

COUNCILLORS' INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, 9 April 2019

Bulletin No: IB/969

INFORMATION ITEM

Pages

1 **Delegated Planning Decisions**

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Delegated planning decisions for the week beginning 1 April 2019 are attached. Contact for enquiries: Jean McPherson, Group Manager: Development Management on 01293 438577.

2 **Action Taken Under Delegated Powers (Significant Operational Decision): Minor Change to Wording of the Housing Allocation Scheme**

Following consultation on 2nd April 2019 with the Cabinet Member for Housing and in accordance with Delegation 7.1.5 of the Division's Sub-Delegation Scheme, the Head of Strategic Housing agreed some minor amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme.

The Head of Strategic Housing has agreed an operational change to redirect resources of up to 5 homes per year from Sussex Oakleaf (who no longer operate a supported housing service in Crawley), to Crawley Open House, a local hostel.

In return, the Council would be assisting Crawley Open House with the throughput of vacancies so that other homeless applicants who need shelter and with a local connection to Crawley are better placed to access the homeless hostel. This also includes residents who approach the Council for assistance and who are not eligible for emergency temporary accommodation.

Crawley Open House (COH) is a day centre and hostel with shared kitchens, bathrooms and laundry facilities. Residents, over the age of 18 and have a local connection to Crawley, are assisted with benefit claims, encouraged to manage their own finances, to seek employment and where appropriate to access help from outside agencies.

COH is the only hostel providing accommodation and support in the borough and therefore demand for their services is high.



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When residents of COH are ready they are supported into move on accommodation owned and managed by the charity. COH own and manage 3 move on houses accommodating up to 15 residents at any given time. However, from there when they are ready for independent living, tenants have to find their own accommodation which can prove difficult in the current climate. Being able to access settled and affordable accommodation is crucial to enable throughput and ensure a move on pathway exists for single homeless people in Crawley.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force in April 2018 and significantly changed the way in which local authorities deliver services to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. It shifted the focus towards early intervention and the prevention or relief of homelessness, and for local authorities, having clear housing pathways for people (especially single homeless people with support needs) is vital if the use and cost of nightly paid temporary accommodation is to be minimised.

The Allocations Scheme currently allows up to 5 units per year of Council accommodation to be allocated to applicants who have been accepted onto the Sussex Oakleaf tenancy support service. As this particular project no longer exists in its original form in the borough it is proposed that it be redirected to COH residents instead.

By diverting the direct lets to COH, the Council will greatly assist with increasing the throughput of vacancies at the hostel so that more homeless residents who approach the Council will be able to access the temporary accommodation.

The minor change to the wording of the scheme will also assist the Council to achieve more pathways for single homeless people (who may also be sleeping rough), without the need for expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation in line with the Homeless Reduction Act. These changes took effect on Monday 8th April 2019.

3 **Press Releases**

Press releases are available at www.crawley.gov.uk/news