

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE
4.00pm 17 JANUARY 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL
MINUTES

Present: Councillor Meadows (Chair), Councillor Hill (Deputy Chair), Gibson (Group Spokesperson), Atkinson, Barnett, Bell, Drutt, Lewry, Moonan and Wealls

PART ONE

61 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

61a) Declarations of Substitutes

61.1 Councillor Wealls substituted for Councillor Mears.

61b) Declarations of Interests

61.2 There were no declarations of interest.

61c) Exclusion of the Press and Public

61.3 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

61.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration any items on the agenda.

62 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

62.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the Housing and New Homes Committee meeting held on 15 November 2017 are agreed and signed as a correct record subject to the time the meeting ended being corrected to 10.25pm.

63 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

63.1 The Chair stated the following:

“Firstly, May I wish you all very happy New year.

On a sadder note, late in 2017 we lost some dear friends and colleagues who I would like us to pay our respects to.

Anne Ewings was actively involved in Resident Involvement, passionate and popular, liked by staff and residents alike. Anne was one of the friends of Queens Park and involved in many local community activities and will be missed.

Becky Purnell was the manager of the Resident Involvement team for the last 6 years and had many years of working across the Tarn area of the city in community development. Becky’s kindness, inclusive approach and passion for tenant and community involvement will be sadly missed by staff and residents.

Neil Tideswell was a member of Tenant Disability network for some years and an active member of Resident Involvement at his association at Ingram Crescent and across the city.”

(At this point the Committee held a minute’s silence. Members also remembered former councillor Brian Pidgeon who had recently passed away).

Looking forward, we already have a busy schedule for 2018 and are starting off on a very positive note, with families starting to move into our new council homes at Kite Place and Brookmead, our new Extra Care Scheme. We have 57 new homes at Kite Place and 45 extra care flats at Brookmead.

We are looking to build on our success in providing new homes for the city with our Living Wage Joint Venture with Hyde Housing and we are looking forward to working together to start work on the three identified sites. In addition we are beginning work to look at how we may provide responsive repairs and capital works in the future. We will be working with tenants and leaseholders and ward councillors over the coming months to ensure their views are at the heart of the decisions we make, as to how we provide repairs and major works in the future.

With the agreement of this committee we have launched additional and selective licensing in wards in the city. There is much work to be done to launch the schemes and to ensure that standards of private sector housing in the city improve.

Looking back to 2017, we have seen consistent good performance within the housing service, with some really positive feedback from our customers. Housing Needs have come in the top 5 for compliments across the council for the second time in a row. Our performance in many areas was exceptional, including in collection of rent where we are one of the highest performing councils in the country. We need to work hard to help and support our tenants through further changes to the benefit system, including the introduction of Universal Credit in the city. We need to ensure that tenants have access

to information and support to enable them to navigate the system to continue to pay their rent.

As part of my back to the floor programme, I have been shadowing housing staff across the wide range of council housing services. I have spent time with our housing customer services team, and housing officers at the local housing offices; housing options staff and the private rented housing team. I was pleased to see the work that our staff were doing and hear of the ideas they had to continually improve the services tenants receive.

Looking forward, you will be aware of Brighton and Hove Independent Mediation service and some of the fantastic work they do to help resolve neighbour disputes which is a huge benefit to the council and the city.

BHIMS is a charity that offers a range of mediation and conflict resolution services to those who find themselves in conflict with their neighbours, work colleagues or family. BHIMS have been awarded a small grant to make a short film to promote the use of mediation which is something that we would want to support and also make use of. The housing service wants to encourage more people to take up mediation and conflict coaching and this film should raise awareness of the help on offer.

And finally, with the rising cost of fuel, we are constantly looking for new energy initiatives to help residents save on fuel bills. We have two agenda items on energy initiatives tonight and, as you will be aware the council is part of a partnership of Sussex local authorities, called Your Energy Sussex, which has set up an energy tariff scheme for residents across the county. Tonight you will be given an update and asked to support promotion of the Your Energy Sussex tariff scheme to local residents.”

64 CALL OVER

64.1 Items 67, 68, 69 and 71 were called for discussion.

65 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Petitions

65.1 There were no petitions.

Questions

65.2 John Hadman asked the following question:

Night shelter at the Brighton Centre

“Given that the Council funded “outreach work” to identify rough sleepers who would benefit from the availability of this night shelter; that work has been ongoing for nearly a year to identify a site for this shelter; that six full time employees have been recruited; and 25 volunteers have been, or are being, trained could you provide figures for the numbers of people using the facility each night, the number of people refused access, and the number of users transferred to the Brighton Centre from other places of accommodation?”

65.3 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. The Night Shelter has been a huge success. At present 30 people a night are being offered a place at the night shelter and attendance in numbers accommodated at the Nightshelter vary. No client referred has been refused a placement. No client has been accommodated at the Nightshelter from other accommodation and all placements have been made for clients sleeping rough in the city.

So far 6 people have been supported from the shelter into more permanent housing options and 2 have been supported to reconnect out of the city.

We have secured an extension at the Brighton Centre for an additional month and shelter will remain there until 11th March.”

65.4 Mr Hadman asked a supplementary question regarding the financing of the use of the Brighton Centre. He asked if the £135,000 rewarded by the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee was used for this purpose following his petition last year to open night shelters. The Chair confirmed that that money had been used for the night shelter. The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing reported that currently it looked as if the entire budget would be spent if not a small overspend of that budget. Therefore the council were not anticipating there being any underspend at all of the budget that was granted last year.

65.5 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.6 David Thomas asked the following question on behalf of Barbara Roberts:

Legal action against B&HCC leaseholders on the Bristol Estate

“Within nine working days of the Chair of this committee saying “We can confirm that we are not attempting to win litigation at all costs“, the Council made an Application to the Property Tribunal naming 39 Respondents; a common tactic putting the maximum amount of pressure on residents over the Xmas and New Year period. Presumably the council officer who wrote the Chair’s response knew this.

There were errors in the Application. Was this due to action being rushed through just prior to the holiday period or poor and incorrect record keeping by the Council?

65.7 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. At the 15 November Committee meeting I said: “We can confirm that we are not attempting to win litigation at all costs and that instead after two years we would welcome the Tribunal’s findings on this issue based on their independent assessment of the issues.” That is still our position. The council made the application to the Tribunal on 28 November. The timetable for leaseholders to respond to the application was set by the Tribunal, not by the council.

It would not be appropriate to comment further in a public forum now that the tribunal are dealing with this case.”

65.8 Mr Thomas asked the following supplementary question:

“I would like to understand how the answers we have been given and subsequent behaviour squares with the Council’s responsibilities regarding Duty of Candour, Duty of Care and honesty to this committee?”

65.9 The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing explained that the council by going to the independent Tribunal were giving the opportunity for the leaseholders to put their case forward and it would be considered in an independent manner. The council did not have any say over when the responses were to be given however the council did contact the tribunal and say it was happy and open for there to be an extension granted. The Executive Director understood that the leaseholders were currently in discussion or in communication with the leasehold tribunal. As the Chair had said it was not appropriate to have detailed discussion about this matter at this time. Going through the tribunal process would give the opportunity for the leaseholders and council both to put their case forward in front of the independent tribunal, who would be able to assist in the matter.

65.10 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.11 David Croydon asked the following question:

“Those parts of the Mears Group contract that I have been allowed to see are, mostly, very good. In the light of further information being published regarding fraud, of 468 post inspections of work carried out by the subcontractor through Mears only 30 failed. However, when internal audit carried out 39 ‘door to door’ inspections, 8 of which had already been passed by Mears, 7 out of 8 of these failed for “significant overcharge”. Will the Committee support the call by Councillor Mears, made over a year ago, for an investigation into the Mears/B&HCC contract?”

65.12 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. This case from several years ago related to a single sub-contractor working on a small proportion of responsive repairs. The checks undertaken by our Housing team identified the overpayments being made to the sub-contractor.

At the time the council took steps to recover all the overpayments and associated costs owed to the council and improve the controls and inspection regime with our contractor and their sub-contractors.

The council also commissioned a review of the partnership to further identify improvements that would benefit the partnership, residents and stakeholders. The learning from this will be used to inform the programme for delivering housing repairs, maintenance, improvements and capital works post April 2020; when the current contractual arrangements expire.

A report on the procurement programme will come to a forthcoming meeting of the Housing & New Homes Committee.”

65.13 Mr Croydon invited the councillors to come on a tour of Clarendon House with him and his surveyor to see some real buildings and listen to a different point of view from that of the council officers and Mears.

65.14 The Chair replied that she was sure all committee members would be perfectly agreeable to accept any invitations received.

65.15 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.16 Barry Hughes asked the following question on behalf of Madeleine Sailani:

“Knightguard Security Ltd

“I have been made aware that a director of a company called Knightguard is being allowed to survey and, generally, condemn entrance doors across the city? Does the committee appreciate that any profit from the new doors fitted goes to the very same company?”

65.17 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. We have recently let a new laundry contract and following break-ins, and an attempted break-in at three launderette locations, we have had to review resident access arrangements at 7 sites in the city. We are already aware of the work that might be needed at these locations, and are seeking quotes from Knightguard.

There have been one or two locations where Knightguard, on visiting the location, was able to suggest alternative solutions that might be less costly, while providing a tenant focused response to the problem the Council is seeking to resolve.

Any decision to replace a door entry system or door would ultimately be made by the council not a contractor.”

65.18 Mr Hughes stated that the incidences of which he was aware did not relate to laundrettes. He asked if the committee really believed that this sort of relationship made sense? A gentleman from Knightguard turned up at a block of flats and without knowledge from the residents, condemned the door entry system. The residents were then confronted with a section 20 notice asking them to pay collectively several thousand pounds. The council ought to have some system whereby they could check the need for such radical work.

65.19 The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing replied that there had been no cases where a contractor had identified that works needed to be carried out and that these had been re-procured with that contractor without any council involvement. If anybody, (resident or contractor) suggests that there are any issues with door entry systems they are inspected by council officers who make the decision as to whether the work needed to be carried out. Where the council have had Knightguard carrying out work, and they had identified works which could be carried out more cheaply,

then that had been considered by the council. There had been no incidents where the council had not checked what has been said and had not carried out its own evaluation of what is needed before any works are procured or any section 20 notices are issued.

65.20 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.21 Clare Hudson asked the following question:

Children in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

“Confirmation was given at the last Committee meeting that no children have lived in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.

Does this mean that these children have been moved to permanent accommodation within the six week period or on to other emergency or temporary accommodation?”

65.22 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. It is correct that no children or pregnant women have been in Bed & Breakfast type accommodation with shared facilities for longer than 6 weeks – as per statute. Such households are moved to other temporary accommodation that has self-contained facilities.

The Council also offers to assist households to move to private rented accommodation. With regards to young people who are unable to live at home, our approach is to absolutely avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. However it would not be possible to provide a blanket ban as there have been a couple of occasions when we have had to do this due to the very specific circumstances that young people have found themselves in and the lack of alternatives. We would only ever do this in very exceptional circumstances.”

65.23 Ms Hudson asked if the Chair could explain why she, her wife and her one year old son were placed in an HMO in Eastbourne for 8 to 10 weeks in 2016.

65.24 The Chair replied that the Committee was unable to talk about specific cases at this meeting however, she was sure that the officers would talk to Ms Hudson at the break.

65.25 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.26 Nichole Brennan asked the following question:

“In light of the figures provided by Dr Tim Worthley of the 17 homeless people (average age 46) who died in 2017 in Brighton and Hove I must question the adequacy of the Council’s implementation of SWEP.

The Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing referred to the fact that “Government statute is three nights below zero” in order for SWEP to be triggered. Could the Committee clarify which statute?”

65.27 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. There is no statutory requirement for the council to provide a SWEP provision. This council, like most authorities, use the guidance issued

by Homeless Link in partnership with the Department of Communities and Local Government which provides guidance to local authorities on their responsibilities and on best practice. The council have recently updated our policy on opening SWEP and I can reassure you it is in line with the Homeless Link Guidance.”

65.28 Ms Brennan asked the following supplementary question:

“Can you explain why when the count was on, that SWEP was not activated on five freezing nights?”

65.29 The Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing explained that the SWEP was activated when there was either an amber warning or whether the temperature is zero or less for two consecutive nights. When that has happened then SWEP has been activated and has also been activated at further times. In the last two years the average SWEP numbers in the SWEP season has been 11. This year already SWEP had been activated 12 times. The council believe that it has activated SWEP on all the times when the guidance said that it should and in addition it had activated at further times.

65.30 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.31 Kiah Garrett Gotch asked the following question:

Agenda Item 66(d): Council Owned Short Term Homelessness Accommodation

“This item is to be warmly welcomed. It is a pity that the “Supporting information” is not comprehensive and the proposals are lacking in detail. It is of the utmost importance that this policy is not treated in the same manner as the policy to have a Council run night shelter decision was treated a year ago.

Will the Committee ensure this initiative is kept out of the hands of property developers?

Will the Committee ensure community involvement and impose a tight time schedule to buy/build/refurbish appropriate accommodation?”

65.32 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. This item is subject to tonight’s committee decision as set out in item 66(d). Subject to the decision tonight, the council has a duty to consider all options and make their decision based on best consideration including value for money.

The Committee remains committed to community engagement as required as part of the decision and policy process and will aim to deliver appropriate accommodation subject to the relevant governance, financial and legal requirements as efficiently as possible. The committee will be asking for a further report on this matter. The council was already building and refurbishing its own temporary accommodation and that should be put in the report with any other options.”

65.33 Ms Garrett Gotch stated that it was very worrying that the Chair had refused to listen or respond to other important questions on housing. She and others believed that the Chair

was acting outside of the council's constitution in refusing questions on St Mungos, Discretionary Housing Payments, the council's statement on housing benefit and the implications of government reports in two key responsibilities of this committee. The refusal to explain the action taken was an affront to democracy transparency and accountability.

65.34 The Chair thanked Ms Garrett Gotch for her statement.

65.35 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.36 Maria Garrett Gotch asked the following question:

Agenda Item 69: Housing First

“Housing First, introduced in Finland, **places homeless people in permanent housing** before they become afflicted by issues such as addiction and mental illness. It removes any initial complicated tests, and in essence trusts individuals to turn a corner independently, with support provided further down the line. A 2017 report by EU housing organisation Feantsa, named Finland as one of the only EU countries not in the midst of a homelessness crisis. The Centre of Social Justice recommended that the UK government consider the experimental approach. Does the Committee agree?”

“This report shows that of the 10 people going through the B&HCC “initiative” that as of January 2018

1. One person is in emergency accommodation
2. Two people are in temporary accommodation
3. The two people in Social housing were occupants prior to Housing First
4. Two people are “disengaging” from the project

My question is very simple; how can this initiative be described as having a “Housing First” approach and when will a Housing First Initiative be put in place run by professionals who know what they are doing?”

65.37 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. The Finnish Housing First model does not place people in permanent accommodation but places people into (largely) congregate supported housing with a personalised and psychologically informed model, and without fixed timeframes for move on.

This is in line with current Housing & Adult Social Care Commissioning on supported housing for single homeless and rough sleepers.

The Housing First contract Commissioned by B&HCC has a fidelity based support model ensuring clients continue to receive support even where they fall out of housing. This is in line with best practice guidelines.

It was not open to the provider or the Commissioners to offer permanent housing and alternative arrangements, including long term supported housing placements in self-contained properties without move on expectations and long term temporary accommodation in leased properties were made available. Where a client no longer has

capacity to receive support or chooses to disengage they are safely transitioned to alternative appropriate support models. The current provider is a recognised market leader in the field and is currently part of a wider research study to ensure that they continue to offer the best possible service within current accommodation restrictions. Over 70% of the original clients have maintained accommodation and are continuing to receive support”

65.38 Ms Garrett Gotch stated that the report showed that out of 10 people going through the B&HCC initiative that is part of January 2018. No 5. One person is in emergency accommodation. No 6. Two people are in temporary accommodation. No 7. Two people in social housing were occupants prior to Housing First and 8. Two people are disengaging from the project. How can this initiative be described as having a Housing First approach and when will the first Housing First initiative be put in place and run by professionals who know what they are doing?

65.39 The Chair replied that the committee would discuss the matters raised in the supplementary question under item 69 – Housing First.

65.40 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.

65.41 Keith Marston asked the following question:

Agenda Item 67: Housing Revenue Account Energy Strategy

“The Council is considering an up to date Energy Strategy. However, given this “will prioritise energy efficiency solutions with the aim of mitigating fuel poverty” it is strange that household income is excluded as this is directly related to the definition of “fuel poverty”.

Why is this not included in the strategy and will the Committee consider a review of the draft strategy by experts clearly beyond influence of interested parties from a business perspective and based upon an ecological and up-to-date technical analysis?”

65.42 The Chair replied as follows:

“Thank you for your question. This is our first HRA Energy Strategy, it aligns with our landlord function of maintaining, and where feasible, improving properties, this includes increasing energy efficiency. The strategy sits alongside and interacts with a number of relevant strategies, including the corporate Fuel Poverty & Affordable Warmth Strategy developed alongside colleagues in Public Health.

As your question highlights, Fuel Poverty is known to have a number of causes: low income, poor energy efficiency and high energy prices

The consequence of being fuel poor can result through differing degrees of any of these three causes. However it is generally recognised that improving the energy efficiency of homes can have the largest and most long-lasting impact on addressing fuel poverty. As a landlord we have a primary responsibility for the energy efficiency performance of our buildings.

The strategy suggests a twofold approach; the first is Technical which is where our more challenging responsibility as a landlord lies. The second is Lifestyle, which as a council and social housing provider we are intent on supporting through energy saving advice and support services, including collaboration with financial inclusion and income-support services within both housing services and the wider council.

There is no exclusion of addressing household income; however it is worth recognising that the matter of financial inclusion and low income has a much wider scope than that of fuel poverty and the energy efficiency of buildings. These issues are also recognised in the Fuel Poverty and Affordable Warmth Strategy; the strategies will work alongside each other to address all causes of fuel poverty and its impacts.

In respect of the second part of the question, if approved, the progress of the strategy will include independent external expertise to support business planning and/or technical analysis where appropriate”

- 65.43 Mr Marston stated that his question was about the inclusion of household income, as the government’s own definition of fuel poverty was percentage of household income spent on energy bills. Therefore household income surely had to be included in the report.
- 65.44 The Chair replied that the council were including financial inclusion and income support services and they had a holistic approach around supporting residents with their income and with any expenditures. That hopefully would take care of some of the issues around lifestyle, helping with energy, saving advice and support.
- 65.45 **RESOLVED-** That the Public question be noted.
- 65.46 Councillor Barnett asked where the council were building property for temporary accommodation. The Chair replied that the council were refurbishing Stonehurst Court, an ex-sheltered housing unit, and reconverting it back to ten two bedroom houses for temporary accommodation use. The Committee also agreed to turn the Oxford Street housing office into temporary accommodation. The council were also looking at other options through the buy back policy where the council was looking to purchase property lost to the council under Right to Buy, and using those properties for accommodation. There were other initiatives that the council were considering and a report would be submitted to a future committee.

Deputations

- 65.47 The Committee adjourned from 4.55 and returned at 5.15pm.
- 65.48 The Chair agreed to take the following late deputation which was presented by Ree Melody on behalf of Love Activists:

“We would like to know why the council has not adjusted or even expanded the Housing First model here in Brighton since the end of the pilot project which took place during the end of 2014 through to February 2015? We know that the pilot was 70 % successful, giving permanent homes and adequate support alongside to 10 homeless people, 7 of which maintained their tenancies.

We are deeply concerned about the length of delay in expanding this model. We have kept a timeline of actions and inactions since the end of the pilot project here in Brighton as follows...

Ten months after we first heard about the housing first pilot here in Brighton, in January 2016, Love Activists included the proposal of expanding Housing First model within our 7 solution based proposals to end homelessness, knowing it to be a proven working model which has ended and significantly decreased the levels of homelessness in other parts of the world.

A few months later in April 2016, the committee agreed to bring forward a report on the pilot to enable the project to have the opportunity to move forward.

In November 2016, the report was supposed to be heard. Yet it was deferred several times until finally being heard in June 2017. Which meant that in the end it took 14 months to provide an inadequate report which meant things could not move forward whilst homeless human beings remain suffering and dying on our streets.

Yet there is already data out there which is even in the report itself about the models effectiveness. For example, it states that in 2003 and 2008, the New Economics Foundation estimated that a single homeless person, if they were homeless for one year, it would cost the UK public purse between £24,000 and £26,000 more than other citizens. Showing how economically this model can save money.

More importantly, Housing First can quickly help get people off the streets and provide permanent homes with support alongside. The data shows strong and consistent outcomes for tenancy sustainment of between 70-90%.

The recent evaluation of the 9 Housing First projects around the UK, found that a significant 74% of current service users had been successfully housed for one year or more by 5 of the Housing First services.

Since the introduction of the model in this country, it has only focused on helping the most entrenched homeless. Although it is a model which can help all types of homelessness as proven in Canada where they adjust it to suit all individuals whether old or young, no matter what their needs are. We can provide useful information and contracts directly to the homeless hub in Canada to assist in councils applying the same strategy here in the UK.

In the past we have been told that the council does not have any affordable properties to expand the model. Yet there has been many opportunities via new housing developments which we believe could have included making some of the properties available towards Housing First. It has also been a year since the council has voted unanimously to make use of the empty buildings which could also be used towards the model.

Too many preventable deaths have occurred on our streets whilst the council massively delays on expanding this proven working model.

We want to know when and how the council will move forward by adjusting and

expanding it and if they will truly make use of empty buildings to prevent more lives being taken by the harshness and the struggle of living on our streets which can be avoided by the Housing First solution.”

65.49 The Chair informed Ms Melody that she would receive a written response.

65.50 **RESOLVED**

(1) That the deputation be noted.

66 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

66.1 The Board considered the following Notice of Motion agreed at the Full Council meeting held on the 14th December 2017:

This Council resolves:

1. To request that a report be brought to Housing & New Homes Committee on the business case modelling for a “spend to save” purchase of emergency/temporary accommodation by the council and that this modeling:
 - (i) Estimates revenue savings on current expenditure of private provision;
 - (ii) Estimates the capital appreciation *and rental income* that would flow to the council through ownership of Emergency accommodation;
 - (iii) Explores the potential to offer greater support to residents of emergency accommodation from any savings achieved;
 - (iv) Should take into account and continue to build on the work already in progress on the feasibility of temporary housing options, in addition to the existing HRA purchasing policy;
2. That after consideration and approval of the report by the Housing & New Homes Committee any recommendations be referred to the Policy, Resources & Growth committee, such as recommendations on policy changes and delegated powers.

66.2 The Chair suggested that the report should include work already being carried out in remodelling temporary accommodation, such as Stonehurst Court and the Oxford Street former housing office and properties lost under right to buy.

66.3 Councillor Gibson commented that the Notice of Motion had been supported by all parties. The scope of the motion did include emergency accommodation and built on the start that had already been made. There was a massive potential to using the rental income of council owned temporary and emergency accommodation rather than using the private sector.

66.4 **RESOLVED:**

(1) That the Notice of Motion be noted.

(2) That it is noted and approved that a report be brought to the Housing & New Homes Committee as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

67 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ENERGY STRATEGY

67.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which attached the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Energy Strategy for consideration. The strategy outlined the current energy efficiency performance of the stock and set out approaches for future improvement. The report was presented by the Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager.

67.2 Councillor Druitt proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Gibson as follows:

“To amend the recommendations and add the following as shown below in ***bold italics***:

2.1 That the Housing and New Homes Committee ***welcomes and*** approves the HRA Energy Strategy as Appendix 1.

2.2 That a progress report is brought to the Housing and New Homes Committee a year from now to update the committee on progress with the delivery of the Strategy.”

67.3 Councillor Druitt welcomed the report which he considered important and timely. He was pleased to see that Brighton & Hove compared well with other local authorities with regard to progress in alleviating fuel poverty and decarbonisation of the city’s energy supply.

67.4 In response to a number of questions from Councillor Druitt, the Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager responded as follows:

- Household income was very much part of the strategy. There was a twofold approach, firstly tackling the buildings technical issues and secondly supporting energy saving advice services, such as the SHINE project and the Sussex tariff.
- The reference to carbon emission reductions slipping, related to pressure at national level where the carbon budgets that are set in line with the Climate Change Act 2008 are set to be missed.
- The reference to digital services was flagging the potential risk that Smart Homes would be coming forward in the 2020’s and council tenants could potentially be disadvantaged by not having the digital services and Smart devices that other residents may have in the city. There would be a need to manage that risk so tenants could be supported in a digital age.
- With regard to the fuel poverty regulations, the suggestion that there should be a more ambitious target could be discussed in plans going forward. This was not something the strategy was excluding or setting at this stage.
- With regard to partnership working, BHESco (Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-op) have been working with council officers on the SHINE project which was EU funded and officers would be looking to integrate with local energy companies and promote them where it was relevant.
- Renewables were very much part of the planning at strategic level.
- Grid capacity would be a factor where the council might implement further solar pv. This is a council wide issue. Colleagues working in the International & Sustainability Team had been in contact with UK Power Networks about the council’s capacity.

- The Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager had no involvement in the Rampion Wind Farm.
- The Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager would provide a written response on the question relating to the Heat network studies undertaken on HRA property at Eastern Road (DA5) and Clarendon Road (DA6).
- The reference to the decarbonisation of the energy supply referred to the national government Clean Growth Strategy. In order to achieve the council's proportion of national targets in line with the Climate Change Act, it was recognised that most buildings would have to have their heating decarbonised which meant moving away from fossil fuel and combustion processes and moving towards heat networks and heat pumps, for example. It is a 2050 ambition in line with the national legislation.
- With regard to next steps, work would be carried out on further consultation and delivery plan. A procurement for consultancy support would be included in developing the delivery plan and reported to committee.

67.5 Councillor Bell asked if and when the strategy would be taken to the Area Panels. He expressed concern that some of the factors in the report would affect leaseholders, whose properties made up 20% of the housing stock. Councillor Bell asked if leaseholders had been consulted. The proposals could cost leaseholders a large sum of money and the council needed to engage with them to see if they were able to afford to implement the changes set out in the report. Councillor Bell asked if the move away from the use of plastic had been incorporated in the report. Officers advised that they were aware of the financial implications for leaseholders and they would be consulting with leaseholders and tenants. A version of the report was taken to the Area Panels and there was subsequently a further meeting with Area Panel members the previous week. Officers had not yet taken on the wider ecological implications of the use of plastics and this would be taken on board.

67.6 Councillor Atkinson asked for more information with regarding page 75 – renewable energy from heat pumps and page 76 – SHINE bid providing an energy advice service. Officers advised that heat pumps were a renewable energy source. They will take and extract heat from water, ground or air. It was possible that in the future a gas boiler would be replaced with a heat pump. The SHINE project was running in council housing up to 2020 based on EU funding. The project was offering financial inclusion advice to up to 250 tenants and leaseholders, as to how they could save energy and money in their homes. The council was also looking to recruit some volunteer energy champions and train those people in the tenant/leaseholder group so they could provide further advice. There was also a pilot to provide some smart controls with some new boilers.

67.7 Councillor Wealls commented that the strategy was a series of ideas rather than a plan of action. He felt there was a need for an action plan. He would support the Green amendment.

67.8 Councillor Hill considered that the strategy was a good start and in time would change into something more tangible. With regard to household income, Councillor Hill stated that there were many references to fuel poverty in the report. This was the HRA strategy so it did not cover all housing in the city. Page 75 referred to the HRA application for further EU funding. She asked if officers knew the result of the application. Councillor Hill commented that the Area Panels had not seen the full strategy report and should be allowed to see it if that was requested. Officers responded by explaining that the EU

funding bid was for a project called Solarise. This bid had been led by colleagues in the Sustainability International Team. It had been hoped that officers would have heard about the bid by the end of 2017 but the bid had to be resubmitted just after Christmas and a decision was expected in the next two months.

67.9 Councillor Gibson referred to the points about household income. Fuel poverty could be addressed by improving fuel efficiency and raising income. Page 47 of the report stated that “household income is under a separate remit and not in the scope of this strategy.” It was important to recognise that a significant part of the equation was improving people’s household incomes and addressing poverty. Councillor Gibson was positive about the strategy but agreed with Councillor Wealls that it needed to be more definite and focused. There was an opportunity for Brighton & Hove to be an exemplar in combating fuel poverty and decarbonising and localising energy supply.

67.10 The Chair asked the Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager to send any written responses to all members.

67.11 **RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Housing and New Homes Committee welcomes and approves the HRA Energy Strategy as set out in Appendix 1.
- (2) That a progress report is brought to the Housing & New Homes Committee a year from now to update the committee on progress with the delivery of the strategy.

68 YOUR ENERGY SUSSEX ENERGY TARIFF

68.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which provided an update on the Your Energy Sussex (YES) partnership, led by West Sussex County Council, which planned to establish a local energy tariff scheme to deliver a set of low cost, high value energy tariffs to residents and businesses across the Sussex area. YES was a local authority partnership open to 15 Sussex local authorities working with residents, businesses and other partners to promote energy saving and renewable energy. The council is an affiliate member of the partnership. Members were asked to support the promotion of the scheme to residents in the city through existing communications networks. The report was presented by the Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager.

68.2 Councillor Wealls provided examples from his own energy company which demonstrated that there were cheaper tariffs available than those proposed by the report. He asked why the proposed scheme was considered a good deal.

68.3 The Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager explained that there was no guarantee that the scheme would offer the cheapest tariff available. There had been some analysis carried out in November 2017 where there was a comparison with the big six energy suppliers. Robin Hood did have cheaper tariffs than those energy suppliers. The data suggested that the majority of people who do not switch or very rarely switch

would be more likely to have their energy supplied by the big six suppliers. In terms of promoting the scheme there would not be any guarantees that it would be the cheapest price and if people found that there was a cheaper tariff elsewhere the council would encourage them to take the cheapest tariff. The aim of the scheme was to promote switching. The council could not procure an energy partner that could guarantee being the cheapest energy supplier at any one time.

- 68.4 Councillor Wealls stressed that there was a huge difference in the prices of Robin Hood tariffs and the tariffs of his own energy company. He would find it difficult to support a recommendation that the council support Robin Hood Energy as a provider when there were tariffs in the market that were 20% to 25% cheaper.
- 68.5 Councillor Druitt expressed concern that there might be a conflict of interest in the council white labelling Robin Hood Energy. This particular deal which would have the council's name attached to it was not necessarily the best deal for residents. He asked if the council would be encouraging people to take up the Robin Hood tariff even if it was not the best deal for them. If that was the case that would contradict the fuel poverty alleviation ambitions of the council. He asked for clarity about whether the council stood to gain anything from people taking up the tariff. Meanwhile, the council's website stated that Carillion were the council's partner. Councillor Druitt assumed that Robin Hood Energy had replaced Carillion.
- 68.6 The Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager explained that the council would not advise anyone to switch to the Your Energy Sussex tariff if there were cheaper tariffs available. Someone who received advice through the SHINE project would have the benefit of an advisor who would help to find the best deal for the individual, which might be the cheapest tariff or one of the cheaper tariffs for a longer period of time on a fixed deal. The proposed scheme was a more generalised offer that would be promoted on the basis of it being competitive and offering good customer service. Carillion were procured by West Sussex County Council a few years ago to deliver what was going to be a green deal offer across Sussex. This deal ground to a halt and did not happen. West Sussex had used them on individual projects such as building solar farms. They have had no involvement in the energy tariff scheme.
- 68.7 Councillor Moonan stated that it was a concern that there were many people in the city who did not have the wherewithal or the information to know that they could change their tariffs. This was something the council should address as part of bringing people out of fuel poverty. Councillor Moonan was pleased that the council would be looking at voids as people moving into a property could inherit the past provider. She was concerned that the Warm Homes Discount was not included and asked what impact that might have on residents. Another area of concern was that it appeared that any surpluses were placed in a pot which was shared out through a Partnership Board. Councillor Moonan asked about the representation of the Board. She was concerned that Brighton & Hove as a large unitary authority with a high level of deprivation would only get one vote on the Board.
- 68.8 The Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager explained that the Warm Homes Discount was an obligation on energy supply companies over a certain size. Robin Hood Energy had not reached that level yet but they had made it clear that they wanted to offer the Warm Homes Discount at some point in the future. Officers could

update members if there was any progress. The council needed to be clear in any publicity that if people were eligible for the Warm Homes Discount they might get cheaper energy costs with a company that did offer the discount. Meanwhile, the council would have representatives on the panel considering the allocation of the Fuel Poverty Fund. There would be some flexibility about how the allocation would be made across the different authority areas and also some recognition of those areas that have the greatest uptake.

- 68.9 Councillor Bell concurred with comments made by Councillor Wealls and would not support the scheme. He noted that Housing Services were recommending Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-operative and wanted to know why there appeared to be different schemes being promoted.
- 68.10 The Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager explained that Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-operative carried out a lot of work in the city, some of which had been funded by the council to run energy advice desks. They did not supply energy. There would not be a conflict in working with both organisations.
- 68.11 Councillor Hill noted the concerns expressed that at any given time these tariffs might not be the cheapest. However, there was an advantage in having a company that may not be cheapest at all times but over time had been seen to be consistent and good value. The scheme would not be recommended to someone if they could be paying less on a different tariff. One of the advantages of having the Robin Hood tariff was the void switching. She stressed it would be good to get residents off pre-payment meters. She concurred with Councillor Moonan with regard to the Warm Homes Discount. She welcomed the Fuel Poverty Fund but shared concern on how much money would come back to the city. Councillor Hill questioned the wording of recommendation 2.2 which appeared to suggest the council would support the promotion of this scheme whereas the officer had stated that the intention was for the council to communicate the benefits of the scheme alongside other schemes.
- 68.12 The Housing Sustainability & Affordable Warmth Manager explained that the Warm Homes Discount and voids, would be something that officers would consider in the voids process. He stressed that if a void is switched then the new tenant can switch to a new energy supplier the day after they move in. Officers would want to make them aware of the eligibility of the Warm Homes Discount and it was hoped it would eventually be offered through the scheme.
- 68.13 Councillor Druitt shared Councillor Weall's concern but acknowledged that Councillor Moonan and Councillor Hill had made valid arguments. He considered the idea to be very good as it would enable the council to encourage people to move away from the big six suppliers and off coin meters, increase people's awareness, and the majority of the time would most likely result in people being better off. However his concern was that some of the time vulnerable tenants would be misled by the fact that it had the council branding and would assume that the council was recommending it as the best deal. He proposed that that the committee defer a decision on the report to the next meeting in order for officers to carry out an analysis of the long term cost benefit of this tariff against the rest of the market.

68.14 Councillor Atkinson expressed concern at recommendation 2.2. where the wording suggested promotion of the scheme. He would prefer it to say it was raising awareness of the scheme.

68.15 The Chair agreed that the report be should be deferred and brought back to the next meeting with responses to the questions raised.

68.16 **RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the report be deferred and brought back to the next meeting with responses to the questions asked by members, to ensure that the committee have a robust and ethical report that can be supported to residents alongside other providers.

69 HOUSING FIRST

69.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Health & Adult Social Care which was provided as a response to a request at the 14th June 2017 meeting for a follow up report outlining the effectiveness and progress with the Housing First approach to housing rough sleepers. The Committee had also agreed that a further report be undertaken to identify the potential savings across the council and other public service providers that are achievable from using additional properties from Housing First. It had been further agreed that this report was completed by January 2018, in order that any savings identified could inform the budget process of 2018/19. The report was presented by the Commissioning & Performance Manager.

69.2 Councillor Bell referred to the legal implications in paragraph 5.2 and asked for clarity as to which committee had responsibility for Housing First. The Senior Lawyer explained that major funding decisions would be considered by the Health & Wellbeing Board, however as the report considered homelessness which was clearly within the remit of Housing & New Homes Committee it was appropriate for members to receive reports on the agenda. The Health & Wellbeing Board was a service committee to the extent that it was able to make decisions.

69.3 Councillor Gibson raised the following questions/issues:

- What was the average time rough sleepers seeking accommodation had to wait on the streets, bearing in mind the government's goal of no second night out? The last figure Councillor Gibson had seen was about three months.
- Three things could help to reduce rough sleeping. i) That people out on the streets were given a greater priority for the limited housing that exists in hostels & supported housing. ii) That there is a greater supply of supported accommodation iii) That there is more move on accommodation at the end of the pathway homeless people travelled along, and more Housing First accommodation for those people that are described as revolving door homeless and never make it along the pathway.
- What types of accommodation might be suitable for housing people under a Housing First model as being operated at the moment in the city?

69.4 The Commissioning & Performance Manager responded as follows:

- It was difficult to answer the question about the average wait on the streets. People would wait a different length of time based on their priority and their needs. For example, if someone had a dog they tended to wait longer as there were not so many hostels that would take dogs. People who needed level access also waited longer as there was less suitable accommodation available. Some people waited three months and others waited significantly longer.
 - All the suggestions made by Councillor Gibson would reduce rough sleeping.
 - With regard to the type of types of accommodation which might be suitable for housing people under a Housing First Model, it had been found that some people found the Housing First fidelity model quite difficult. This model provided dispersed accommodation across a geographical area in the local communities. Some Housing First clients become lonely and did not make friends in those locations. Officers wanted to trial the congregate Housing First Model which had been used in Scandinavian countries. These were self contained units in a block or in a locality where people would be able to integrate and keep contact with other homeless people. However, there was still a need for self contained dispersed accommodation.
- 69.5 Councillor Moonan stated that Housing First played an important part in the range of homeless services. She agreed that all of the suggestions made by Councillor Gibson would address rough sleeping which was why all of those things were in the Rough Sleeping Strategy. The model worked well internationally and in the city and Councillor Moonan was pleased to see some of the life changing outcomes as set out in paragraphs 3.10 and 3.15 of the report. The model was working and was cost effective. There were challenges in the city in finding suitable accommodation whether it was dispersed or congregate. Both types were needed and this was something the council was working hard to achieve. Councillor Moonan agreed that it would be good to expand the Housing First model and hoped that there would be positive progress to report in due course.
- 69.6 Councillor Wealls referred to some of the questions asked by the public earlier on in the meeting and asked what was holding back progress in implementing Housing First more quickly. He asked if the problem was finding suitable sites rather than the financial model.
- 69.7 The Commissioning & Performance Manager responded by explaining that the commissioning budget included money spent on the Housing First model; however, there was no spare money. Therefore it was impossible to expand any of her services. The Chair stressed the Health & Wellbeing Board would need to consider whether they wanted to expand that model, as it was funded via the Board.
- 69.8 Councillor Bell welcomed the current report which had been requested by the committee, but did not think it was going far enough. Councillor Bell stated that he would like to see a further report showing where the problems were, who was blocking progress and how the council could improve the situation by providing more accommodation for people who needed it. He stressed that a further strategy report was required setting out decision making policies which could improve people's lives.
- 69.9 Councillor Gibson stressed that Housing First clearly worked and cost an average of £10,000 per person in terms of homeless support, yet a homeless person cost around £25,000 according to the New Economics Foundation report. This was a cost saving

for the public purse. Councillor Gibson set out the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Druitt as follows:

“To insert new recommendations as shown below in ***bold italics***;

(1) ***2.2 That this report is referred to Health and Wellbeing Board, for consideration of successes achieved by Housing First in terms of wellbeing outcomes and overall cost-effectiveness, and to explore the identification of resources in collaboration with the CCG in order to be able to contribute to its expansion in 2018/19***

2.3 That this report is referred to Policy, Resource and Growth committee, and that the committee is requested to call for a further report to consider identifying the necessary budget to contribute to expansion of Housing First

2.4 That a future Housing and New Homes Committee receive further information indicating options to enable housing providers to make suitable properties available to expand provision of Housing first accommodation.”

69.10 The Committee voted on the amendment which was agreed unanimously. The Committee then voted on the substantive recommendation which was agreed unanimously along with the addition of 2.2 to 2.4 as set out above.

69.11 **RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the contents of the report which is provided for information only, is noted.
- (2) That this report is referred to the Health and Wellbeing Board, for consideration of successes achieved by Housing First in terms of wellbeing outcomes and overall cost-effectiveness, and to explore the identification of resources in collaboration with the CCG in order to be able to contribute to its expansion in 2018/19.
- (3) That this report is referred to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee, and that the committee is requested to call for a further report to consider identifying the necessary budget to contribute to expansion of Housing First.
- (4) That a future Housing & New Homes Committee receive further information indicating options to enable housing providers to make suitable properties available to expand provision of Housing First accommodation.

70 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESILIENCE – PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

70.1 The Committee were presented with a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing which stated that on 9th October 2017 a report on Emergency Planning and Resilience – Preventing and Responding to Emergencies was submitted to the Neighbourhoods Inclusion and Equalities Committee. It was agreed that because of the relevance to housing tenants that the committee report attached at Appendix 1 was presented to the Housing & New Homes Committee. An extract of the minutes of the Neighbourhood Inclusion and Equalities Committee was also attached at Appendix 1.

70.2 RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee report on Emergency Planning and Resilience – Preventing and Responding to Emergencies, presented to Neighbourhoods Inclusion and Equalities Committee on 9th October 2017, be noted. This was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

71 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- 71.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Finance & Resources and the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing which presented the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue and capital budget for 2018/19 as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Members were required to consider the revenue budget proposals including savings and service pressures as well as changes to rents, fees and charges and also the capital programme. The report also set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy and 30 year financial forecast. The report was presented by the Deputy Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Housing Strategy, Property & Investment.
- 71.2 The Chair noted that three amendments had been received from the Green Group.
- 71.3 Councillor Gibson stated that the report showed a sound and comfortable future for the Housing Revenue Account under the current constraints. He raised questions/issues on the following:
- Capital buy back budget - What was the basis of cutting this important use of Right to Buys and borrowing to provide new housing?
 - The assumption in the modelling was about CPI plus 1% which was over 3 years, whereas the government had said that CPI plus 1% was going to relate to caps on rent increases for 5 years.
 - Projection to breach the borrowing cap by 2021 - the report stated that there would be reserves of 6.3m. Yet the amount the council proposed to breach the cap was even by 2022/23 only projected to be under a million. Was that excessively cautious when there was a housing crisis?
 - No model had been carried out on the impacts of the high value voids issue.
 - Clarification was requested on figures on the Estate Development Budget – Last year's budget including the top up from reserves had been cut. The likely spend this year was £407,000 and was likely to be cut to £348,000 next year. What consultation had taken place or was proposed over that particular cut?
 - Proposal to fund the Children's Centres from the HRA – Councillor Gibson referred to the legal advice provided in the report which stated that "Whilst this expenditure (of £170,000) is not directly linked to the council's housing functions, it probably falls within the discretion afforded by the Circular...." Councillor Gibson wondered if there could be more clarification about the circular and in particular the thrust of the circular under the general principals which was saying that the HRA, from which the committee were being asked to fund Children's Centres, should be "primarily a landlord account containing income and expenditure arising from the housing authorities' landlord functions. There was a

massive concern about funding Children's Centres out of the landlord account. Were Children's Centres a landlord function?

- 71.4 Councillor Gibson stated that he was proposing three amendments. Amendment 1) would increase the capital programme expenditure and financing budget to £39,344m. Amendment 2) proposed a way of funding this additional expenditure. This amendment would increase temporary and emergency accommodation. Amendment 3) was requesting that Children's Centres should continue to be funded by the whole community via Council Tax.
- 71.5 The Head of Housing Strategy, Property & Investment stated that with regard to the buy back policy, members agreed to increase the budget for buy backs for the pilot scheme from £1m to £2m, from notionally four homes to eight homes and that was reflected in the budget.
- 71.6 Councillor Gibson replied that if the budget was continued at the same level it would be £4m for a period of a year enabling the buying back of 16 properties. Yet the budget shown in the report was £1m plus likely underspends.
- 71.7 The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing stated that the initial intention was to buy back a fewer number of properties, and an amendment doubled that figure. Concerns were raised as to whether the council would be able to spend that amount of money in time and it was agreed with finance colleagues that the additional money should be carried over to the following financial year in order to continue the programme.
- 71.8 The Deputy Chief Finance Officer responded as follows:
- With regard to questions about the long term projections in the medium term financial strategy, the CPI point was one of being generally prudent. Government policies could change so finance officers would always, when undertaking long term projections, build in an element of risk protection. This was considered a reasonable adjustment to make to take account of possible changes of government policy over that period.
 - Quite a large element of the reserves (£3m) had to be held by the HRA as lifetime cover against general risks. Over time many assumptions could change and fluctuate, such as the impact that welfare reform might have on rents and collection performance. There were many other general risks that might change the balance of reserves over time.
 - The amendments, although meeting the deadline, had come to the attention of officers at a late stage. A breach of the debt cap was already highlighted within the report and this amendment could potentially add to that issue. Although it appeared that there would be enough reserves to deal with the projected breach, officers needed more time to model and review the proposal in detail and understand what impact, if any, this might have on reserves. At this time amendments 1 and 2 would not therefore be safe. The Deputy Chief Finance Officer did not have enough information at this stage and he did not recommend that the committee consider those amendments today. However, all groups were able to put forward alternative budget proposals. He suggested that these amendments could come forward to the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee or to Budget Council subject to further consideration and checks by officers.

- 71.9 Councillor Gibson stated that he would follow finance officers advice and would like to give the officers time to prepare a response. He would withdraw amendments 1 & 2 and refer them to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee. He would not withdraw amendment 3 in relation to the funding of Children's Centres.
- 71.10 The Principal Accountant stated that with regard to question about the Estate Development Budget, new figures were available under the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) month 9 monitoring forecast. The estimated spend under EDB was in 2017/18 was now £350,000.
- 71.11 The Senior Lawyer referred to the question that asked whether children's centres were a landlord function and as such chargeable to the HRA. The Senior Lawyer stated that Councillor Gibson had picked up her reservations in the legal implications. She advised that it was not clear. Children's Centres were not an obvious landlord function and she could not say that it was definitely chargeable to the HRA. She thought that there was an element of discretion and if, as there appeared to be, there was an argument to be made that the particular service was targeted at HRA tenants then the council might be able to make an exception. She could not give any legal guarantees but the risk of a judicial review was considered fairly low in practice.
- 71.12 Councillor Bell referred to paragraph 5.2 on page 140 with regard to consultation. This stated that a letter had been sent to all Area Panel representatives and Chairs explaining the budget proposals. He had spoken to his East Area Chairman and his Ward representative and neither of them had received the letter. Councillor Bell requested that the letter be resent, and also sent to committee members. The Chair agreed to this request.
- 71.13 Councillor Hill referred to the amendment relating to the Children Centre contribution. She stressed that Budget Council in 2017 agreed that the HRA should contribute £250,000 to funding Youth Services and this had been supported by the Green councillors. There were some other areas where the HRA made a contribution to costs such as local newsletters. The HRA should be used in ways which best supported the tenants. The Committee had been told it was low risk. The General Fund was under pressure and council tax revenue only accounted for about 15% of the council's income. Councillor Hill wanted the contribution to remain. It was in the interest of council tenants and it was a good use of money.
- 71.14 Councillor Moonan supported the fact that the council had spent HRA money on youth services. The argument for that decision was that these youth services would be targeted at areas where there was a high proportion of council housing and it would benefit families, some of which were particularly vulnerable and in high need. The same argument applied to early year's provision, which could change vulnerable children's lives. All these services were at risk and the contribution was a small proportionate amount of money. In terms of the legal risk there were a significant number of local authorities around the country who were looking at using the HRA more creatively, due to the pressure that the General Fund was under. She commended the recommendation within the budget and would vote against the amendment.
- 71.15 Councillor Druitt seconded the third amendment which was proposed by Councillor Gibson and is as follows:

“To add recommendation 2.2 g and add brackets as shown below in ***bold italics***:

2.1 That Housing and New Homes Committee;

- a) recommends that Policy Resources and Growth Committee approves and recommends to full council the updated HRA revenue budget for 2018/19 as shown in appendix 2 **(as amended by 2.2 g)**

2.2 That Policy Resources and Growth Committee:

a) Recommends that full council approves the updated HRA revenue budget for 2018/19 as shown in Appendix 2 (as amended by 2.2 g)

(g) That the proposed £170k costs towards Children Centres continue to be funded by Council Tax through the General Fund Budget, with Appendix 2 amended to reflect this change

2.3 That the full Council:

- a) Approves the updated HRA revenue budget for 2018/19 as shown in Appendix 2 **(as amended by 2.2 g)”**

71.16 Councillor Druitt agreed that the Green councillors had supported the funding of Youth Services last year; however they were now questioning who should fund those services. Tenants were under a great deal of financial pressure and it was not right that they subsidised services that were available to the whole community. If the burden was spread across all council tax payers then everyone’s burden would be much lower. There was an opportunity this year to raise council tax by an extra 1%. It was not fair that tenants were being asked to pay twice, through their council tax and again through their rent for a service the whole community benefited from. This was not specifically a tenant service. The burden should fall across the wider community.

71.17 The Chair stressed that early years improved life chances for the most vulnerable young people in the city. She believed that this provision should remain in the budget.

71.18 The Committee had a short recess at this point to discuss the amendment.

71.19 Once the meeting reconvened, the Committee voted on the Green amendment set out in paragraph 71.15 above. There were two votes for the amendment, four votes against the amendment and three abstentions. The amendment was therefore not carried.

71.20 **RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the Housing & New Homes Committee:

- (a) recommends that Policy, Resources & Growth Committee approves and recommends to full Council the updated HRA revenue budget for 2018/19 as shown in Appendix 2;

- (b) recommends that Policy, Resources & Growth Committee approves and recommends to full Council the capital programme expenditure and financing budget of £36.344m for 2018/19 and notes the 3 year programme as set out in Appendix 4;
- (c) approves a rent reduction of 1% in line with government legislation as detailed in paragraph 3.13;
- (d) approves service charges and fees as detailed in Appendix 3;
- (e) notes the HRA forecast outturn for 2017/18 in Appendix 1 of a £0.425m underspend;
- (f) notes the Medium Term Financial Strategy and 30 year financial projections shown in Appendix 5;
- (g) notes the Integrated Service and Financial Plan (savings proposals) in Appendix 6.

Note: Councillor Wealls was not present during the discussion and decision on this item, having left the meeting after item 70.

72 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL

72.1 No items were referred for information to Full Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of