

Report from the Chairman on the work of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

This report gives an overview of the main issues considered at the meeting held on 28 September 2021.

1. Afghan Resettlement Scheme

Central Government wrote to all Local Authorities in May 2021 asking for Councils to offer support and accommodation for Afghan relocation and assistance.

The Committee resolved to approve the participation in Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) in Spelthorne; and

To support a policy approach of being open to support in general future refugee schemes in Spelthorne as requested by Central Government on which detailed reports will be provided.

2. Capital and Revenue Monitoring Reports

The Committee received reports from the Chief Accountant outlining the Capital and Revenue situation for the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee as of 30 June 2021.

The Committee were advised that there was an underspend of £290k on the Capital Report and an overspend of £271k on the Revenue Report.

3. Tenancy Strategy

The Council's Tenancy Strategy has not been reviewed since it was originally introduced in 2012.

The revised strategy is a more comprehensive version of the original document and focusses on local needs and affordability of housing within the Borough.

The Committee resolved to approve the new Tenancy Strategy and to report back to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

4. Acquisition of Registered Providers' Street Properties Policy

At present the Council has no policy in place to enable the purchase of properties for specific local needs such as large properties or properties adapted to meet the needs of the disabled. This new Policy will be managed by Knowle Green Estates who will be responsible for any acquisitions.

The Committee resolved to recommend to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that:

The Acquisition of Registered Providers Street Properties Policy is approved and to make Capital Programme recommendations for 2022-23 before approval by Council in February 2022.

5. Community Wellbeing and Housing Forward Plan

The Committee noted the Forward Plan for future business

6. Contract for Cleaning of White House and Harper

The Committee considered a report on the proposed contract for the cleaning of White House and Harper House following a tendering process. Five companies were invited to submit a tender however only 2 were received. It was resolved to approve a cleaning contract for the duration of 3 years with an option to extend for a further two 12-month periods.

7. Search Moves Partnership Review

In 2009 a Search Moves Partnership was formed by Spelthorne Borough Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council and PA Housing and A2 Dominion. It was formed to allow Housing Register applicants to bid on properties in all the aforementioned boroughs providing greater choice as to the locations and types of properties they were able to bid on. Unfortunately, the cross boundary lettings ceased in 2017 when separate Housing Allocation Policies and Housing Register Application Forms were introduced by the individual councils.

A number of options were put before the Committee, and they resolved to agree that Spelthorne Borough Council should give notice and subsequently withdraw from the Search Moves Partnership.