

Public Document Pack

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A meeting of the **Council** will be held in **Virtual** on **Tuesday 24 November 2020** at **2.00 pm**.

MEMBERS: Mrs E Hamilton (Chairman), Mrs C Apel (Vice-Chairman), Mrs T Bangert, Mr G Barrett, Miss H Barrie, Mr M Bell, Rev J H Bowden, Mr R Briscoe, Mr J Brown, Mr A Dignum, Mrs J Duncton, Mr J Elliott, Mr G Evans, Mrs J Fowler, Mrs N Graves, Mr F Hobbs, Mr K Hughes, Mrs D Johnson, Mr T Johnson, Mrs E Lintill, Mrs S Lishman, Mr G McAra, Mr A Moss, Mr S Oakley, Dr K O'Kelly, Mr C Page, Mr D Palmer, Mrs P Plant, Mr R Plowman, Mr H Potter, Mrs C Purnell, Mr D Rodgers, Mrs S Sharp, Mr A Sutton, Mrs S Taylor and Mr P Wilding

SUPPLEMENT TO AGENDA

13 Questions to the Executive (Pages 1 - 6)

Questions to the Executive submitted post meeting.

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Chichester District Council

Full Council

24 November 2020

Questions to the Executive Sheet

Question from Cllr Barrett to Cllr Taylor:

In the local press there has been a call for a moratorium on planning until there is greater clarity from Government regarding house numbers. Do you support this and what are your views on this subject.

Answer:

Dear Councillor, thank you for you for your question.

A moratorium on development is not possible. Under the law, developers have the right to submit planning applications which must be determined by the Council within agreed timescales. If not, they have a right of appeal to Planning Inspectors. Furthermore, if we cannot identify proper planning grounds to defend individual appeals against 'non determination', permission will be granted and we will also likely be found to have acted unreasonably. In such circumstances, we would also be at high risk of Inspectors making awards of costs against the Council. The other point to make is that if we have planning permission by appeal, on a piecemeal basis, we are unlikely to achieve the joined up infrastructure which we badly need.

I would not therefore support the suggested moratorium.

Question from Cllr Bangert to Cllr Sutton:

Accommodation for Serious Offenders.

WSSC withdrew their funding for accommodation for prisoners on license with monitoring services in 2019. Since that time I understand that CDC has worked with other Districts, Boroughs, the Probation Service and Ministry of Justice to ensure the continuation of this valuable function. I know, in particular, that officer Linda Grange has worked tirelessly to maintain this service. My question is that if this service is lost, who will take on responsibility for helping this challenging group, and what will the effect be on homelessness, as well as risk to our population, and the offenders themselves?

Answer:

The supported accommodation for ex-offenders has up until recently been funded by WSSC. In 2019 West Sussex district and boroughs were made aware that WSSC were planning to withdraw their funding for this service along with funding for other supported housing schemes across the county. The district and boroughs made representations to WSSC to prevent the withdrawal of these funds due to major concerns as to the impact this would have on the delivery of these services and the potential effect on communities. It was agreed that WSSC would work together with

the district and boroughs to try to avert the loss of the offender accommodation service and that the districts and boroughs would contribute to keeping this service going up until the end of March 2021, whilst a longer term solution was found. The Director of Housing and Communities has been involved in several meetings with Probation and the Ministry of Justice in an attempt to find another supplier at reduced cost or to get the probation to pick up the bill.

The other Districts & Boroughs have from the start been absolutely clear that they will not contribute anything further (even if CDC chose to do so) and WSCC have said they will not hold the contract beyond 1st April 2021, so in effect there is no-one to commission the service.

Officers attended a Pan Sussex leaders meeting last week which was held by Probation and the Ministry of Justice to specifically to discuss this issue. At the meeting it was clear that probation still seemed to expect the district and boroughs to continue our funding of this service and it was suggested that the existing spaces be made available for the whole of Sussex and costs spread more widely with East Sussex to reduce the costs but there was little merit in this for either the West or East Sussex councils.

Although no solution was identified Probation agreed to a number of actions including

- Contacting the Police & Crime Commissioner about the possibility of the PCC holding any ongoing contract
- Exploring the potential of extending the East Sussex Framework for supported housing to develop alternative accommodation or re-model existing
- Exploring the potential for new initiatives in local authority areas, such as Emerging Futures in Worthing to take on contract and develop or remodel existing contract.
- Exploring the options around using enhanced housing benefit to keep a reduced service going with no contract
- To look at the pots of cash they have access to and draw on various providers to link up with Change Grow Live (CGL).

The key issues are:

- It is not CDC's responsibility to ensure ex-offenders are supervised, though we may end up with a statutory duty to house some of them
- The house in Chichester does not just receive people with a Chichester background, they come from across the County, so we wouldn't necessarily see the same number of these prisoners arriving here homeless.
- We may need to work with CGL and Probation on housing the current cohort.
- The loss of the CGL service means that it will become much harder to accommodate and manage a relatively small group of offenders who may potentially pose a risk to the wider population.

Change Grow Live – are a Charity started by a group of Magistrates in Sussex who have now developed into a nationwide organisation who provide support and accommodation to people leaving prison. They currently have three 7-9 bed properties across Sussex, 2 in West Sussex and 1 in Brighton.

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/>

It is generally recognised that they provide an excellent but expensive model/service.

Question from Cllr Bangert to Cllr Sutton:

Greyfriars: Commuted Sums to Deliver Affordable Houses.

“Greyfriars was founded with the support of CDC, so it seems fitting that we continue to back this worthwhile project. I would like to ask the Cabinet member for Housing how Greyfriars fits into the overall scheme to provide low rent accommodation, given shortages in this sector, especially for older residents?”

Answer:

Councillor Bangert, Members

Chichester Greyfriars’ Housing Association was established in 1969 by local people with the aim of providing affordable housing for local people of retirement age. It developed 2 schemes of 12 and 71 flats during the 1970’s. The association undertook no further development for nearly 50 years. During this time the funds of the association built up.

In 2015 the Board of Directors (who are not paid) changed the strategic direction of the Association and decided to look into their ability to develop further accommodation in the Chichester area, utilising the capital fund that had been accumulated. They approached the housing delivery team of the Council to seek their support.

In 2013 the Council had developed a new Housing Strategy – ***Local people, Local homes***. At that time registered providers had significantly reduced their development programmes in response to the reduced grant available and inherent risks as a result of the changes to the welfare system. As a consequence our first priority was “Maximising the supply of local homes to meet the needs of local people”. The existing partnership arrangements with registered providers was reviewed to enable a more flexible partnership with a range of providers.

It was recognised that many of larger registered provider partners were no-longer pursuing small sites. Registered Providers had less resources and were generally unwilling to develop small sites and yet the SDNP and many rural communities were only looking to develop small schemes of around 6 units and wished to work with smaller more local organisations. There was also a feeling that many of our existing Registered Providers partners were becoming more remote and less locally accountable. A comprehensive range of options were considered but there was no one easy solution. A range of delivery mechanisms was required so that opportunities could be taken up as they came along. This included working with larger Registered Providers on strategic sites and seeking out and supporting small local Registered Providers and Community land trusts to deliver smaller sites.

In 2017 an opportunity arose for a registered provider to take on 4 flats on a S106 site at Pynham Crescent in Hambrook and Chichester Greyfriars were keen to take on this opportunity. The association has since developed a development strategy to develop 25 affordable homes for older people over a 5 year period, starting with the development of an additional 13 flats (8 phase 1 and 5 phase 2) on their existing site at Royal Close, supported by commuted sum contributions from the Council. The housing delivery team continue to working closely with Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association to identify further opportunities.

The Council's Housing Strategy and the Local Plan set out the main framework for the delivery of affordable housing and these are both based on evidence from the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). The housing delivery team seek to influence the delivery of market homes and facilitate the delivery of the affordable homes through a range of mechanisms. These include:

- **Negotiation of the affordable homes on market and strategic sites.** This is done based on national policies, local policies in the Local Plan and any supplementary planning guidance, as well as using any evidence base we have available, including the HEDNA, housing register figures, local housing needs figures. National planning policy does not allow us to prescribe who delivers the affordable homes but they must be a registered provider, however we will suggest suitable providers. In the case of smaller schemes developers usually find it hard to find RPs to take on the affordable housing and we are therefore in a position to put forward associations such as Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association.
- **Working with registered providers to identify opportunities within their own stock-** such as at Royal Close. This is currently a major ongoing project with Hyde and in the past we have supported them to develop under used old garage sites and supported the redevelopment of a number of out-dated sheltered schemes.
- **Working with providers to maximise their investment in the Chichester District and also maximise the amount of grant they are able to attract from central government.** The housing delivery team work with a wide range of registered providers, including large nationals such as Hyde and Clarion; large regional providers such as Vivid, Stonewater and Radian; and smaller more local / specialist providers such as Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association, Worthing Homes, Stonepillow, Greenoak and Petersfield Housing Association.
- **Supporting Registered Providers to development market sites by providing commuted sum funding –** such as the site at Middleton Close, Bracklesham being developed by Worthing Homes to deliver 9 social rented homes approved by cabinet in March this year
- **Working with Community Land Trusts and Parish Housing Working groups** to identify potential sites within their parishes and support the development of affordable housing to meet local need.
- **Working with specialist providers such as Stonepillow to identify site opportunities and maximise the funding we can attract from government.**

The Current Housing Strategy set out the following objectives:

- Deliver 1000 new affordable homes by 2025
- Increase capacity to meet rural housing needs through “Community Led” housing initiatives.
- Address the need for specialised housing for those with care needs

The need for older person housing is assessed on a site by site basis and takes account of the needs based evidence available at the time and the suitability of the site. It is worth mentioning that the housing register has not demonstrated a high need for older person rented homes over the last 10 years, this is partly due to a generation of households who were able to purchase their own homes, enabled through the generous subsidies of the Right to Buy. All evidence now points to a growing need for older person housing including extra care housing.

The latest HEDNA picks up on this and one of the actions in the current Housing Strategy is to “**Support development of new extra care housing (ECH)**”. To this aim we will be looking to identify an appropriate site for additional ECH and at the same time work with WSCC to support the development of a partnership with the capacity to deliver an ECH scheme.

Chichester Greyfriars Housing Association plays a small but very significant role in delivery of housing in the district but with the support of CDC we hope that their role in the future delivery of affordable homes for older people will grow as they build up capacity.

Questions and answers from Cllr Sharp to Cllr Plant:

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for attaching the ‘Statement by the West Sussex Cycle Forum’ and in answer to your three questions:

- 1. What lessons can be learnt from the County Council’s short-lived pop up cycle- lane trial which has brought about a polarised and hurtful debate which has damaged the future health and environmental outcomes for our residents?**

Cyclists have used the roads in and around Chichester for many years and the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated many societal changes and challenges in a remarkably short period of time. The first complete lockdown demonstrated how much safer and pleasanter it was to ride a cycle with so few cars about.

Both WSCC and the resident population learnt a great deal from the Tranche 1 plans, caused by the imposed short timeframe and lack of design consultation in the rapid implementation of the cycle lanes. Sudden congestion lead to lack of understanding and vice versa. A key issue for the future will be to communicate with local people to understand the latent demand for such an infrastructure.

WSCC’s Environment and Scrutiny Committee paper of 18th November 2020 here (see page 141 onwards) looked specifically at ‘lessons learnt’)

<https://westsussex.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g2365/Public%20reports%20pack%2018th-Nov-2020%2010.30%20Environment%20and%20Communities%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans are based on evidence that builds a narrative. Both CDC and WSCC are currently working on their LCWIPs and consultation, early, meaningfully and with all stakeholders, as the LCWIP schemes will be key. A communications plan to manage this process will also be essential, as schemes move from the page to the street.

2. What can we do to prevent the disconnect between the laudable words and aims of our strategies, policies and plans (of the Climate Change Action Plan) and public perception and acceptance of the need to change?

The Pop-Up cycle lanes were the first occasion in Chichester that cyclists have challenged the private car's dominance of the roads in this area, and voluntary behaviour change usually takes a while. The cyclists in Oxford City for example have been accepted more rapidly because of the sheer numbers of cyclists relative to the number of cars. It will take a while to persuade individuals not to use their car for short journeys in the winter, simply because of future Climate Change. There must be a personal convenience and/or health benefit too.

During the future installation of cycle lanes under Tranche 2, WSCC will maintain its normal operating procedures which will include consultation and engagement. Each scheme will have its own communications plan and clear monitoring and evaluation criteria set out well in advance.

For Tranche 2 and with relevance to Chichester only, the WSCC paper quoted above notes:

Tranche 2 was submitted on 7th August and the Secretary of State has yet to announce the outcome of the scheme. The programmes included in tranche 2 are: · A programme of Active Travel infrastructure improvements · A programme of school gate infrastructure improvements and investment in Bikeability Training. · A programme of protecting and enhancing existing cycle lanes.

3. The West Sussex Cycle Forum has delivered a statement outlining the case that it is for Districts to take up the government's 'Gear Change' and 'LTN1/20' - Is this something that you as the Cabinet Member would be willing to look into and take forward with our Chichester District Cycle Forum?"

Ultimately, WSCC are the Highway Authority but it is important to maintain communication between CDC, WSC, Highways England and the Cycle Forum, for the future improvement of cycle lanes in the city and the wider area. The pro-cycling lobby has made its presence felt and will persevere for a greater share of the safe space on the roads, both for the health of residents and the long-term reduction in CO2 emissions/NO2 air pollution.