

# POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Date:** 07 September 2020

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors: Richard Lewis (Chairman)  
Glenvil Greenwood-Smith (Vice Chairman)  
Steven North (Leader of the Council)  
David Jenney (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Tony Boto  
Wendy Brackenbury  
Val Carter  
Helen Harrison

Dudley Hughes JP  
Andy Mercer  
Sarah Peacock  
Phillip Stearn

## 145. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Brackenbury, John Farrar and Roger Glithero.

## 146. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

## 147. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Dudley Hughes	Financial Contributions to Voluntary Sector Organisations	Was a Trustee of Service Six.		Yes
Sarah Peacock	Financial Contributions to Voluntary Sector Organisations	Had regular contact with Serve as they were based in Rushden.		Yes

## 148. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

No questions were submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

#### **149. URGENT ITEM**

The following item of business had been added to the published Agenda with the consent of the Chairman in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 as a decision was required before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

#### **150. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

##### **a) Homelessness Prevention Panel – 02 September 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness Prevention Panel held on 2 September 2020 were noted (see pages 109 to 113)

The Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager reported that in recent years concerns had been expressed by councillors about the standard of accommodation at the night shelter and this had led to ENCS seeking alternative premises. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the night shelter had closed at the end of March 2020 as there would have been a significant risk to staff and volunteers when working with the client group, particularly on the premises. A decision had since been made that the night shelter would not reopen in its current premises. 89-91 Duck Street were owned by the Council and were currently leased to the Mayday Trust and it was now agreed that the Mayday Trust should be allowed to invoke the break clause in their lease. It was anticipated that the shelter could be open by late October/early November.

The Council would need to decide whether to continue to charge rent to the night shelter and if so at what level. The majority of the rent could be claimed back by ENCS in Housing Benefit payments, however the Council would not receive full subsidy for these payments as ENCS were not a registered provider. Discussions were also underway with Longhurst to establish whether a head and sub lease could be entered into so that full subsidy could be claimed.

#### **RESOLVED that:**

- (i) when the properties at Duck Street become available they are leased to ENCS (or to Longhurst and sub-let to ENCS) to provide a night shelter and supported accommodation, for an initial 18 month period, to assist longer term use.
- (ii) up to £15,000 of the remaining Homelessness Prevention Grant funds is allocated to ENCS as set up and additional running costs for the period to 31 March 2021.
- (iii) the funding allocated for the SWEP is retained by ENC until proposals are in place on how this will be provided.

The Panel also recommends that the Shadow Authority urgently considers future homelessness provision and funding, as part of the budget setting process.

*(Reason: To ensure the continued provision of a night shelter.)*

## **151. FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE PLAN**

The Health Protection Manager presented a report which requested the Committee to recommend the Food Safety and Health & Safety Service Plan to Full Council. The Service Plan was an annual requirement of the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive.

The Covid pandemic had had a significant impact on the delivery of the service. The extent to which the aims of the Service Plan would be achieved would be influenced by how things progressed as we moved towards the 'new normal'.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the Team would endeavour to catch up on inspections when they were able to resume inspections and may start to do inspections along with its Covid work. The vacant Health Protection Officer post was not related to food work and following an unsuccessful recruitment process the post was now being reviewed. It was noted that the County Group had removed asbestos awareness from the priorities for the year and the Health Protection Manager undertook to establish why and would report back to Members.

The Committee asked for their thanks to be passed onto the Team for all of their work during the Covid pandemic.

### **R.3 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:**

- (i) That the Food Safety and Health & Safety Service Plan 2020/21 be approved (Appendix 1 to these minutes pages 114 to 129).

*(Reason: To accord with legislation and the Constitution of the Council.)*

## **152. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**

The Community Partnerships Manager presented a report which sought approval for an 'in principle' extension to the existing arrangements with voluntary sector organisations, with a recommendation that provisions for financial year 2021/22 were included in the draft budget for the new North Northamptonshire Council (NNC).

All of our current agreements terminated on 31 March 2021 and some of the other north-based councils had funding agreements with voluntary sector organisations running beyond 31 March 2021. These agreements were effectively seen as ongoing commitments and proposals were emerging to include them in the NNC draft budget for 2021/22. There was a good deal of uncertainty about how local government reorganisation would affect voluntary and community finances in the future and many organisations were now operating with reduced capacity due to funding cuts, which put them at greater risk of failure. The Committee was now asked to consider approving an 'in principle' extension to our current agreements for 2021/22, with a recommendation to the North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority that the required funding based on current levels was included in the draft NNC 2021/22 budget.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the full Equalities Impact Assessment.

- (ii) To approve an 'in principle' extension to our current Community Support Grant agreements and Service Level Agreements with the voluntary sector organisations as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY:**

- (iii) That the financial provisions to cover the agreement extensions, referred to in recommendation (ii) above are included in the 2021/22 draft budget for the new North Northamptonshire Council.

*(Reason: To maintain a strong and effective partnership arrangement with the voluntary and community sector so they can continue to provide specialist services for our most vulnerable residents.)*

**Chairman**