

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for
Community, Housing and Planning held on 21 March 2018
from 7:00 p.m. to 8:43 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: Neville Walker (Chairman)
Margaret Hersey (Vice-Chairman)

Andrew Barrett-Miles*
Edward Belsey*
Richard Cherry
Phillip Coote
Ruth de Mierre

Bruce Forbes
Sue Hatton
Chris Hersey
Anne Jones
Edward Matthews*

Anthony Watts Williams*
John Wilkinson
Peter Wyan

*Absent

Also Present (Cabinet Members): Cllr Andrew MacNaughton and Cllr Norman Webster.

Also Present (Members): None.

1. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE - COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4

Councillor Holden was substituting for Councillor Watts Williams and Councillor Moore was substituting for Councillor Barrett-Miles.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Matthews, Councillor Watts Williams, Councillor Barrett-Miles and Councillor Edward Belsey.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Holden declared a personal interest in item 8 as he was currently participating in the Mid Sussex Wellbeing Service Weight Off course.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Committee held on 17 January 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

6. DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONTRIBUTIONS, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND VIABILITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS.

Lois Partridge, Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy introduced the report which asked the Committee to consider three draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) intended to replace the adopted Developer and Infrastructure SPD, which was adopted in 2006. The Committee was asked to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves the three documents as suitable for public consultation. She explained the key issues in the revised Development and Infrastructure

SPD and the Development Viability SPD which were contained in the report. Emma Shuttleworth, Business Unit Leader for Housing Enabling introduced the Affordable Housing SPD and its key issues which were also contained in the report.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy informed the Committee that the SPD needed to be updated so it would be kept in line with the policies of the newly adopted District Plan. She also confirmed to the Committee that the public consultation would commence on 9 April 2018 for 6 weeks and finishes on 21 May 2018.

A Member noted that the report states that the minimum indicative standard of car parking provision expected in Hotels, Motels and Guest Houses is based on the WSCC car parking standards at one space per bedroom. A development in East Grinstead was approved that provided no car parking provision the Member sought clarity on this issue.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy clarified to the Member that MSDC would always defer to WSCC as the principal Highways authority on any parking matters.

A Member queried how the Council could require housing schemes to make effective use of land and not deliberately sub-divide sites to avoid making affordable housing contributions.

The Business Unit Leader for Housing Services confirmed that this would be done on a case by case basis and the SPD provides a tool for Officers and Members to challenge developers on aspects like effective use of land, and provision of affordable housing.

Members commented that the separation of the three SPDs made them clear and concise.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy explained that the figures included in the report had been reached as a result of consultation with the appropriate Officers. A Member asked the Chairman whether he was happy with the figures contained in the report. The Officers and the Chairman confirmed they were confident that they were accurate. Developers would be encouraged to view the figures on the planning website.

A Member asked whether there was a way for the Council to make developers provide affordable units before market price units.

The Business Unit Leader for Housing Services told the Committee that there were clauses in the Section 106 agreements that meant affordable housing is built alongside market priced properties and that they are delivered in a timely fashion.

A Member queried whether the Affordable Housing SPD has provisions to stop affordable housing sites being withdrawn and not replaced. She also wanted to know how the Council are planning on ensuring housing provisions for older people. She highlighted an issue in Hassocks of private residents in blocks of flats not being able to afford building costs that for housing association residents are covered by the housing association.

Regarding the issue in Hassocks the Business Unit Leader for Housing Services informed the Committee that in this instance on ex right to buy units it is the owner's responsibility to check their lease and the Council cannot intervene. The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that the District Council would not be able to get involved and the private residents should have been advised by the leaseholders when purchasing the properties.

The Business Unit Leader for Housing Services explained that affordable housing sites can be redeveloped due to the scheme no longer being fit for purpose but an aim of the SPD is to replace any lost affordable housing with other equivalent affordable units. Regarding provisions for older people the Council already works with specialised providers to provide appropriate units.

A Member raised her concern over planning obligations that can be collected to fund a specific infrastructure project or type of infrastructure being limited to no more than five contributions. She was concerned that there would not be enough developments to be able to fund the infrastructure work needed if they were restricted to no more than five.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy informed the Member that the pooling limit did not apply to section 278 contributions.

The Business Unit Leader for Housing Services explained to Members that the monies retained by housing associations when shared owners buy additional shares would be reinvested in affordable housing. This reinvestment would be a recycled capital grant however it would not be ring-fenced to Mid Sussex and could be used to provide affordable housing elsewhere. These are rules set by Homes England, if it were a grant supplied by Mid Sussex then in the grant agreement it would specify that the affordable housing would have to be re-supplied into the district.

The Business Unit Leader for Planning Policy and Economy told Members that the purpose of the SPDs was to elaborate on the policies in the District Plan and provide context and a framework. The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that policies carry more weight than the key issues in SPDs.

A Member queried whether there was a minimum standard for the quality of affordable housing. The Business Unit Leader for Housing Enabling informed the Committee that the quality of affordable housing was controlled by the building regulations. Housing associations have their own standards and they seek to only acquire the properties that are built to the same quality as private properties. She also told the Committee that a concealed household relates to properties where for example a young adult is residing with their parents. Affordable housing units are given a discounted rate for section 106 contributions to reflect the fact that generally people who are housed in these units already use local services such as Education.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning noted that the SPDs had not been scrutinised by the Committee before and he was pleased to see that the report had now come before the Committee. He wanted to thank the work that Officers had put in to create these SPDs.

The Chairman then noted that no more Members wished to speak so moved to the recommendation, which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee;

- i) Consider the three Development and Infrastructure, Viability and Affordable Housing SPD documents; and
- ii) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning approves the three documents as suitable for public consultation.

7. MID SUSSEX PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT.

Natasha Allen, the Partnerships Manager, introduced the report which sought to inform Members of the Mid Sussex Partnership's progress. Members were asked to consider the report and endorse the inclusion of the work enablement update within the annual MSP report for the next financial year.

A Member commented that no Councillors were members of the Strategic Joint Action Group and that she believed the group would gain value if there was representation.

The Partnerships Manager noted that this could feed in to the current review of the MSP. .

The Cabinet Member for Community noted that the report showed the amount of work MSDC does with external organisations and that they are an active member in the community. He told the Committee that the Police Commissioner was reviewing her funding all over the County to provide fair funding.

The Chairman noted that no more Members wished to speak so moved to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- (i) Considers the report;
- (ii) Endorses inclusion of the work enablement update within the annual MSP report for the next financial year.

8. MID SUSSEX WELLBEING SERVICE

Paul Turner, the Wellbeing Manager, introduced the report which aimed to update Members on the Mid Sussex Wellbeing Service. The Service is performing well and meeting its targets. The Council has received a 5.6% reduction in funding which follows the 8% reduction in the previous financial year. The report set out the services that were delivered in 2017/18 and outlines proposals for 2018/19.

A Member queried how the Council could get more General Practices to work with the Wellbeing team.

The Wellbeing Manager stated that the Council only wants to get involved with GPs in areas where they can add value. The team can't be available at every surgery but they do help advise Care Coordinators in surgeries across the District.

A Member wanted it noted that he knew first-hand how effective the programs run by the Wellbeing team were. He queried whether a program for Members could be introduced. He also believed that getting the Clinical Commissioning Groups from across the District would help the program immensely.

The Wellbeing Manager informed Members that the team attend many events in the District that are run by different wellbeing organisations. He asked if Members know of any they should inform the Wellbeing team.

A Member queried whether it was just a cautionary note that the Council could incur redundancy costs of £41,000 in 2018/19 if WSCC decide to serve notice on the current partnership agreement funding for the Wellbeing Service.

The Wellbeing Manager informed him that it was a cautionary note however it was also a possibility.

A Member noted that it was unfortunate that the costs of the service could not be directly balanced against the benefits that it offers to the community.

The Wellbeing Manager told the Committee that Public Health would be researching information on using return on investment to fund the Wellbeing Service. He also confirmed to Members that the budget from the cancelled Back to Exercise – Albion in the Community course had been reinvested into other wellbeing courses. He informed the Committee that the Wellbeing team don't undertake primary care but do advocate services and events that do.

The Head of Corporate Resources told Members that they were cognisant that Members would like to see more of the budget allocated to support the Service.

The Cabinet Member for Community thanked Members for their comments and advocacy of the Service. He noted the proactive measures that the team are making to reduce social isolation and reminded Members that the team only get involved when they can add value and help. He informed the Committee that 40% of referrals come from GPs and that the cancellation of the Exercise – Albion in the Community course shows that they are prepared to stop a program if it isn't performing as expected.

The Chairman noted that no more Members wished to speak so moved to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- i) Consider and endorses the proposed approach for the continued delivery of the wellbeing service for 2018/19.

9. WORK ENABLEMENT (MID SUSSEX NEETs MENTORING PROJECT) UPDATE

Natasha Allen, the Partnerships Manager, introduced the report which provides Members with an update on the 'Work Enablement' Project, which is the commissioned Mid Sussex NEETs Mentoring Project, named Positive Placements for those not in education, employment, or training, (NEETs). She told the Committee that performance had been good overall, with the project on track or close to delivering against key performance targets.

A Member asked whether they were still being supplied with inaccurate NEET figures. The Member also asked how the Service was managed.

The Partnerships Manager confirmed that they were now receiving accurate information. She also informed the Committee that there are quarterly performance meetings with YMCA and requested that Members contact her if they have issues that they want to be raised.

The Cabinet Member for Community told the Committee that the YMCA were shortlisted for an award for their work in the community and that Officers do monitor the performance of organisations that MSDC work with.

The Chairman noted that no more Members wished to speak so moved to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- i) Consider the progress report;
- ii) Endorses that future reporting of this project be incorporated into the Mid Sussex Partnership Annual Report and for it not to be considered as a separate report.

10. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND PLANNING WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Tom Clark, the Solicitor to the Council, introduced the work programme to the Committee. He told Members that the additional meeting was to inform Members of the Council's response to the Government consultation on the NPPF and its supporting documents and to update Members on the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme.

The Chairman moved to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed the current work programme.

Chairman