in the future was to provide a link to Netley Police Headquarters although, technical difficulties were preventing this from happening at present. Other partners included Shopwatch, Pubwatch, other Council services and insurance companies working on behalf of members of the public.

The Panel discussed the CCTV service and commented on the number of cameras and their location in certain areas, it was advised that to move a camera to a new location would cost in the region of £12-13,000. A suggestion was made to provide body cameras for lone working staff, and it was advised that this was something that could be considered going forward. Further discussions were held around the correlation between private and council owned cameras and the need to identify blackspots across the Borough, and what others' protocols were for storing footage with the aim to create a common profile.

In response to a query, it was advised that some of Rushmoor's cameras would need to be replaced in the near future as they were getting old and the quality of the images would generally deteriorate, it was noted that Hart were currently in the process of updating all their cameras.

- **Community Patrol Team –**

The purpose of the Community Patrol Team (CPT) was to “provide a reassuring presence on the streets and in public places – to ensure a Safe and Clean Environment”. They aimed to do this by dealing with issues related to environmental crime, by working closely with residents, local groups, neighbourhood watch and ward councillors.

The Panel noted that the team had reduced to four members since 2008 and was led by Richard Apsey, Senior Community Patrol Officer. Work covered by the CPT included:

- environmental crime – which covered a number of areas including: abandoned and untaxed vehicles, fly posting, fly tipping, graffiti and nuisance vehicle sales/repair
- park and playground inspection – this involved the daily inspection of the ten main playgrounds and 2-3 times a week inspections of the remaining 31 playgrounds, carrying out minor repairs and litter and graffiti removal
- stray dogs and dog related complaints in public areas – including the collection and/or return of stray animals, dog fouling patrols, advice, guidance and animal welfare
- support at events such as the Farnborough Donkey Derby, Rushmoor Fireworks and Victoria Day

The Panel was advised of activity between July, 2014 and July, 2015 when 7,267 separate activities had been noted. Fly-tipping incidents were dealt with as soon as possible to try and identify who had been responsible, although this was not always possible. Abandoned trollies accounted for 613 of the activities noted, it was advised that the majority of the larger supermarkets had joined the “Trolley Wise” scheme, where an independent

company collected abandoned trolleys on the supermarkets' behalf. With regard to graffiti, it was noted that any offensive or racist graffiti would be removed within 24 hours where possible, and other types removed as soon as possible. It was noted that if graffiti appeared on private land permission was required from the owner before any removal could take place.

It was reported that new regulations on dog chipping would be coming into force as of 6th April, 2016 where all dogs over ten weeks of age would be required to be chipped and registered with a licensed company. Other new legislation around the Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime and Policing Act, 2014 would enable the team to have additional powers to serve community protection notices. There was also an increasing emphasis on littering through the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) litter strategy, as part of this the fine for littering was likely to increase to £150. It was also noted that a new improved system to record activities/incidents remotely was being trialled, the system was called "Confirm Connect".

The Panel discussed the issue around abandoned trolleys and the "Trolley Wise" scheme, it was suggested that charges could be made to the supermarkets for any trolleys returned by the Community Patrol Team, this matter would be discussed further with the Contracts Manager, James Duggin.

The Chairman thanked Miss Lolley for the presentation.

286. **WORK PROGRAMME –**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme.

The Meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

BARBARA HURST  
CHAIRMAN