

Date: 3rd May 2018

Title: Report Item 12 – Correspondence

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To report on correspondence received since the April meeting

Recommendations: To note the report

The following items of correspondence have been received since the April council meeting:

- **Countrymans (mowing contractors)** – now that East Sussex County Council has decided to reduce its verge cutting service from six cuts per year to two, both in the 30 mph zone and on the faster roads, their contractors are asking all parishes if they would like to employ them direct for extra cuts. EDFPC already has its own contractor to do cutting in the 30 mph zone. In a future year, it may consider paying ESCC's contractor to do supplementary cuts on selected rural roads, but this would be subject to an assessment of costs and benefits.
- **Council for the Protection of Rural England** – CPRE is encouraging parishes to respond to the consultation on the new draft National Planning Policy Framework. They are particularly concerned about the proposal to reduce the period for which a Neighbourhood Plan remains valid. This could come down to 2 years, having begun at 5 years, and could make the planning exercise no longer worthwhile.
- **National Rural Crime Survey** - The survey is open for submissions until Sunday 10 June at <http://www.nationalruralcrimenetwork.net/research/internal/2018survey/>. The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner is concerned that the last survey (three years ago) revealed that people in rural areas often did not report crimes as they felt there was 'no point'. It is important to find out if this is still the case. The Commissioner says: *"I urge residents to take part in the survey and help us build a clear picture of crime and anti-social behaviour in rural Sussex and to understand the impact it has where you live or work."*
- **Wealden District Council** – a Community Governance Review is in progress, revising some parish boundaries and electoral arrangements. However, none of the proposed changes will affect EDF. The proposals may be viewed at http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Wealden/Council/Voting_and_Elections/Boundary_and_Electoral_Reviews/Democracy_Parish_Review.aspx
- **Wealden District Council** - WDC has been consulted by East Sussex County Council on their proposal to make budget cuts to Adult Social Care Services. It has responded expressing concern that the proposed 44% reduction is too high and

would have an adverse impact on other services, both statutory and voluntary. A copy of the complete response is appended to this report.

26/04/2018

Response to East Sussex County Council consultation on budget cuts to Adult Social Care Services

We appreciate that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) are facing budget cuts and have to make difficult decisions when it comes to where to make savings. However, our main concern is that the proposed cuts to the Adult Social Care budget would impact on some of the most vulnerable in East Sussex. The cuts would also represent a false economy merely passing on increased costs to other public sector bodies such as the primary care trust e.g. bed blocking and district and borough councils e.g. increased homelessness. They would also impact on the voluntary sector which is already facing unprecedented demand.

We are also concerned about the impact cutting preventative services would have on the health (particularly mental) and wellbeing of our residents. Reducing preventative/early intervention services is short sighted and would simply exacerbate problems to the point of intervention at crisis stage which is much more expensive to deal with.

In reviewing which services to reduce the focus should be on outcomes and the financial impact on other services, both statutory and voluntary.

Community Based Housing Support Services

What do you think about our savings proposal?

We feel that the proposed levels of cuts to the budget for this type of service are too high at 44%.

How would people and organisations be affected by the proposal?

We agree that those with the highest level of need should be prioritised, however if the service does less intervention work the needs of these individuals are likely to escalate until crisis point. Lack of early intervention will impact on individual's mental health and wellbeing which could increase costs to the primary care trust. For those with children there might also be an increase in services needed from ESCC Children's Services.

The lack of early intervention would put households at risk of losing their home. This would mean increased work for the district and boroughs in working with these households to prevent homelessness.

Unfortunately in the current economic climate support service provision both statutory and voluntary is very low and there are no alternative services where people could be referred to for help if this service wasn't available in its current format.

Appendix A

Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways of making the savings?

ESCC should work with district and boroughs to redesign the community based housing support service. Cost savings could be made by a generic service which is not based on age. The service needs to ensure that those with the most urgent housing situations are supported and those to whom local authorities have statutory homelessness duties.

Do you have any other comments on the proposals?

It is essential that the service delivers life skills to ensure people are better equipped to manage and sustain their tenancy following intervention to prevent repeat support.

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme

Do you or your organisation signpost people to the scheme?

Sometimes

What do you think of our proposals to make changes to the scheme?

We can understand why cuts to this service are being explored given that it is not a statutory service. Additionally there are other services across East Sussex that can provide some of the services covered by DESSS either free or for a low cost e.g. food banks for food, Furniture Now charity for low cost furniture. However, there is no assistance for utilities and assistance for rent in advance is not extended to households assisted under DESSS (see below) and as such we have concern over the reduction in support for rent in advance which many households facing homelessness cannot afford.

Do you have any suggestions for other ways we could make the savings?

Removing assistance for household goods will impact on homeless households but as already highlighted there is a low cost alternative provision available.

Other ways the budget spend on DESSS could be reduced would be to require households to pay back any assistance provided at an affordable level. The disadvantage of doing this is the administrative costs of recovering the money, level of debt written off and the period of time taken to recover any assistance.

Do you have any other comments on the proposals?

We are concerned that the proposal to reduce the amount of money given to district and boroughs for rent in advance would affect non-priority and intentionally homelessness households which are not owed a duty by the districts and boroughs. The direct result of this would be an increase in rough sleeping which locally is already on the increase and we would not like to see further increase for many reasons including the impact on the individual/household as well as on other public services including the police.

Appendix A

An additional impact would be the need for services from Children's Services for families not owed a duty due to being intentionally homeless.

Accommodation Based Housing Support Services

What do you think about our savings proposal?

We feel that the proposed level of cuts to the budget for this type of service are too high at 39% given that they provide housing and support to some of those most in need in East Sussex.

How would people and organisations be affected by the proposal?

We are concerned how the proposals would affect Wealden given that we already have a very small provision of accommodation based services. We only have two services and no current provision for young mums, single homeless and for those with mental health. Within our existing provision we only have 10 spaces for young people at risk compared to 13 units in Rother and 37 in Lewes, both of whom are geographically and demographically are very similar to us.

As a local authority we already find it difficult to house those with support needs given our small provision and any reduction in our current provision would be unfair and disproportionate.

Care needs to be taken when looking at services like the refuges since any changes including reduction in staff or number of units could be life-threatening putting women at risk of harm. Not having access to enough provision in East Sussex would impact on other public sector services including the police, Children's Services including the risk of children being taken into care which is both very expensive and not necessarily the best option for the children.

The proposed cuts would have knock on effects on other services provided by ESCC e.g. leaving care services in terms of access to young people at risk accommodation. If accommodation based support wasn't available these households would probably need community based housing support which is also looking to make significant cuts. Additionally, if they were housed in general needs they would impinge on the time of the Housing Officer, may cause antisocial behaviour which would impact on the police etc.

Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways of making the savings?

In making cuts to these services it is necessary to look at fair access to accommodation based housing support across East Sussex based on demographics and needs data.

Appendix A

Do you have any other comments about the proposal?

The viability of these units of accommodation are also at risk many of which will be owned by Housing Associations who will have outstanding debts on the buildings. With a severe shortage of accommodation in East Sussex we cannot afford to lose any social properties.