COMMUNITY
POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 13th June, 2013, at Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cr. R. Hughes (Chairman)
Cr. R.M. Cooper (Vice-Chairman)
Cr. Attika Choudhary    Cr. Jennifer Evans    Cr. M.J. Roberts
Cr. M.S. Choudhary     Cr. Liz Corps       Cr. P.F. Rust
Cr. Jacqui Vosper

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED: That Cr. R. Hughes be appointed Chairman for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED: That Cr. R.M. Cooper be appointed Vice-Chairman for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

3. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th March, 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH IN RUSHMOOR –

The Panel welcomed Mr. Colin Alborough, Environmental Health Manager (Rushmoor Borough Council) and Ms. Susan Hird, Public Health Consultant (Hampshire County Council), who had been invited to the meeting to give a presentation on the new health and social care structures, public health system, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Hampshire’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Rushmoor’s Health Improvement Plan (HIP).

Mr. Alborough gave an overview of the health and social care structure and the Health and Social Care Bill 2013. The structure included details of the providers, which came under public health, National Health Service (NHS) and Adult Social Care. He highlighted where local authorities sat within the structure including Health and Well-being Boards. Mr Alborough explained the new public health system and functions, which would be covered by local authorities and the structure for co-ordinating local strategies.
He then gave details of the work of the CCGs in Hampshire including their structure, financial resources, population covered and cross border working and relationships. He provided an overview of the local structure and how the work undertaken by Rushmoor had fitted within the Council’s purpose and themes. He provided information on Hampshire’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and refreshing Rushmoor’s HIP.

Ms. Hird provided information and graphical details on how data from the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2013 and Census 2011 had been manipulated and used to map areas within Rushmoor for key health issues. She then gave information of Rushmoor’s HIP refresh project plan.

Ms. Hird informed that Panel that, as a result of the substantial changes within health structures, the local authorities continued to have strong engagement with key health partners, and links and partnership working with and across CCGs. In particular, the CCG Chairman, Andrew Whitfield, had engaged with the Council’s Member structures. The Hampshire Wellbeing agenda was underpinned by the Council’s strategic partnerships. The Council’s HIP provided a good evidence base, clear actions and outcome focus and Members, especially the Panel, would be key to the success of its work.

The Panel thanked Mr. Alborough and Ms. Hird for their presentation and raised a number of questions regarding out of date data sources, focus on locality, elderly access to care and ageing population, obesity and lack of activity amongst young people, which Mr. Alborough and Ms. Hird answered. It also highlighted the need to focus on up to date local and economic data and the funding allocation and to ensure these were fed into the refresh HIP.

The Panel AGREED:

(i) to note the update; and

(ii) the draft refresh Health Improvement Plan be submitted to the Meeting of the Panel on 21st November, 2013 for comment.

5. REVIEW OF REGISTERED PROVIDERS 2012/13 –

At the request of the Panel, the Registered Providers Review Group had prepared a Report No. EHH1310, which provided details on the outcome review meetings held to scrutinise performance and develop partnership work of RP’s during 2012/13. Ms. Zoe Paine, Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager, gave a presentation which provided information on the reviews for 2012/13. She informed the Panel that the reviews had been carried out in order to gain a better understanding of how the RPs worked, to build partnership working, look at performance and address any issues/problems.

Ms. Paine explained that an initial meeting of the Review Group had been held to identify the review programme. For 2012/13 the RPs included A2 Dominion, Radian, Defence Estates and Sanctuary. The RPs were then requested to provide information packs including stock profile, estates programmes, annual reports, tenant satisfaction, repairs and performance
information, ASB policy, affordable rent and fixed tenancy policy. A pre-meeting was then held to agree key issues/approach. These included Welfare Reform, estate management and repairs, neighbourhood management, anti-social behaviour and delivery of new homes.

Ms. Paine then gave an overview of the RPs and issues which had been highlighted as a result of the Review Group meetings and issues for the RPs to follow up.

In conclusion, the RP review meetings had been productive and successful and had proved to be helpful and allowed members and officers to gain a better understanding of each housing association and to address areas of concern. It had also enabled the Council to help strengthen existing relationships and further partnership working. It also gave the Council the chance to create an opportunity to identify issues and to be proactive to resolve them.

Following the presentation, the Panel raised a number of questions regarding procedures and policy for personnel requiring housing after leaving the army. These included additional information provided to Defence Estates to ensure that personnel understood the procedures and policies for housing including those personnel who were no longer housed by the army as a result of relationship break-ups. Members also raised questions regarding maintenance, leasehold and service charges and more clarity was required by RPs to highlight what the charges covered.

The Panel ENDORSED the Report.

6. HOUSING OPTIONS RESOURCES –

Following a request by the Panel, the Head of Health and Housing presented Report No. EHH1315 to update Members on the Cabinet’s decision to agree additional staffing in the Housing Options Team. This had been in response to the current increase in service demands on the team. The Panel had received an update report at its meeting on 28th March, which highlighted that, in light of the economic climate, the work of the Housing Options Team had continued to be challenging in prevention work and homelessness.

The Report highlighted that, over the past few months, a series of demand samples had been carried out to help understand the level and type of demand. These showed:

- the number of homelessness applications had increased by 58% on last year,
- the number of rent bonds had increased by 72% on last year,
- 132 households had been placed in bed and breakfast (B&B) compared to 59 households last year,
- the average time spent with callers had increased on average from 10 to 30 minutes since 2011 and as a result failing to answer 44% of telephone calls
more people required help to find accommodation compared to previous years.

The Report gave a summary, which highlighted that most of the Council’s indicators had showed that demand had increased. Casework was becoming more complex as welfare reforms were coming into place. Additional pressures would be felt once the social sector size criteria and universal credit would be brought in October 2013. A more holistic and proactive approach to solving customers’ housing problems was required which was taking longer.

The Report explained that additional resources would enable the team to stop batching work and return to the principles of systems thinking; it would also be possible to understand the demand associated with phone calls. Although the team were endeavouring to keep the principles of systems thinking, the demand was making this difficult and despite best efforts, some work was being batched and phone calls were not being unanswered.

The Report explained the proposed staffing structure, which would include the recruitment of one additional housing officer on a permanent contract and one temporary officer on an 18-month contract. In addition to change, the existing job-share post to a full-time post. End the temporary accommodation officer role once the new officers were in post. This would then:

- enable proactive preventative work to be undertaken to reduce homelessness and the reliance on B&B and the associated costs in the region of £100,000;
- enable the phones to be answered so that the demand could be understood; and,
- build in some resilience into the team to deal with the unknown impact of the welfare reforms.

The Panel congratulated the team on maintaining the service in difficult circumstances and supported the increase in resources. Members raised concern regarding the increase in work and pressure on staff and felt that the Panel should be kept updated on the work pressures of the Housing Options team.

The Panel AGREED to monitor the work of the Housing Options Team and further updates would be provided to the Panel’s Mid Cycle meeting.

7. APPOINTMENTS TO GROUPS –

The Panel agreed the following appointments for the 2013/14 Municipal Year:

(1) Mid-Cycle Meetings –

RESOLVED: It was agreed that Cr. M.J. Roberts would attend the mid-cycle meetings in 2013/13 as a representative of the Labour group, along with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
(2) **Health Issues Standing Group** –

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairman (Cr. R. Hughes) and Vice-Chairman (Cr. R.M. Cooper) and Cr. M.J. Roberts be appointed to the Health Issues Standing Group for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

(3) **Housing Strategy Standing Group** –

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairman (Cr. R. Hughes) and Crs. Jennifer Evans, J.H. Marsh, M.J. Roberts, S. Smith and M. Staplehurst be appointed to the Housing Strategy Group for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

(4) **Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group** –

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairman (Cr. R. Hughes) and Crs. Jennifer Evans, A.M. Ferrier, M.J. Roberts and S. Smith be appointed to the Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

(5) **Registered Providers of Social Housing Review Group** –

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairman (Cr. R. Hughes) and Vice-Chairman (Cr. R.M. Cooper) and Crs. M.J. Roberts and S. Smith be appointed to the Registered Providers of Social Housing Review Group for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

(6) **First Wessex Housing Group/Rushmoor Borough Council Joint Business Meeting** –

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairman (Cr. R. Hughes), Vice-Chairman (Cr. R.M. Cooper) and Cr. M.J. Roberts and the Cabinet Member for Health and Housing (Cr. D.M. Welch) be appointed to the First Wessex Housing Group/Rushmoor Borough Council Joint Business Meeting for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

8. **WORK PROGRAMME** –

The Panel noted the revised work programme and work schedule.

The Meeting closed at 8.48 p.m.

R. HUGHES
CHAIRMAN