

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING
4.00pm 21 APRIL 2010
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL
MINUTES

Present: Councillor Fallon-Khan (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson – Labour)

PART ONE

97. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

97 (a) Declarations of Interests

97.1 There were none.

97 (b) Exclusion of Press and Public

97.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

97.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

98. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

98.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting held on 3 March 2010 be agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member.

99. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

Exceeding TA target NI156

99.1 The Cabinet Member reported the following:

- Brighton and Hove City Council has exceeded the nationally set target (NI 156) to reduce the numbers of statutory homeless households living in temporary accommodation by half by 31st March 2010 over 5 year. Our final result is 316.
- This is a fantastic achievement as the levels of housing need in the city are relatively high and we have a very small social housing stock compared to other cities of a comparable size
- We did so by developing a homelessness strategy which refocused our existing resources on preventing homelessness rather than simply responding to it.
- We work with other agencies and our third sector partners in the city to ensure that we become aware of problems that people have that might lead to homelessness in the future. We can then intervene at an early stage to try to address these problems and prevent future homelessness.
- Together we have developed a range of housing options to prevent people losing their home wherever possible and if this is not possible by assisting the customer to source alternative suitable accommodation before they become homeless.
- We also worked with households in temporary accommodation to help them move on as quickly as possible.

Private Rented Sector Letting Agents

- 99.2 The Cabinet Member reported that Council on 18 March considered a Notice of Motion concerning the findings of the national Citizens Advice report 'Let down' on the activities of private rented sector letting agents.
- 99.3 Citizens Advice proposals called for:
- The licensing of letting agents - who should be required to demonstrate professional competence, have adequate client money protection arrangements and operate a system for handling complaints and redress.
 - The introduction of regulations specifying that no additional charges should be made to tenants for activities that are part of the routine letting and management process.
- 92.4 The meeting carried the motion calling on the council to request the Chief Executive to:
1. Write to the Government and the major political parties seeking their support for the Citizens Advice proposals; and
 2. Ask the Office of Fair Trading to carry out an investigation into the activities of letting agents.
- 92.5 In light of the Citizens Advice report findings and the discussion at Council it was proposed that a cross party working group be set up to look into the issues raised and that this group feeds back to the Strategic Housing Partnership.

100. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

100.1 **RESOLVED** – All items were reserved for discussion.

101. PETITIONS

101.1 There were none.

102. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

102.1 There were none.

103. DEPUTATIONS

103.1 There were none.

104. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

104.1 There were none.

105. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

105.1 There were none.

106. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

106.1 There were none.

107. MINUTES OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

107.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 4 March 2010.

107.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes be noted.

108. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

108.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Housing Management Consultative Committee held on the 8 February 2010.

108.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes be noted.

109. USE OF WELLBEING-POWER TO ACCOMMODATE HOUSEHOLDS IN EXCEPTIONAL HOUSING NEED

109.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which set out proposals on using the Council's well-being power to reduce homelessness in Brighton & Hove, and explained how this would support the 2020 Community Strategy and performance measured by Comprehensive Area Assessment.

- 109.2 The Service Improvement Manager explained that the well-being powers would be used to help ten categories of people. All groups would have to have a local connection except for homeless persons, subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements. The estimation of demand was 153 households per year.
- 109.3 Councillor Simpson asked if the council would be accommodating the people concerned in the council's temporary accommodation or in private rented accommodation. The Service Improvement Manager replied that the council would lease accommodation. The accommodation would be sourced on a case by case basis. The council would manage the accommodation and would pay the landlord a fee. The Assistant Director Housing Management explained that the council had a portfolio of accommodation it leased from the private sector.
- 109.4 Councillor Simpson raised concerns about the potential of an increase in demand that would use up accommodation that might be needed by people who were included in the legislation. The Service Improvement Manager explained that officers would always prioritise accommodation to meet statutory needs.
- 109.5 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That it be agreed to use the council's well-being power to provide accommodation to the 10 categories of homeless persons who normally fall outside the protection of the various statutory schemes, as defined in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.
 - (2) That it be agreed to work with the council's partners in developing arrangements to deliver accommodation to the identified groups.

110. HOUSING MANAGEMENT FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY (CONSULTATION DRAFT)

- 110.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which gave an update on the development of the Financial Inclusion Strategy for residents in Council housing.
- 110.2 The Assistant Director Housing Management informed the Cabinet Member that the report had been submitted to the Housing Management Consultative Committee on 29 March 2010 and had been well received. The final draft of the strategy would be submitted to the Housing Management Consultative Committee in September 2010 and to the Housing Cabinet Member meeting in October 2010.
- 110.3 Councillor Simpson welcomed the strategy, particularly with regard to the health checks for new tenants.
- 110.4 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That the consultation draft of the Financial Inclusion Strategy attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

111. REVIEW OF CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

- 111.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which set out the scope of the Review of Choice Based Lettings. Following consultation, a final report would be prepared for HMCC and the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting.
- 111.2 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the scope of the review and the timetable to achieve this, be noted.
 - (2) That it be noted that a report will be brought back to the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting in 6 months time to report the recommendations of the Review.

112. TENANT SERVICES AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGULATING THE COUNCIL'S LANDLORD SERVICES

- 112.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which outlined the content of the regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2010. The Tenant Services Authority became the regulator of the Council's landlord services on 1 April 2010 when it acquired responsibility for regulating all social housing landlords including stock retaining local authorities.
- 121.2 The Housing Stock Review Manager explained that the report had been discussed at the Housing Management Consultative Committee on 29 March 2010. There would be an annual report setting out how the council would meet the Tenant Services Authority standards.
- 112.3 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That the new regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2010 be noted.

113. PROCUREMENT OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT – HOUSING MANAGEMENT LAND

- 113.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which presented proposals for the way Housing Management parking controls were enforced. The report also outlined the outcome of the recent parking procurement process.
- 113.2 Councillor Simpson suggested that the report be submitted to the Housing Management Consultative Committee for information. The Assistant Director of Housing Management replied that the report could be submitted to the HMCC on 10 May 2010.
- 113.3 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:

- (1) That the proposal to place a contract with Ethical Parking Management for three years be agreed.
- 114. EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY: COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER ON INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY UNDER EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY (PROPERTY A)**
- 114.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which sought approval to initiate formal compulsory purchase action on a privately owned long term empty property (Property A) as part of the council's Empty Property Strategy, and in accordance with the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Policy approved in January 2006.
- 114.2 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That formal action be approved, by means of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), on this long term empty property and its subsequent disposal under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 Section 17.
- 115. EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY: COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR A LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY (PROPERTY B)**
- 115.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which sought approval to initiate formal compulsory purchase action on a privately owned long term empty property (Property B) as part of the Council's Empty Property Strategy, and in accordance with the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Policy approved in January 2006.
- 115.2 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That formal action be approved, by means of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), on this long term empty properties and subsequent disposal of the property under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 Section 17.
- 116. EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY: COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR A LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY (PROPERTY C)**
- 116.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which sought approval to initiate formal compulsory purchase action on a privately owned long term empty property (Property C) as part of the Council's Empty Property Strategy, and in accordance with the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Policy approved in January 2006.
- 116.2 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That formal action be approved, by means of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), on this long term empty property and subsequent disposal of the property under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 Section 17.

117. EMPTY PROPERTY STRATEGY: COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR A LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY (PROPERTY D)

- 117.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Housing Culture & Enterprise which sought approval to initiate formal compulsory purchase action on a privately owned long term empty property (Property D) as part of the Council's Empty Property Strategy, and in accordance with the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Policy approved in January 2006.
- 117.2 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:
- (1) That formal action be agreed, by means of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), on this long term empty property and subsequent disposal of the property under Part II of the Housing Act 1985 Section 17.

The meeting concluded at 4.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of