

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Economic and Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee
held in Committee Room I, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney,
at 6.30pm on Thursday 28 September 2017

PRESENT

Councillors: P J Handley (Chairman), Mrs E H N Fenton (Vice-Chairman), M A Barrett, A C Beaney, Mrs L C Carter, H B Eaglestone, P D Kelland, Ms E P R Leffman, T N Owen and G Saul

Also in Attendance: Mr J Haine

34. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J M Doughty, Mrs L E C Little and C J A Virgin and from Mrs J C Baker and C G Dingwall

Ms E P R Leffman attended for Mr J C Cooper,

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers in items to be considered at the meeting.

37. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure, Miss Jane Southworth addressed the meeting with regard to agenda item No. 7 (Committee Work Programme - Deer Park Medical Centre)

A copy of her submission, together with a copy of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel's Report and Recommendations to which she referred, is attached as an appendix to the original copy of these minutes.

38. WELFARE REFORM ACT – MEETING WITH REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Rob Hawkins and Mr Colin Bloodworth of Cottsway Housing regarding the Company's work in the District and future development plans.

Mr Bloodworth advised that Cottsway had a current development programme that envisaged the provision of between 125 and 150 new homes each year throughout West Oxfordshire and Cotswold Districts.

The Company was under pressure from the regulator to expand its programme to provide somewhere between 200 and 250 new units annually, an increase which would represent its maximum capacity. There were two potential sources of development; either by provision through section 106 planning agreements or by independent development by Cottsway itself. A number of small development sites had been identified in West Oxfordshire which would provide 35 dwellings over four sites. A further 10 to 12 sites capable of accommodating up to 200 homes were also under consideration.

In identifying sites, Cottsway sought to establish the level of local need to ensure that the required mix of properties and tenures was provided in the most appropriate locations. The majority of new properties were built for affordable rent with some being reserved for social rent. In addition, a number of properties were provided for shared ownership. On occasion, in order to ensure the most efficient use of resources, properties that were inappropriate for current needs or uneconomic to refurbish or maintain were sold on the open market, the resultant capital receipts being used to provide replacement dwellings. In this way, the sale of one property could finance the provision of between two and four new homes more suited to current requirements.

Mr Hawkins explained that his team conducted pre-tenancy meetings before a property was let in an effort to ensure a sustainable tenancy. The team went on to manage and support the tenants, referring them to welfare and grant making bodies where appropriate, assisting with the introduction of universal credit and dealing with issues of housing management, exchanges and transfers.

Mr Barrett enquired whether there were any specific plans for the site of the flats at Lavender Place in Bampton. In response, Mr Hawkins advised that the Cottsway Board had decided to decommission this accommodation in January as it no longer met current requirements. Following meetings with residents Cottsway had started the process of decanting into alternative accommodation which was going well at present. To date, three residents had moved out but the decanting process was to continue until December 2018 as it was important to ensure that alternative accommodation was appropriate to the residents' needs.

At present, the future use of the site had not been determined. Mr Bloodworth advised that an options appraisal had been carried out and established that, whilst it would be expensive to demolish and rebuild what was now an end of life building, this could be achieved with the provision of a funding subsidy. However, given that the existing site was rather constrained, an alternative, more appropriate, site might be found and the Company was exploring both options. In response to a further question, Mr Bloodworth confirmed that any alternative site would be as close to the existing facility as possible.

Ms Leffman enquired as to the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit. Mr Hawkins advised that, whilst the impact had been minimal to date, it was expected that the introduction of Universal Credit in November would give rise to a dramatic increase which would lift sharply then plateau.

Accordingly, Cottsway was working closely with the Job Centre and Citizens Advice to seek to mitigate the impact and help tenants to sustain their tenancies. Advice was being provided on controlling expenditure and money management as Cottsway was reliant upon sustainable tenancies. Helping tenants manage their money and working with credit unions to make practical provision was imperative.

Cottsway had a dedicated Officer working with tenants and the DWP and, given its role in hosting the foodbank, the Company had found that gaps between applying for benefits and their receipt gave rise to difficulties for individuals. In response to a further question he confirmed that reliance upon the food bank had increased.

Ms Leffman went on to enquire about the impact of the new legislation creating a Right to Buy. Mr Hawkins advised that, whilst the voluntary right to buy had not had a particularly high profile, it had recently returned to the fore in both the housing sector and the political arena. Cottsway wished to extend the Right to Buy to tenants but the funding mechanism remained unclear. Pilot schemes had operated in seven areas but these had yet to be reported on.

The proceeds of any sale would remain within the County; Mr Bloodworth advised that, whilst the Government had indicated that it would fund a one for one replacement, it was unclear how this arrangement would operate. Ms Leffman questioned how the sale of an individual property could be replaced in the immediate vicinity and Mr Bloodworth suggested that it would be necessary to plan to create a pool of stock to draw upon to replace properties lost through sales.

In response to a question from Mr Kelland, Mr Bloodworth confirmed that measures had been put in place to ensure that the difficulties encountered by the Company in 2012 occasioned by the failure to ensure a sufficient charge had been placed on its properties to secure loans to support development would not reoccur.

Mr Kelland indicated that properties built in rural exception sites had been offered to those living locally in the past rather than them having to apply for tenancies. Mr Hawkins advised that all new properties were now subject to the bidding process but that applicants had to show a local connection. Mr Kelland also enquired whether development by the Blenheim Estate would impact upon Cottsway and Mr Bloodworth advised that, whilst Blenheim was a commercial developer, Cottsway remained a not for profit organisation.

Mr Handley asked if potential tenants were advised when new properties became available and Mr Hawkins advised that this was not the case as the allocation of new tenancies was subject to an open bidding process. However, he reiterated that applicants had to demonstrate a local connection to become eligible.

Mr Saul enquired whether there was any scope to let properties at a social rent rather than at an affordable rent as 'affordable' was something of a misnomer. Mr Hawkins advised that rental income supported the purchase of new stock and Mr Bloodworth explained that, when taking a loan from the Homes and Communities Agency to fund development, Cottsway was obliged to charge an affordable rent. There was a degree of flexibility to charge a social rent in certain circumstances; for example in relation to large properties, but it was necessary to make a specific case and difficult to obtain approval.

Mr Saul stated that shared ownership was a good option for many but noted that there were few properties on the market on that basis. Mr Bloodworth advised that, where properties were obtained through planning agreements some 60% to 70% were let at an affordable rent although, when Cottsway developed itself, it endeavoured to include an element of shared ownership.

He acknowledged there was a need for shared ownership properties with some 200 people having registered an interest. However, there was also a strong demand for properties at an affordable rent.

Mr Beaney expressed some concern over the design of some recent Cottsway developments and enquired how architects were chosen for schemes. Mr Bloodworth advised that architects were drawn from a pre-approved pool established in a consortium with Sovereign Housing. Mr Beaney suggested that employing architects in-house might make negotiating the planning process easier but Mr Bloodworth considered that the additional costs of procurement and loss of savings through economies of scale could be counter-productive. He emphasised that architects drawn from the pool were well briefed on local requirements.

Mr Beaney asked how Cottsway had dealt with public engagement in relation to a recent development in Charlbury and Mr Bloodworth explained that public consultation was required as part of the planning process. Comments received had been considered and balanced against local housing need.

In response to a further question regarding property standards, Mr Bloodworth advised that Cottsway had a standard specification for new homes (although this might vary in relation to properties provided through section 106 agreements). There was a 30 year planned maintenance programme in place based upon an estimated life cycle and supported by surveys on a five year cycle. Mr Beaney went on to question how problems with mould, paintwork and vents were addressed and Mr Bloodworth explained that this depended on whether the problems arose due to lifestyle or some physical defect in the property. In the former instance Cottsway would offer advice and in the latter take steps to rectify the defect.

Mrs Carter noted that there was a high demand for social housing and enquired how the location of development sites was chosen. Mr Bloodworth advised that it was preferable in terms of housing management if new development was located in the vicinity of existing sites. Clearly, it was essential to establish that there was a local demand and any new development needed to make the best use of limited resources by demonstrating value for money. Mrs Carter indicated that housing related issues formed the majority of a ward councillor's workload and enquired whether there had been an increase in rent arrears.

Mr Hawkins advised that Cottsway's performance in rent collection was good and the income generated enabled the Company to develop additional property. However, it was clear that there were pressures on family budgets. Changes to the welfare regime at national level had had an impact but it appeared that many tenants had found work or taken on additional work to meet the shortfall. Where arrears did arise, Cottsway had a team of Officers who visited tenants to do all they could to make arrangements to regularise the account.

Only when all other possibilities had been exhausted did the Company seek to obtain a third party agreement as it was preferable to resolve matters out of court so as to avoid court fees.

Cottsway funded Citizens Advice and encouraged tenants to seek appropriate solutions to debt. However, on occasion, these efforts failed and, whilst Cottsway took the question of eviction seriously, it remained a fall-back option if all else failed.

Whilst some RSL's had adopted an automated process, Cottsway continued to contact those in arrears to assist so far as possible. It was in the business of providing housing, not eviction.

Arrears continued to be a constant challenge and, whilst Cottsway achieved a 99% collection rate last year, the introduction of Universal Credit in November would have an inevitable impact.

In response to a question from Mr Kelland it was explained that an affordable rent was set at 80% of local market rent whilst a social rent was set at 50% to 60% of that level. Mr Bloodworth advised that, instead of providing a capital grant, the Government had allowed for an increase in rent to fund development. The increased income enabled RSL's to borrow with rental income meeting the interest. Whilst the Government provided some grant aid, this was limited to a few properties and Cottsway had only funded some 30 homes in this way over the last five year period.

Mr Hawkins noted that the increase in the level of affordable rent had given rise to an increase in the number of tenants eligible to receive Housing Benefit. He also advised that the rent at 80% of market level included all charges.

Ms Leffman noted that when resurfacing a garage forecourt in Charlbury, areas related to properties that were no longer in the Company's ownership had not been included and asked how a more 'joined up' approach could be employed.

Mr Hawkins advised that the Company wished to see the local streetscape enhanced where possible and advised that private owners were often invited to participate in such schemes. However, he acknowledged that this approach was not universal, and explained that when asked, not all private owners chose to participate.

Mr Handley expressed some concern that local councillors had not been kept informed about arrangements for the redevelopment of Blenheim Court in Carterton. Mr Hawkins explained that it had been thought important to ensure that the residents involved were the first to be informed about the proposals and a meeting had been held at both sites. A dedicated welfare officer was available to give advice on issues such as home loss payments and to assist residents and their families in making arrangements for alternative accommodation. Only once the tenants had been advised was information distributed more widely.

Mr Handley indicated that residents often contacted their local councillor after they had been advised of the arrangements and had been given time to absorb the implications. He considered that local members should be kept up to date with developments in order that they could offer advice to residents.

Mr Handley also expressed concern at the quality of certain elements of the grounds maintenance work in the town. Mr Hawkins outlined the arrangements for grounds maintenance works and explained that it was important for Cottsway to secure value for money. If there were any concerns over the quality of work, Mr Hawkins invited Members to notify Cottsway of any particular issues so that site visits could be arranged.

Mr Handley went on to seek clarification of the arrangements for discretionary housing payments to assist those faced with additional costs associated with empty rooms. The Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised that there were some 80 individuals receiving assistance, met from a defined Government Grant allocated on a year on year basis. Mr Hawkins advised that Cottsway also operated its own fund to offer assistance to those experiencing difficulty. The Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised that some 300 tenancies were affected throughout the District. In response to a question from Mr Owen, Mr Hawkins advised that, whilst Cottsway would offer advice and assistance, anyone who had succeeded to a tenancy that resulted in under-occupation could not be compelled to move.

Mr Handley thanked Mr Bloodworth and Mr Hawkins for their contribution to the meeting and, at the suggestion of Ms Leffman, it was **AGREED** that they be invited to attend again in six months' time to provide an update on the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit.

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted.

39. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received and noted the Chairman's update report.

In response to a question from Mr Beaney, Officers confirmed that the Chairman of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend a future meeting to outline how the Committee proposed to deal with phase two of the consultation on the Oxfordshire Healthcare Transformation Programme. To date, no response had been received.

Mr Beaney also expressed some disquiet that concerns expressed with regard to the planning enforcement system were to be considered by an informal Member Working Group rather than a Sub-Committee. It was noted that a report appeared on the agenda for the current meeting and that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July had been approved as a correct record at the last meeting.

40. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018

The Committee received and considered the report of the Strategic Director which gave an update on progress in relation to its Work Programme for 2017/2018.

40.1 RAF Brize Norton

The Strategic Director advised Members that a meeting had been held with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation in an effort to clarify the position in relation to the REEMA north site. Whilst some progress had been made, the position remained somewhat complex and a further meeting was to take place the following week. The Strategic Director undertook to advise Members of the outcome of that meeting in due course.

A meeting between Members and Officers and service representatives from RAF Brize Norton had also been held at which the Council's representatives expressed their frustration at the inability to gain certainty with regard to future plans for the base.

The service representative acknowledged and shared this view as it was the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, not the base personnel, which were the decision makers in this respect.

The Council's Officers were to collaborate with other authorities to prepare a briefing paper to illustrate the impact of RAF Brize Norton on Carterton and the surrounding area to the MOD, DIO and the Royal Air Force and explain why it could not be treated as an island but as an intrinsic element of the town. It was important to demonstrate the role the base could and should play in the District.

Mr Handley advised that a meeting was to be held the following week to tour infrastructure projects in and around Carterton and identify the improvements required. The County Council had been requested to develop a plan and a layout of what could be expected of Brize Norton in the long term.

40.2 Oxfordshire Healt Care Transformation Programme

The Strategic Director advised that Officers had met with Simon Angelides, the Programme Director for the Oxfordshire Transformation Programme, on 15th September and expressed the Council's disappointment with the Phase I consultation process.

In addition, they informed Mr Angelides that it was thought unacceptable that the recent announcement about the moving of stroke beds from Witney Community hospital to Abingdon was made without any communication whatsoever with the Council.

In response, Mr Angelides advised that Phase I was nearly complete in terms of decision making but there were still challenges, most notably the referral to the Secretary of State (IRC) which should conclude in December 2017.

The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group acknowledged that consultation around Phase I was not all it should have been, but they felt they needed to move quickly as it involved urgent and intensive care.

The process for Phase 2, which would not conclude until well into 2018, would consist of the following steps:-

- revisiting of 'the case for change' – PR and consultation
- Options development
- Viability review
- Public consultation
- Decision

A stakeholder Group in the form of a monthly forum would be established with all Districts represented. This was set to commence shortly and would enable district authorities to be much more closely involved.

Mr Angelides accepted that the Council should have been notified about the changes in stroke bed provision, but indicated that this was a clinical decision made with patient care as the upmost concern.

With regard to the closure of the Deer Park medical practice, it was not yet clear how the Clinical Commissioning Group intended to comply with the recommendations made by the Independent Reconfiguration Panel in response to the referral to the Secretary of State for Health.

Mr Barrett expressed concern that the ongoing postponement and delay reflected a pattern previously established by the Clinical Commissioning Group, designed to frustrate meaningful consultation. The earlier submission by the representative of the Deer Park Medical Centre Patient Participation Group clearly illustrated how the CCG was seeking to deflect attention from local issues by amalgamating consultation into a wider programme.

Mr Barrett emphasised the importance of keeping the CCG's intentions under close scrutiny to ensure effective consultation on local issues.

Mr Handley concurred, indicating that although the CCG had acknowledged that communication on phase one of the project had not gone well, it was intended to continue with consultation on the second phase. He suggested that the Council should seek support for the retention of local services from the local Member of Parliament.

Mr Beaney questioned how the Council could exert influence over the commissioning group and, following a recent meeting of Healthwatch, Ms Leffman questioned whether the CCG was clear as to its own position. Given the difficulties experienced by Healthwatch, it was essential that the Council continued to press for information.

The Strategic Director suggested that, rather than pursue Miss Southworth's suggestion to re-establish the Working Party, the Committee might wish to consider inviting representatives of the Clinical Commissioning Group to attend the next meeting. Mr Beaney considered this suggestion could be taken up in tandem with the re-establishment of the Working Party. Mr Kelland reminded Members that the other Witney medical practices had declined an invitation to meet with the Working Party and had indicated that they were capable of absorbing the patient list from Deer Park.

Ms Leffman suggested that, rather than duplicate work already being undertaken, as an alternative to re-establishing the Working Party, the Committee might wish to appoint a representative to attend meetings of Healthwatch. She advised that Healthwatch was finding it difficult to obtain definitive information about local practices and indicated that, of the 18 surgeries in West Oxfordshire, 16 were at least one full time doctor short. Mr Handley agreed but cautioned that this could be too complex for a single body. Mr Owen suggested that the Council should publicise its concerns more widely and urged Members to attend meetings of the commissioning group to make their views known. It was **AGREED** that Officers would enquire whether it would be possible for the Council to be represented at meetings of Healthwatch.

RESOLVED: That representatives of the Clinical Commissioning Group be invited to attend the next meeting, together with the local Member of Parliament, to provide information on their response to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel's Report and Recommendations in relation to the closure of the Deer Park surgery and on the consultation on phase two of the Oxfordshire Healthcare Transformation Programme.

40.3 Police, Community Safety and CDRP

Members expressed concern over the recent increase in criminal activity in the District and, in response to a suggestion from Mrs Carter, **AGREED** that the Local Police Area Commander be invited to attend a future meeting prior to the submission of their usual annual report.

Mr Handley noted that there appeared to be a reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers operating within the District.

40.4 Leisure Management Contract Working Party

Mr Beaney requested that a meeting of the Leisure Management Contract be held sooner rather than later. The Strategic Director advised that the new contract had only recently come into force and suggested that it would be more practical to wait until the new arrangements had been given the opportunity to bed in. Given that the contractor had not changed, Members did not consider such a delay to be warranted and requested that arrangements be made for a meeting to be held as soon as possible.

The Chairman noted that the composition of the Committee had changed and that membership of the Working Party needed to be reviewed. It was **AGREED** that Mr Beaney, Mrs Carter, Mr Eaglestone, Mrs Fenton and Mr Kelland be appointed to serve on the Working Party and that an invitation be extended to those Members of the Committee not present.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the amendments detailed above, the Committee's Work Programme for 2017/2018 be approved.

41. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services which gave members the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme published on 19 September 2017.

RESOLVED: That the content of the Cabinet Work Programme published on 19 September 2017 be noted.

42. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report of the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support which provided an update on the progression of Choice Based Lettings within West Oxfordshire since its introduction in October 2016.

Mr Kelland noted that prospective applicants were unable to identify the exact location of a property from the information found on the website. In response, the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised that the information provided was sufficient to identify a general location but could not be too specific without the risk of compromising the privacy of the existing tenants.

Mrs Carter noted that, although 98.65% of applications were made through the online system, this figure concealed the fact that many applicants received assistance from others. She advised that the introduction of the online system had given rise to a significant increase in her own workload as a Ward Member. In response, the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised Members to refer all such enquiries and requests for assistance to the Council's Officers as additional staff resources had been put in place to provide help to applicants where necessary.

In response to a question from Ms Leffman, the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised that there had been no change to the Council's allocations policy on the introduction of Choice Based Lettings and that the definition of 'Local Connection' remained unchanged.

In response to questions from Mr Beaney, the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised that the content of the online application form had been agreed with the Council's partner authorities.

He advised that only a small number of home visits had been necessary to help with completion of the application as the majority of enquiries and requests could be resolved over the telephone.

The Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support acknowledged that the allocation of properties was an emotive issue but confirmed that relatively few complaints had been received as the system was transparent in showing the level of housing need. In conclusion, he emphasised that Members should refer requests for assistance to the Council's Officers.

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted.

(Mrs Carter and Mr Owen left the meeting at this juncture)

43. THE COUNCIL'S ENFORCEMENT FUNCTION

The Committee received and considered the report of the Strategic Director providing information on the operation, staffing levels and reporting arrangements of the Council's Planning Enforcement function.

Mr Kelland expressed some concern over recent retrospective applications and the Development Manager advised Members that all applications had to be considered and determined on their own planning merits; the fact that an application had been submitted retrospectively was not a relevant consideration.

Mr Beaney suggested that it would be helpful to Members if they were able to monitor the progress of planning enforcement cases through the Members' portal. He also questioned whether progress was delayed as a result of procrastination on the part of the Council's legal advisors. The Development Manager acknowledged that staffing issues and the consequent pressure of work had resulted in a period of 'crisis management' during which communication had suffered. However, these issues had now been resolved and it was expected that the new structure would improve the position.

The Strategic Director advised that the question of Member access was being considered at Cotswold District Council and, subject to the need to maintain security, it could be possible to introduce such arrangements.

The Development Manager went on to suggest that it might be helpful to hold surgeries on planning enforcement with local councils and Mr Haine advised that this might be included in the town and parish council liaison meetings scheduled for November. With reference to concerns over delays in pursuing enforcement action, the Development Manager acknowledged the need to ensure that sufficient evidence was in place to support the institution of legal proceedings so as to avoid a threat to public funds.

Mr Handley expressed his support for the introduction of some form of simple monitoring arrangement to enable Members to report potential unauthorised development and monitor the progress of investigations and it was **AGREED** that Officers would explore the possibility of introducing such an arrangement.

The Strategic Director questioned whether, having received the report, the Committee wished to proceed with the institution of a Working Party to consider the operation of the planning enforcement system. Members **AGREED** that no further action be taken at this juncture.

Mr Handley thanked the Development Manager and his team for their work on the Council's behalf and Mr Haine reminded Members that the new staffing arrangements would need time to bed in.

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted.

44. SYRIAN REFUGEES - UPDATE

At the request of Mr J C Cooper, the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support provided a brief update on what the Council was doing for the Syrian refugees in the District and how the project was progressing.

He reminded Members that, in October 2015, the Council had pledged to take six refugee families. The first two families arrived in West Oxfordshire on 2 December 2015 with the further four families being received by the end of Summer 2016.

Of the 72 local authorities in the South East, 60 pledged to receive Syrian refugees with 52 authorities having received a total of 812 individuals. In West Oxfordshire a team had been put in place to support the families with help from a number of voluntary sector groups and organisations. The Council continued to receive support through Central Government funds and the project operated at no cost to local Council Tax payers.

The Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support went on to outline the measures in place to help the families meet the challenges that they faced in integration. In response to a question from Mr Kelland, he advised that only those family members with refugee status were eligible to come to the United Kingdom under the scheme.

Mr Saul enquired what steps were being taken to help the families integrate socially and the Group Manager for Revenues and Housing Support advised that a variety of initiatives were in place operated by the voluntary sector, faith groups and schools. In response to a question from Ms Leffman he informed Members that specialist mental health support was being provided by Refugee Support where necessary.

Members joined Mr Beaney in expressing their thanks to the Council's Officers and those other individuals, groups and organisations for their work.

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted.

45. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTER I 2017/2018

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Communities providing information on the Council's performance at the end of quarter I 2017/2018.

The Strategic Director advised that the total number of affordable homes delivered in quarter 1 was 24, not 35 as stated in the report but confirmed that it was expected that the annual target of 133 properties would be met.

Mr Saul noted the increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation and questioned whether the Council should do more to incentivise the private sector to accept homeless families. The Strategic Director made reference to the report regarding the allocation from the Homelessness Support Fund considered by the Cabinet at its last meeting

RESOLVED: That the information provided be noted.

46. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

46.1 Ambulance Services in West Oxfordshire

Mr Handley noted that the Fire service had responded to some 1,700 calls for medical assistance and suggested that the service was at capacity. He also indicated that the South Central Ambulance service Trust had spent over £17 million on private ambulance services and it was **AGREED** that this issue be raised with the Clinical Commissioning Group at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm

Chairman