

**Minutes of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee  
26 September 2023**

**Present:**

Councillor M.M. Attewell (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M. Arnold	L. Brennan	A. Gale
E. Baldock	M. Buck	O. Rybinski
C. Bateson	S.A. Dunn	

**Substitutions:** Councillors S.N. Beatty and S. Gyawali

**Apologies:** Councillors S.M. Doran and K.M. Grant

**In Attendance:** Councillor M. Beecher

**36/23 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

**37/23 Disclosures of Interest**

Councillor Arnold declared that she ran Ashford Youth Club who had been asked to be part of the warm hub.

**38/23 Questions from members of the Public**

There were none.

**39/23 Ward Issues**

There were none.

#### **40/23 Grants Panel Terms of Reference**

The Committee considered a report from the Community Development Manager on the Grant Funding Panel Terms of Reference. Members were informed that adoption of the new terms of reference would need to be incorporated into the Constitution as this was an outstanding item when the Committee system was introduced. This would also enable the 2023/24 grants process to begin. It was recommended that the Terms of Reference referred to in Option one be adopted as this would allow for representatives from several Committees and political groups.

Members raised concern regarding membership of the panel; they agreed that only Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee members should form the composition of this panel due to holding expertise relevant to this area. Members also expressed concern for members of the panel who could not subsequently vote at Committee to determine the grants.

The Committee debated all three options set out in the report and explored alternative options such as abolishing the Grants Panel, instead allowing the Committee members to direct the Grants process. The Committee ultimately agreed that the quickest and most streamlined option was favourable.

The Committee **resolved** to approve the establishment of the Grants Panel for 2023/2024 in order that the Grants Panel process can begin and **resolved** to recommend option three to Council with the following amendment:

“The Chair and Deputy Chair to nominate a substitute to cover for the eventuality that there is an absence”.

The Committee also **resolved** to make the following recommendations to Council:

- 1) Approve revised Terms of Reference for the Grants Panel
- 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee to agree the names of those members on the Grants Panel
- 3) Recommend the inclusion of the Grants Panel Terms of Reference in the Constitution

#### **41/23 Community Centre Saturday Opening (A continuation)**

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Lead for Independent Living on the Continuation of the Community Centre Saturday Opening. The initial continuation of this provision was agreed by this Committee on 28

March 2023, and members were now asked to consider a further extension which would be reviewed in six months.

An update on numbers attending both the Fordbridge and Greeno Community Centres was provided to demonstrate the success of this scheme. This included 400 attendees at Fordbridge Centre over the summer, and 142 attendees at the Greeno Centre which provided for the most vulnerable groups.

Opportunities for the funding of this continued provision were also highlighted. An additional estimated cost profile of £42,015 would be added to the Independent Living budget; There was appetite to fund this through the cost of living fund for a further six months, or alternatively through the NWS Alliance Prevention Fund. It was noted for this initiative to become a permanent provision, a growth bid would need to be submitted to account for additional budget implications.

The Committee queried the transport arrangements available for vulnerable attendees. It was confirmed that centre minibuses operated on a Saturday to meet transport demands. The Committee also queried whether Secondary Schools were aware of weekend volunteering opportunities available at the Community Centres. The Committee were informed that there had been engagement with local schools, however due to the vulnerabilities of some attendees staff were required to undertake enhanced DBS checks.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1)continue to endorse the Council's approach of expanding the Community Centres provision to take account of the impact of current cost of living, energy and social isolation crisis on our communities.

2)continue with the provision of opening at least one community centre within the borough of Spelthorne for 6 days a week, which is currently in place throughout the winter period, engaging centre staff to provide the additional provision.

3)Fund the Community Centres provision through the Spelthorne Borough Council Cost of Living Fund for the period of a further six months.

#### **42/23 North West Surrey Role Mapping Risks and Opportunities**

The Committee considered a report on the North West Surrey Role Mapping Risks and Opportunities. The Strategic lead, Independent living highlighted the roles residents came in contact with when presented in a Health and wellbeing landscape and explained that initiatives from both NWS Health and Care Alliance, the Integrated Care System and Surrey County Council were progressing at pace. This year Stanwell, Ashford and Sunbury would be in receipt of particular focus from both health partners and the County.

The report highlighted the recommended proposal to approve a proactive approach to neighbourhoods. This involved the Council placing itself at the heart of the neighbourhood agenda. Resource and officer time would be committed to ensuring full engagement with both NWS Health and Care Alliance and Surrey County Council Thriving Communities. The Spelthorne Healthy Communities partnership board would also act as the conduit for these initiatives with the potential to expand the remit to include more voluntary sector representation.

The Committee queried how these initiatives were funded. The Committee were informed that the NWS Health and Care Alliance had agreed to provide funding worth 50k to be administered by Spelthorne Healthy Communities Partnership Board. The future possibility of down the line prevention funding was also raised.

The Committee **resolved** to approve a proactive approach to neighbourhoods and:

- 1) Note the range of roles that support residents through a Health and Wellbeing lens.
- 2) Note the current approaches to our populations through this lens by major stakeholders including North West Surrey Health and Care Alliance and Surrey County Council.
- 3) Make recommendations in relation to the level of engagement expected with these similar initiatives.
- 4) Consider opportunities offered as a system partner

#### **43/23 Verbal Update on the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Round 2, Property Acquisition and Bridging Hotel Closure**

The Committee received a verbal update on the Local Authority Housing Fund, Property acquisition and bridging hotel closure from the Housing Strategy and Policy Manager.

A summary was given on progress made in both Round one and Round Two of the LAHF programme. During Round one, the Council was allocated funding for purchase of 11 properties to house Afghan and Ukrainian refugees by the end of the calendar year. To date eight properties were purchased, with more property viewings arranged to meet this target. During Round two of this programme, the Council was allocated funding for the purchase of three resettlement properties for Afghan refugees, and four temporary accommodations to support the Council's temporary accommodation needs.

Following the Home Office's closure of the Bridging hotel for Afghan families on 16 August 2023, there were 25 households in residence at the hotel. The Council had accepted relief duty of 22 households. 16 families housed in

temporary accommodation at Longford Estate, three families went directly to properties acquired by the Local Authority Housing Fund and three single people households were placed in B&B accommodation.

The Committee **resolved** to note the verbal update and agreed a written note of the update be circulated to Committee members.

#### **44/23 Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee.

Councillor Attewell confirmed she would arrange for a presentation on Youth Services delivered by officers from Surrey County Council for next Committee which was already an agreed item on the Forward Plan.

The Committee requested the following items be added to the forward plan:

- 1) A report on management of Harper House and the White House.
- 2) A report on the delivery of health services within the borough
- 3) A report on actions to engage Local Health providers including hospitals and GPs.

#### **45/23 Exclusion of Public and Press**

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson, seconded by Councillor Arnold and **resolved** to exclude the public and press in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### **46/23 Staffing Report - Independent Living**

#### **47/23 Leisure Operator Procurements**

#### **48/23 Urgent Item- Cost of Living Support Fund**

The Committee considered an urgent item on the Cost of Living Support Fund. The Strategic Lead, Independent Living advised that the Council had £191,000 available to allocate in the Cost-of-Living Support Reserve. The Committee during consideration of Item 7 on the Community Centre Saturday Opening had approved the partial use of this reserve to provide funding for the temporary continuation of the six day a week offer at the Council's Community Centres. In total a maximum budget of £42,015 was needed for another year of delivery commencing 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023, leaving a remaining fund of £148,985. The Committee were asked to make a recommendation as to the proposed allocation and governance of this remaining fund.

The Committee considered all three options within the report and made recommendations for the appropriate use of this fund. Some members suggested the funding could be utilised for families in need of accommodation on the housing register. It was suggested that families most in need could be identified from food bank referrals, Schools and Youth Clubs. Other members suggested making a donation to Spelthorne Make a Wish Charity.

The Committee **resolved** to note the recommendations outlined in the report and recommend option two to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.