

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL****HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE****4.00pm 19 SEPTEMBER 2018****HOVE TOWN HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBER****MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Meadows (Chair) Councillor Hill (Deputy Chair), Councillor Mears (Opposition Spokesperson), Councillor Gibson (Group Spokesperson), Councillors Barnett, Bell, Cattell, DrUITT, Lewry, and Moonan.

**PART ONE****17 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS****17a) Declarations of Substitutes**

17.1 Councillor Cattell substituted for Councillor Atkinson. Councillor Mears reported that Councillor Lewry would arrive late for the meeting due to an appointment.

**17b) Declarations of Interests**

17.2 There were no declarations of interests.

**17c) Exclusion of the Press and Public**

17.3 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.

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

**18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

18.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the Housing and New Homes Committee meeting held on 13 June 2018 are agreed and signed as a correct record.

**19 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS**

19.1 The Chair stated the following:

“We have had a busy summer in housing. After much work, a new ‘Selective Licensing Scheme’ for private rented homes in 12 central and coastal wards in the city has been agreed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Selective Licensing Scheme will be introduced for all private rented homes not currently covered by mandatory or additional licensing for houses in multiple occupation. Members will remember that this scheme was approved by committee in November 2017 following an in-depth consultation. I am also pleased that we have received 1627 applications for our additional licensing scheme which, with Selective Licensing, will raise the standard of Private Sector Housing in the city. A full update on Private Sector Housing will be brought to committee in due course.

I am pleased that we are continuing to deliver our ambition to increase the number of new homes in the city. A positive planning decision for Selsfield Drive will enable us to build thirty new flats. This in addition to the homes purchased under our buy back policy, which members will see has been reviewed, the scope widened and is on the agenda this evening.

I would finally like to remind you that we are holding a special Housing and New Homes Committee next Wednesday at Brighton Town Hall at 4pm. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and agree the new arrangements for the delivery of our responsive repairs and capital works programmes currently provided by Mears. I have attended Area Panel meetings to discuss this and have been impressed with the engagement of tenants and leaseholders in this process.

I will be moving item 28 forward on the agenda as there are young people in the audience supported by officers.”

## **20 CALL OVER**

20.1 It was agreed that all items be reserved for discussion.

## **21 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **Petitions**

21.1 There were no petitions.

### **Questions**

21.2 David Croydon asked the following question:

“The council is taking 40+ leaseholders to tribunal. Some of them disputed the Major works bills for necessity and quality. The disputes process was not followed and mediation was refused.

The council’s Housing Department has a budget of some £60m+ pa. It is defending the interests of a company with some £800m+ pa income.

Sadly, the leaseholders do not have this order of resources.

Are the councillors aware of this and do they know how much is being spent on this project?"

21.3 The Chair replied as follows:

**"Thank you for your question – a similar question has been asked before. To clarify, the council is not taking leaseholders to tribunal but are taking a case to tribunal - a major works project at 5 buildings on the Bristol estate. The determination of the tribunal will affect leaseholders in terms of how much they will have to pay for the works. The cost can't be increased. The tribunal may of course reduce the costs if they see fit. The outcome will affect all leaseholders whether they are part of the case or not.**

**The council incurred costs of around £3 million in carrying out these external refurbishment works and leaseholders were invoiced their lease share of the costs on 30 September 2015 – the total amount billed to leaseholders was around £1 million.**

**Whilst the many leaseholders have paid, a number of leaseholders have withheld payment of their service charge. The council has dealt with disputes as best it could over a period of 18 months but our responses were not accepted. We decided that in order to resolve the dispute it would need to be finally decided legally. The leases of course are legal contracts.**

**The important point is not the council's Housing budget, or Mears turnover. The important point is that in March 2017, £400,000 of service charge was being withheld and the council very much has a duty to resolve the matter.**

**The council does not believe it is possible to resolve a major works dispute of this nature by mediation where the council believes the costs to have been reasonably incurred and the works carried out to a reasonable standard while some leaseholders do not believe they should contribute at all. That is not something that can be mediated. It requires a competent body to hear the structural surveying and legal facts on each side and determine the matter.**

**There were two approaches the council could have taken. One was to issue proceedings against leaseholders withholding their service charge in the County Court for debt. The other was to have the matter heard at the First-tier tribunal who have been set up to determine cases of disputed service charge such as this.**

**The leaseholders have an expert witness to present their evidence. Their statement of case was written by a barrister. The council is duty bound to present its case in full supported by all its evidence. You asked if the councillors know of this. Yes we have been sent a couple of emails regarding this matter over the period of the last 18 months."**

21.4 As a supplementary question Mr Croydon circulated a paper to members which he stated was the start of the bundle sent from the barrister acting for the council. Mr Croydon stated that he found that mediation was something that could have been

done, and would have been infinitely cheaper for everyone, and was absolutely refused after tribunal was taken. He asked if the councillors were aware of this? Did they all support this behaviour? The Chair replied that councillors were very aware of the procedures that the council as a corporate body have to follow in all legal matters. She thanked Mr Croydon for his question and did not permit him to ask individual councillors on the committee if they supported the process.

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

### **Deputations**

21.6 There were no deputations.

## **22 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

### **(a) Petitions**

#### Improve Our Estates Now

22.1 The Committee considered the following petition signed by 153 people and submitted by Councillor Janio:

*“The Estates Development Budget (EDB) is a resident led project that improves council-housing-owned-buildings, community facilities, land or local environment - or that benefits the community and the quality of life of the tenants. The Labour Administration left £407,000 in the EDB Budget Reserve last year, and this year the budget was cut to £348,000 leaving £237,000 unspent.*

*We are requesting the Labour Administration spend a minimum of £100,000 of this reserve on improving the Estates across Hangleton and Knoll immediately.”*

22.2 The Chair responded as follows:

**“EDB reserves were £407,000, as mentioned in your petition, as at 1 April 2018. The HRA 2018/19 budget assumes a total spend on EDB of £348,000; £178,000 from this year’s budget resources and £170,000 from EDB reserves. This leaves estimated reserves of £237,000 at 31 March 2019. The current plan is to spend the reserves over a few years to temporarily boost the annual budget for EDB rather than spend it all in one year. By doing this we have been able to make it easier for residents to plan and submit their bids by gradually reducing the budget rather than have a dramatic drop between years.**

**The annual EDB budget is divided between the four area panels, according to the number of properties in each area. Resident associations, and other groups of residents, can make bids for funding to carry out work that fit the criteria of the budget. Residents make decisions on which bids to support at special meetings of the four area panels in April each year. To spend an additional £100,000 in Hangleton and Knoll would undermine the established process for allocating the budget and making decisions on how it is spent and may be considered unfair to those in other parts of the City.**

**There is still time for residents in Hangleton & Knoll to submit a bid for the 2019/20 programme and I have asked officers to contact representatives in these areas to offer their assistance.”**

**22.3 RESOLVED:**

That the petition be noted.

**(b) Questions**

22.4 There were no questions submitted by councillors.

**(c) Letters**

22.5 There were no letters submitted by councillors.

**(d) Notices of Motion**

**(i) Truly Affordable Housing at Brighton General Site**

22.6 The Committee considered the following Notice of Motion agreed at full council as follows.

“This Council notes that the Brighton General Hospital site is a public asset, and as such should be used for public good; prioritising NHS use first and foremost with any spare land used for truly affordable housing.

This Council therefore requests:

1. A report to be provided to Housing and New Homes Committee, detailing the availability of land at the site and the most appropriate ways in which to develop it for truly affordable housing, including options for development by the Joint Venture, B&H Community Land Trust, directly by the Council, or a combination.
2. That the Chief Executive writes to partners at Sussex Community NHS Trust, to communicate the will of the Council expressed in this Notice of Motion, so that all parties can conduct negotiations with this in mind”.

22.7 Councillor Moonan welcomed the Green Notice of Motion and noted that this was one of the few brownfield sites in the city. This was an NHS owned site and the NHS were interested in working with the council. Key worker housing had been discussed in detail as nurses, physios and doctors were all struggling to live in the city. A report would be brought to the Committee regarding this ongoing work. Councillor Moonan stressed that affordable housing was an aspiration. She assured the Committee that the Chief Executive was having conversations with the NHS.

22.8 Councillor Gibson welcomed the action taken to date. A key point was this was a precious site that was publically owned and should be used for public use.

22.9 Councillor Mears pointed out that the NHS would have aspirations for the site but housing could have an impact. She supported the work to help key workers and stressed that this should be made a priority. She would welcome a report to the Housing & New Homes Committee.

22.10 Councillor Druitt concurred with previous comments. He asked if the Chief Executive had already written to the NHS. Councillor Moonan explained that there had been a great deal of discussion between the council and the NHS. The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing stated that she and the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture had met with the NHS three weeks ago and had discussed the Notice in Motion.

22.11 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Notice of Motion be noted.
- (2) That a report be brought to the Housing & New Homes Committee as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

**(ii) Deaths in Temporary Accommodation**

22.12 The Board considered the following Notice of Motion:

“This Committee notes that as a matter of urgency, a report is due to come to the next Housing & New Homes Committee regarding issues at Kendal Court, Newhaven and requests that it should provide:

- Information on the numbers of deaths in all the different forms of temporary and emergency accommodation over the last 2 years.
- Information of the support services that residents can access in Newhaven and a comparison with those available to residents in Brighton and Hove (including rough sleepers). Including any changes to the support provided over the last 2 years.
- A review of the support needs of the 54 residents of Kendal court, analysis of how well they are being met and what steps may need to be taken should more support be needed.
- Information about management in regard to managing the block and an assessment of the effectiveness.
- An independent survey of residents to identify their issues and concerns that we may seek to address.”

22.13 Councillor Gibson stressed that it was important that this was a joint Notice of Motion agreed by all parties. It was very worrying that there had been 7 deaths in 2 years. This meant that people were more likely to die in Kendal Court than on the streets. There needed to be a careful investigation with the support of the council. Councillor Gibson welcomed the fact that there would be a full report to the next Committee. He commended the motion.

22.14 Councillor Mears remarked that she was pleased to see the joint Notice of Motion which reflected councillors’ concerns. She stressed that councillors took this matter very

seriously. The report to the next meeting would provide more information on why there were a higher percentage of deaths in this accommodation.

22.15 Councillor Moonan informed members that the council took any death of a person under its care very seriously. The Safeguarding Board had looked at rough sleeping deaths and had started to look at deaths in different forms of accommodation in the city. A great many clients were very vulnerable and the Board was looking to see if there was something over and above that fact that was leading to deaths. The council tried to commission accommodation very carefully and were robustly managing contracts.

22.16 The Chair confirmed that there would be one joint report for the Health & Wellbeing Board and Housing & New Homes Committee as joint action needed to be taken. This was agreed as the best course of action by the committee.

#### 22.17 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Notice of Motion be noted.
- (2) That a joint report be brought to the Housing & New Homes Committee and the Health & Wellbeing Board as outlined in the Notice of Motion.

### 23 HOME PURCHASE POLICY UPDATE

23.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which sought to provide an update on the pilot to purchase properties that have previously been sold under the right to buy and that the council had first refusal to buy back. The report was presented by the Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager who outlined an amendment to the report. At the Estate Regeneration Member's Board a correction was made to the criteria. The report stated that the properties (Section 106 sites) should be amongst Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock. It should read **nearby** Brighton & Hove City Council stock.

23.2 Councillor Gibson welcomed the report and the progress made and paid tribute to the Chair for wanting to see the Home Purchase Policy developed. Councillor Gibson welcomed the detail in appendix 1 and stated that he would like to see this updated in a year. He set out the following amendment:

"To amend the recommendations, as shown below in ***bold italics***:

#### 2.2

Agrees the revised Home Purchase Policy attached at Appendix 2 which broadens the range of properties which the council can purchase beyond just those which were formerly owned by the council, ***with the following amendments as shown in the box below,***

#### 3 Criteria

3.1 The decision to purchase properties will be dependent on a business case on a property by property basis which would be determined by the following factors:

- The purchase price (up to £250,000) and availability of capital funds
- The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy.
- The cost of any refurbishment work required to bring the property up to the Brighton & Hove Standard ~~(maximum of 10% of purchase price)~~
- Whether on going maintenance costs are considered to be excessive ~~(or greater than average stock levels)~~
- The property is situated amongst, **or near to**, existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock
- There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
- Whether a purchase of a property would free up land or enable access to a site suitable for development of affordable housing
- Savings to the council through reduced need for temporary accommodation or specialist accommodation
- ~~The impact of a subsidy in addition to the rental income on the viability of the purchase (to a maximum of £10,000)~~ **The impact of net subsidy provided to the overall programme**

## 8 Other opportunities

8.1 Alongside the purchase of homes, other opportunities may become available to purchase properties or land for housing including securing affordable housing units as part of new housing developments in the city (S106 sites). The viability of each potential purchase would need to be completed taking account of:

- The purchase price and nature of the property/land
  - The cost of any conversion and refurbishment work to bring it into use
  - The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy
  - Grant funding opportunities to support delivery of new housing
  - Planning considerations
  - There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
  - The property/land is situated amongst existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock
- 8.2 The viability of each potential S106 site would need to be completed taking account of:

- The number of units and purchase price proposed
- Management viability e.g. would the units need to be in a separate block
- Financial viability of the property
- The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy
- Timing of the purchase. An early discussion with developers would be essential, particularly if we propose to take forward affordable rented only units
- Planning considerations as we would only be seeking affordable rented properties at present
- There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
- ~~**The property/land is situated amongst existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock. The proximity of the property or land to existing Brighton and Hove Council housing stock;**~~

8.2 The viability of each potential S106 site would need to be completed taking account of:

- The number of units and purchase price proposed
- Management viability e.g. would the units need to be in a separate block
- Financial viability of the property
- The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy
- Timing of the purchase. An early discussion with developers would be essential, particularly if we propose to take forward affordable rented only units
- Planning considerations as we would only be seeking affordable rented properties at present
- There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
- ~~**The property/land is situated amongst existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock. The proximity of the property or land to existing Brighton and Hove Council housing stock;**~~

and to add recommendation 2.3, to read as shown in bold italics:

### **2.3**

***For Committee to receive a report in a year's time on the updated version of Appendix 1, with such a report to provide estimates of the subsidy modelled for 27.5% living wage rents as well as an assessment of the estimated saving to the council as a whole, should the property assessed be let as temporary accommodation."***

- 23.3 The amendment was seconded by Councillor Druitt.
- 23.4 Councillor Mears stated that she was not sure if the amendment was adding anything to an already very detailed policy and she and her group would support the recommendations in the report. Members had already been told that a decision on every purchase would be made on a business case.
- 23.5 Councillor Cattell remarked that many housing associations and registered providers were pulling back from their main purpose of providing affordable housing. The recommendation would give the council opportunities in the future. The council could step in when registered providers could not.
- 23.6 Councillor Bell welcomed the report and stressed that the business case for each property would be submitted to Housing & New Homes Committee, Planning Committee and Policy, Resources & Growth Committee. This was an excellent start. The amendment was not needed.
- 23.7 Councillor Hill stated that the amendment did not make a difference to the policy but would enable the council to do more of what was already being done.
- 23.8 Councillor Moonan praised the policy. She stressed that should the amendments be agreed, officers would still be asked to look at purchases on a case by case basis.
- 23.9 Councillor Druitt considered the report to be good and a very positive step forward. The Green Group amendments were simply minor adjustments to improve it. The concerns that had been raised were that the amendments might move away from a case by case basis to a more holistic policy basis. He assured members that was not the case. The amendments still made it clear that this was a case by case policy and each purchase would only be undertaken if there was a business case.
- 23.10 Councillor Druitt drew attention to the original recommendation "the cost of any refurbishment work required to bring the property up to the Brighton & Hove Standard (Maximum of 10% purchase price). He stressed that if the purchase price was 10.01% that property would be eliminated from the list. Councillor Druitt referred to the recommendation "whether ongoing maintenance costs are considered to be excessive or greater than average stock levels." He asked what would happen if there were really good value ongoing maintenance costs but they happened to be 1% more than the average. Finally, he referred to the recommendation, "The impact of a subsidy in addition to the rental income on the viability of the purchase (to a maximum of £10,000)." He asked what would happen if this was £10,001? He considered that these were arbitrary numbers that were ruling out potentially good properties. The Green

amendments took out arbitrary targets and looked at each property on a case by case basis. The amendments added a report on the whole scheme in a year's time. Finally, Councillor Druitt asked whether each business case for each individual property would be reported to the committee.

(Councillor Lewry arrived at the meeting at this point – 5.13pm).

- 23.11 In answer to questions the Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager confirmed that in relation to the right to buy back a property the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing had delegated authority up to £250,000 to purchase those properties. That was how the council had been operating under the pilot. In terms of the expansion of other opportunities and Section 106 sites; all of those would be subject to a business case and come back through the Committee.
- 23.12 Councillor Bell referred to Councillor Druitt's comments. He had confidence that officers would still build a business case if a property was slightly over the percentage purchase price as stated in the report.
- 23.13 In answer to further queries the Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager clarified that individual properties that were purchased back, (where there was a right of first refusal), were purchased under delegated authority. The bigger sites such as the Section 106 sites would come back through committee. The Executive Director further clarified that if the council had best opportunity, but one of the sections of the policy was not met such as the 10% or if it was £12,000 instead of £10,000, within the policy she did not have delegated powers to make an exception. However she did have the authority, after consultation with the Chair to bring any report to committee. In addition, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chair had urgency powers.
- 23.14 Councillor Gibson stressed that a key point was that the second part of the amendment asked for a report back to Committee. The amendment was making the policy smoother and easier. The key factor was whether the business modelling stacked up and whether the programme required a subsidy.
- 23.15 At this point the Committee voted on the amendments outlined in paragraph 23.2 as amended. Before voting it was agreed to remove the Green amendment to the fifth bullet point of Section 3.1, the last bullet point of 8.1 and the last bullet point of 8.2 as these had already been amended by officers. Amendment 2.3 was further amended to read "for committee to receive a report in a year's time on the updated version of Appendix 1, with such report to **include** estimates of the subsidy modelled for 27.5% living wage rents as well as an assessment of the estimated saving to the council as a whole, should the property assessed be let as temporary accommodation."
- 23.16 Members voted for the amendments as follows. 2.2 (3 Criteria) third bullet point (agreed by 6 votes in favour with 4 abstentions). 2.2 (3 Criteria) - fourth bullet point (agreed by 6 votes in favour with 4 abstentions). 2.2 (3 Criteria) Last bullet point (agreed by 6 votes in favour with 4 abstentions).
- 23.17 Members voted on the officer's amendment. The report stated that the properties (Section 106 sites) should be amongst Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock. It

should now read ***nearby*** Brighton & Hove City Council stock. This change was unanimously agreed.

23.18 Members voted on amendment 2.3 as further amended (see paragraph 23.16 above). This was agreed unanimously.

23.19 Members voted on the substantive recommendations as amended which were agreed unanimously.

23.20 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Housing & New Homes Committee:

- (1) Notes the outcomes of the Home Purchase Policy pilot to date.
- (2) Agrees the revised Home Purchase Policy attached at Appendix 2 which broadens the range of properties which the council can purchase beyond just those which were formerly owned by the council, ***with the following amendments***

(All references to property being situated amongst existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock be amended to read '***situated near by Brighton & Hove City Council stock.***' as amended by officers.

To amend the recommendations, as shown below in ***bold italics***:

### 3 Criteria

3.1 The decision to purchase properties will be dependent on a business case on a property by property basis which would be determined by the following factors:

- The purchase price (up to £250,000) and availability of capital funds
- The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy.
- The cost of any refurbishment work required to bring the property up to the Brighton & Hove Standard (~~***maximum of 10% of purchase price***~~)
- Whether ongoing maintenance costs are considered to be excessive (~~***or greater than average stock levels***~~)
- The property is situated nearby existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock
- There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
- Whether a purchase of a property would free up land or enable access to a site suitable for development of affordable housing

- Savings to the council through reduced need for temporary accommodation or specialist accommodation
- ~~**The impact of a subsidy in addition to the rental income on the viability of the purchase (to a maximum of £10,000) – The impact of net subsidy provided to the overall programme**~~

## 8 Other opportunities

8.1 Alongside the purchase of homes, other opportunities may become available to purchase properties or land for housing including securing affordable housing units as part of new housing developments in the city (S106 sites). The viability of each potential purchase would need to be completed taking account of:

- The purchase price and nature of the property/land
- The cost of any conversion and refurbishment work to bring it into use
- The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy
- Grant funding opportunities to support delivery of new housing
- Planning considerations
- There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
- The property/land is situated nearby existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock

## 8.2

The viability of each potential S106 site would need to be completed taking account of:

- The number of units and purchase price proposed
- Management viability e.g. would the units need to be in a separate block
- Financial viability of the property
- The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy
- Timing of the purchase. An early discussion with developers would be essential, particularly if we propose to take forward affordable rented only units
- Planning considerations as we would only be seeking affordable rented properties at present

- There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
- The property/land is situated nearby existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock.

8.2 The viability of each potential S106 site would need to be completed taking account of:

- The number of units and purchase price proposed
  - Management viability e.g. would the units need to be in a separate block
  - Financial viability of the property
  - The viability of the purchase against rent levels as set out in the council's rent policy
  - Timing of the purchase. An early discussion with developers would be essential, particularly if we propose to take forward affordable rented only units
  - Planning considerations as we would only be seeking affordable rented properties at present
  - There is a specific housing need for the type of property that is being offered, as established by the Housing Register
  - The property/land is situated nearby existing Brighton & Hove City Council housing stock.
- (3) For Committee to receive a report in a year's time on the updated version of Appendix 1, with such a report to include estimates of the subsidy modelled for 27.5% living wage rents as well as an assessment of the estimated saving to the council as a whole, should the property assessed be let as temporary accommodation.

## **24 NEW HOME FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - ROTHERFIELD CRESCENT – SCHEME APPROVAL**

- 24.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture which presented five options for consideration by members. It identified a preferred option (Option 1) and recommended that this was taken forward to the detailed design stage. The report was presented by the Project Manager, Estate Regeneration who explained that the report presented the architect's amended scheme which had been value engineered in response to the points raised by members at the Housing & New Homes Committee in November 2017. Paragraph 3.4 provided a summary of the main items where savings had been made. The value engineering exercise had realised a saving of 15% (£178,000) on total scheme costs from £1.215M to £1.037M inclusive of professional fees. A detailed breakdown of the headline savings was contained in Table 2 of the report.

- 24.2 An independent review of the costs had been carried out by the council's cost consultants Potter Raper under its city build partnership. They found that the revised scheme costs appeared to be accurate and robust. Sufficient budget had been set aside for the value engineering scheme at Rotherfield Crescent in the current HRA Capital Investment programme. Current forecasts for the use of Right to Buy receipts in 2019/20 included the development of Rotherfield Crescent. Any delay to the scheme would have a negative impact on their use and would increase the risk of not achieving the required expenditure. Members were asked to approve the value engineering scheme and agree rent levels based on the new homes rent policy. If approval was granted then it was anticipated that a planning application would be submitted later this year.
- 24.3 Councillor Gibson set out the following amendment:
- “To amend the recommendation 2.2 (iii) to read as shown below in bold italics:
- iii. The scheme rent levels at 37.5% of Living Wage **rents for 3 bed properties and 27.5% living wage rents for the 2 bed property**, in line with the New Homes Rent Policy.”
- 24.4 Councillor Gibson welcomed the savings that had been made. There had been a better use of resources and this had enabled the council to charge lower rents. Councillor Gibson raised the question about financial viability. He asked for it to be confirmed that the option that was being proposed in the amendment for rent levels (27.5% Living Wage rents for the 2 bed property and 37.5% of Living Wage rents for the 3 bed properties) would produce a subsidy in the modelling of £42,000 with a payback period of 51.9 years. The Principal Accountant confirmed that amendment did mean that the scheme with the mix of rents produced a surplus of £42,000 with a payback period of 51.9 years. As amended the scheme would be viable.
- 24.5 At this point in the proceedings the Chair stated that she would like to see the paperwork to support what had been confirmed by the Principal Accountant. It was confirmed that Table 3 on page 66 was going to be amended and circulated to councillors. The Committee would consider other items on the agenda whilst the paperwork was prepared.
- 24.6 When the consideration of the report was resumed, the Chair reported that councillors had now received paperwork relating to the financial implications of the Green Group amendment.
- 24.7 Councillor Bell welcomed the report. He had had great reservations about the costs, overdesign and specification when the report was first presented at committee. He questioned why the current proposals had not been presented previously. This made him concerned that other schemes were not being engineered for the value of residents. The Lead City Regeneration Programme Manager reassured Councillor Bell that officers were taking a value engineered approach for all schemes in the programme and were trying to build in value and learning from the programme to date. The scheme under consideration was different in that it had been submitted through a design competition. Officers had learnt from the process.

- 24.8 Councillor Cattell asked the Senior Lawyer to advise if she should abstain from voting on this item as she was Chair of the Planning Committee. Councillor Moonan stated that she was also a member of the Planning Committee. The Senior Lawyer confirmed that it would be safer to abstain. If Councillors Cattell and Moonan voted and expressed a view, they could be said to have pre-determined their decision at the Planning Committee. Both councillors could remain in the Council Chamber.
- 24.9 Councillor Gibson stated that the amendment was straightforward. What was being recommended was in line with the new homes rent policies, that the council should achieve a mix of rent levels on schemes. The new table produced by the Principal Accountant could replace the one in the report should the amendment be agreed. Councillor Gibson stated that there was a problem with affordability in the city. By lowering the rents as proposed in the amendment, they potentially would be affordable for a household on an income of £20,000. Councillor Gibson commended the amendment which was seconded by Councillor Druitt.
- 24.10 The Chair thanked officers who had carried out an enormous amount of work on the scheme.
- 24.11 Members voted on the amendment as set out in paragraph 24.3 above. Members voted in favour of the amendment by 8 votes with 2 abstentions.
- 24.12 Members then voted on the substantive recommendations as amended above. Members voted in favour by 8 votes with 2 abstentions.
- 24.13 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That the Housing & New Homes Committee note the options and associated risks presented in paras 4.1-4.2. of this report.
  - (2) That the Housing & New Homes Committee agrees Option 1 as amended and approves:
    - i. The proposed scheme of four new council homes at Rotherfield Crescent, Brighton under the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme;
    - ii The procurement of a development partner and professional services for the delivery of the project and give delegated authority to the Executive Director, Environment, Economy and Culture in consultation with the Executive Director, Finance and Resources to award the contract following completion of the procurement process;
    - iii The scheme rent levels at 37.5% of Living Wage **rents for 3 bed properties and 27.5% living wage rents for the 2 bed property**, in line with the New Homes Rent Policy;
  - (3) That the Housing and New Homes Committee recommend to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee to:
    - iv Appropriate the Rotherfield Crescent former garages site for planning purposes and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Economy and Culture to appropriate for housing once the development is complete.

## 25 OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF ALLOCATIONS PLAN

- 25.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which informed members that a new Housing Allocations Policy for the city had been adopted in December 2016. The new policy contained a provision of an allocations plan. The current report looked at the performance of the allocations plan since it was adopted and introduced in January 2017. The report also gave an update on the implementation of the new allocations policy and recommendations for a new allocations plan for approval as required under the allocations policy. The allocations Policy provided that a new Allocations Plan would be approved by the Housing & New homes Committee on an annual basis. In addition, any deviation of more than 5% of each allocation queue was reported to committee. The report was presented by the Head of Housing Needs.
- 25.2 Councillor Gibson referred to table 14.1 on page 117 of the report and asked for confirmation that with regard to the council's interest queue over the period that had been monitored, there were 37 allocations in the council's interest queue out of 948. The Head of Housing Needs confirmed that in relation to the council's interest queue from January 2017 to March 2018, there were 37 properties that went to the council interest queue which was about 4%, which was less than the 10% target.
- 25.3 Councillor Gibson stated that there were 37 allocations whereby it ideally would have been 95 allocations if the 10% target had been met. His understanding of the allocations plan was that the council aimed to be within 5% of the target allocations. The council were therefore not within the 5% range on the 95 the council would be seeking to achieve from the council interest queue. The Head of Housing Needs confirmed this was correct.
- 25.4 Councillor Gibson praised the report and appreciated a great deal of work had gone into it. There were many helpful proposals. His concern, which related to the amendment, was that there was underachievement particularly with regard to council interest. The Green Group amendment would ensure that the council would get back on track for the allocations queue. The amendment deleted the reporting period for the allocations plan. The amendment further recommended that the committee should receive a report in a year's time setting out the performance against the allocations plan. The amendment was set out as follows:

"To amend the recommendations 2.3.12 and renumber the recommendations accordingly, adding a further recommendation 2.3.14, as shown below in bold italics:

***2.3.12 Change the reporting period of the allocations plan from one year to three years.***

### **2.3.13**

**2.3.12** Amend Band D Applicants, required to be on the Housing Register of the purpose of obtaining shared ownership. These applicants may only be assessed for the above purpose and will not receive an allocation of social housing or be nominated to a

Housing Association, to include the following. Different financial caps may be applied for applications for shared ownership than those used for social /housing applications. All applications for this band will remain suspended whilst in this Band.

**~~2.3.14~~**

**2.3.13** Change the method of increasing the income and savings from the Consumer Prices Index to the increase in average rents in the city allowing applicants 50% of income for the purpose of rent.

***2.3.14 That the committee receive a report, in a years time, setting out the performance against the allocations plan, for the period January 2017 – March 2019”***

- 25.5 The amendment was seconded by Councillor Druitt.
- 25.6 Councillor Moonan thanked officers for the report. As council lead for Adult Social Care she was particularly interested in the council's interest queue as she was concerned that the council were not achieving the 10% that had being allocated. She had been doing some work between Adult Social Care & Housing Services to look at the barriers for the council not allocating those properties. These were a vulnerable group of people and there were barriers around people being able to maintain their tenancy. Many of these barriers had been overcome and she was confident that allocations would go up, all within the criteria set out in the allocations policy. With regard to the amendment, Councillor Moonan stressed that important action was already being taken to overcome barriers. However, in principal, Councillor Moonan did not have a problem with the amendments.
- 25.7 Councillor Mears noted Councillor Moonan's comments but stressed that that there was not an Adult Social Care Committee, so there was no way of looking at the detail. Councillor Mears had recently substituted on the Health & Wellbeing Board on 11 September. There was a presentation from Adult Social Care about expanding Housing First and officers showed a slide which clearly showed how clients reached the stage where they could receive housing. The slide showed social housing as well as private rented social housing. Councillor Mears had asked what criteria was used for the local connection and had not received an answer. Housing Services clearly had a local connection of five years as agreed by the council housing policy. In the past there had been issues about Adult Social Care running their own allocation policy. It was concerning that through the Health and Wellbeing Board, Adult Social Care was using another system. They needed to report to Housing & New Homes Committee on what local connection was being used on expanding Housing First.
- 25.8 Councillor Mears stated that the Allocations report was excellent and officers had carried out a great deal of work. With regard to transfers, she asked that it was ensured that all transfers criteria was checked to allow rebranding to homeless people if their criteria was not a transfer.
- 25.9 With regard to the amendment, Councillor Mears referred to the original 2.3.12 which stated "Change the reporting period of the allocations plan from one year to three years". She also referred to the proposed amendment to 2.3.14 which called the committee to receive a report in a year's time setting out the performance against the allocations plan, for the period January 2017 to March 2019. Councillor Mears had no

problem with a report coming back to committee in a year, but stressed that 2.3.14 would override 2.3.12. Councillor Gibson clarified that the Green amendment would delete the original 2.3.12.

- 25.10 The Head of Housing Needs responded to questions put by Councillor Mears. With regard to the comments on transfers, officers would pick up the issue regarding homeless people. The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing confirmed that anyone housed in council stock from Adult Social Care had to meet the council's allocations criteria in respect of the local connection policy which was five years.
- 25.11 Councillor Mears asked for reassurance that Adult Social Care were adhering to the housing allocation policy and were not using their own discretion around local connection. Councillor Mears asked for a response in writing. The Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing gave her assurance. She stressed that the most important thing to remember was that Adult Social Care did not allocate properties. The allocations were carried out by the housing allocation staff, who abided by the rules.
- 25.12 Councillor Bell asked about the financial implications of the proposed amended new 2.3.14. Was there any benefit to the amendment. The Head of Housing Needs confirmed that there were resource implications. Bringing a report back in one year would take up officers' resources. Staff worked at full capacity and would have to shift other jobs around.
- 25.13 Councillor Moonan remarked that the Housing First model was presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board and sought approval for the wrap around support that is part of the Housing First model. This effective support was for highly vulnerable homeless people and rough sleepers. They were housed first and the support was built around them. The Health and Wellbeing Board approved the wrap around support and the accommodation would be submitted to the Strategic Accommodation Board. If any were accommodated in housing stock they would meet the rest of the allocations criteria. This could be a perfect solution to a number of complex clients.
- 25.14 Councillor Gibson drew attention to an issue that some residents had raised with him. When they were downsizing, for example from 3 beds to 2 beds or from 4 bed to 2 beds but only needed one bedroom, they found that they were not able to downsize advantageously through the policy. He stressed that the council wanted to encourage people to downsize. The Head of Housing Needs agreed that the council did want to encourage people to downsize but stressed that 2 bedroom accommodation was the most sought after in the city. Officers tried to allocate accommodation according to need. The council did not have an allocation policy currently that allowed people to have an extra bedroom. The Chair stressed that there were flexibilities in the policy around disabilities.
- 25.15 Councillor Hill referred to the amendment and asked if there was any scope to compromise and change 2.3.14 to "That the Committee receive a report in **two** years' time..." instead of a year's time. Councillor Gibson stated that he would be prepared to compromise and amend the amendment to report back in two years.
- 25.16 After some discussion it was clarified that by the Executive Director that what the amendment was saying was that although the committee would have the report in two

years' time, it would not just report on performance from today to two years' time. It would report from 2017 (the beginning of the allocations policy) to 2020.

- 25.17 Councillor Druitt seconded the amended amendment. He stated that Housing & New Homes Committee in 2016 passed an amendment that changed the number of refusals from one to two. He understood at the time that the amendment covered all queues. Correspondence received today suggested that that was not the case and that the homeless queue was not included. The Head of Housing Needs explained that the homeless queue was not included as the homeless legislation was very clear that one offer of suitable accommodation discharges the homelessness duty.
- 25.18 Councillor Druitt referred to people who were removed from the waiting list at the time and asked how many had appealed the decision and whether any appeals had been upheld. The Head of Housing Needs referred to table on page 113 of the report which set out all the reviews. There was a column that showed the numbers that had been removed from the register. They were all the people who had requested a review based on being removed from the register. There was a total of 513 reviews. Only 31 were upheld. Some were still outstanding. She would circulate to members the reason why some were upheld as requested by Councillor Druitt.
- 25.19 Members voted on the amended amendment which was agreed unanimously. Members then voted on the substantive recommendations which were agreed unanimously as amended.
- 25.20 **RESOLVED:-**

That the Housing & New Homes Committee:

- (1) Notes the performance monitoring report at appendix one of the report
- (2) Agrees that the percentage of properties advertised under the Allocations Plan remains as follows:
  - Homeless 40%
  - Transfers 30%
  - Homeseekers 20%
  - Council's Interest (Social Services) 10%
- (3) Agrees to the following minor amendments to the Allocations Policy as set out
  - (i) Band C Sheltered no other housing need – update to restrict this band reason to bids only on sheltered accommodation and not general needs.
  - (ii) Point of clarification – award of extra bedroom as contained in appendix two paras 3.3 to 3.7
  - (iii) 3 bedroom properties with a dining room – increase minimum number of occupants to maximise occupancy level to large properties

- (iv) Decrease total household income in policy to
  - One bed £22,000
  - Two bed £32,000
  - Three bed and above £36,000
- (v) Increase savings cap to four months average rent
  - One bed £5,000
  - Two bed £7,000
  - Three bed and above £8,200
- (vi) Increase savings cap for sheltered applicants only to £16,000
- (vii) Waive savings cap on extra care applications. Waiver cases can only be offered accommodation if there are no other non-waiver case waiting for extra care
- (viii) Remove sheltered Panel from the sheltered assessment process
- (ix) Introduce new Band A – sheltered applicant with need to move under the allocations policy within the same scheme
- (x) Affordability of accommodation due to the welfare benefit cap – Ability to by-pass applicant who is not able to afford accommodation.
- (xi) Removal of over 50s requirement in seven blocks of flats. (not over 55 for sheltered)
- (xii) Amend Band D Applicants, required to be on the Housing Register of the purpose of obtaining shared ownership. These applicants may only be assessed for the above purpose and will not receive an allocation of social housing or be nominated to a Housing Association, to include the following. Different financial caps may be applied for applications for shared ownership than those used for social /housing applications. All applications for this band will remain suspended whilst in this Band.
- (xiii) Change the method of increasing the income and savings from the Consumer Prices Index to the increase in average rents in the city allowing applicants 50% of income for the purpose of rent.
- (xiv) That the Committee receive a report, in two years' time, setting out the performance against the allocations plan, for the period January 2017- March 2020.

## 26 HOUSING FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

- 26.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which updated members on the continued joint work with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) in response to housing fire health & safety matters arising following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The Committee were informed of

developments and oversight of fire doors, consultation on installation of sprinkler systems and other actions taken, and developments post the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The report was presented by the Lead Consultant, Health & Safety, accompanied by Andrew Gausden, Head of Business Safety, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

- 26.2 Councillor Druitt thanked officers for the report and stated that he appreciated the level of consultation. He referred to paragraph 3.9 in relation to the risk assessment. This stated that “We have looked specifically at the potential impacts of the doors failing within 30 minutes and the assessments have confirmed that the risk remains low.” Councillor Druitt asked what was the potential impact of the doors failing. Paragraph 3.14 referred to the proposal to identify suitable funds for the future replacement of Manse Masterdor and review the similar situation that had arisen with IG Doors. Councillor Druitt asked how much this would cost. Councillor Druitt referred to Paragraph 3.21 in relation to action being taken in relation to sprinkler installation. He considered this to be a reasonable compromise, and still took into account people’s wishes. However, he expressed concern that if a person refused sprinkler installation, it might adversely affect the household above and below that person. Were officers confident this was a safe compromise?
- 26.3 The Lead Consultant, Health & Safety explained that in relation to paragraph 3.9, a door failing prematurely was not necessarily a problem if other fire safety measures were in place and to the satisfaction of the Fire Service. Fire safety involved layers of precaution. The main principle was that if a door was closed it would contribute 15 to 20 minutes of protection regardless of the type of door, which was a good time for first fire service attendance and for any escape for neighbours. The door would be protecting the people immediately next to it and not the floors above or below.
- 26.4 Councillor Druitt expressed concern that before the Grenfell disaster, it had not been anticipated that a fire would go through the block so quickly. The Lead Consultant, Health & Safety replied that safety work was carried out in the city after Grenfell. No combustible cladding was found. Grenfell was an unusual fire and a wakeup call. Officers had inspected all the housing stock in the city and were happy to give reassurance.
- 26.5 Councillor Mears thanked officers for the report and thanked East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. Officers had come to the East Area Panel and given a presentation which had gone down well with the tenants and provided reassurance.
- 26.6 The Lead Consultant, Health & Safety confirmed that all fire safety risk assessments on tall blocks had been completed. This could be seen on the council website and was an ongoing process.
- 26.7 Councillor Hill referred to work carried out in the private sector. HMO licensing would help prevent fire risk. The Lead Consultant, Health & Safety stated that there had been 128 surveys on blocks in the private sector. The last couple of blocks had just been completed. He stated that most fires took place in HMOs.
- 26.8 Councillor Bell remarked that it should not be forgotten that the council had been carrying out fire safety work before Grenfell, including the installation of a sprinkler system. He referred to paragraph 3.10 and asked why the supply of new IG Doors had

been suspended. Councillor Bell referred to paragraph 7.2 and asked if East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service would match fund the council's expenditure for sprinkler costs of both St James' House and Essex Place. Mr Gausden, confirmed that East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service had agreed to fulfil the match funding offer for sprinkler systems.

26.9 The Lead Consultant, Health & Safety informed members that because of the test failing of Manse Masterdoor, further testing was carried out on four other manufacturers which failed in a similar way. Because this was part of a legal investigation those reports were not being released. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government advised local authorities that they suspend any further production until they came back with further recommendations as to what could be done to improve the standard of these doors. IG was not one of the doors that failed but it was part of the general industry pause that had come about. As a result the council were suspending the rolling programme of fire door replacement. However doors that became damaged were being replaced with timber fire doors as a temporary arrangement.

26.10 The Head of Housing Strategy, Property & Investment reported that the council had increased funding for fire safety measures following Grenfell. The council welcomed East Sussex Fire & Rescue's funding for sprinkler systems and had also increased its funding. A budget report would be brought to committee on door costs in due course.

26.11 The Chair thanked officers and stressed that it was necessary to do the best for the residents in the city.

26.12 **RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Committee agree the proposed approach in response to the latest Government advice on fire doors as outlined in paragraphs 3.13 & 3.14 of the report.
- (2) That the Committee agree resident consultation on the adoption of a hybrid sprinkler scheme be offered to residents at St James's House and Essex Place as outlined in paragraph 3.21 and commencement of consultation with residents of additional blocks as outlined in paragraph 3.23.
- (3) That Committee note the ongoing joint work with ESFRS and actions following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

**27 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT ( DFG ) HOUSING POLICY UPDATE 2018**

27.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which reported that the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Housing Policy provided greater flexibility in how the DFG was spent. The report provided an update on the outcomes of the new housing interventions delivered in partnership and sought the Committee's approval to make some changes to the eligibility criteria and amount available under some forms of assistance being offered to improve the delivery and make the best use of the resources available. The report was presented by the Operational Manager, Housing Adaptations.

27.2 Councillor Moonan remarked that she was sure all members would welcome this work which was about supporting people in their own homes. It was also supporting hospital discharge and making people's homes appropriate for them to move back to. Councillor

Moonan was pleased to see the Community Link Worker post. Councillor Moonan asked about means testing and said she would like reassurance that the money was targeted appropriately i.e people on low incomes who needed help and not people who could do this work for themselves.

- 27.3 The Operational Manager, Housing Adaptations reassured Councillor Moonan that these referrals would come through Health or Social Care for through other housing professionals. People who had the means were generally unlikely to come through this route and were more likely to resolve their own housing issues. Officers could monitor the take up of discretionary forms of assistance.
- 27.4 Councillor Mears welcomed the report and thanked officers. She stressed the importance of people being able to stay in their homes for longer and for people to be discharged from hospital and go back to their homes. Councillor Mears stressed that unless something was in place there would more call on Adult Social Care, hospitals and nursing homes. Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.11 and remarked that she was interested to read that Ashford Borough Council had increased their grant to £10,000. There was a need to be mindful that to keep more people in their own homes the council might need to be looking at extending the grant funding. It should also be recognised that tradesmen were often difficult to find and costs would increase.
- 27.5 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 7.3 of the report which stated that the Housing & New Homes Committee had delegated powers to discharge the Council's functions as a housing authority. Bearing in mind that these proposals would go to the Health & Wellbeing Board under the Better Care Fund, it should be recognised that the funding would come from the Housing & New Homes Committee. She was concerned that the council was becoming less joined up whereas local authorities should be more streamlined. She stressed the need to see reports being submitted to the Health & Wellbeing Board on this subject.
- 27.6 Councillor Cattell commented that this was a fantastic project. Something small could make a huge difference to someone's life, particularly if they had just come out of hospital and they had had a life changing procedure. This was about being able to act very quickly and be responsive. It was about saving money across the board, helping the council's overall budget and making people's lives better.
- 27.7 The Chair thanked the Operational Manager, Housing Adaptations for the detailed report. Members voted on the recommendations in the report and a new recommendation requesting a report to the committee in a year's time outlining how grant money had been spent. This was unanimously agreed.
- 27.8 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That Committee notes the work done under the policy to date, the outturn to date and difference it has made to people's lives from the customer feedback received.
  - (2) That Committee approves a variation to the *hospital discharge grant* eligibility to include any older person or disabled person being discharged from intermediate care (such as Craven Vale & Knowle House)

- (3) That Committee approves the proposal to fund a dedicated Community Link Specialist within the Link Back Service to co-ordinate a small pool of early intervention volunteers to deliver the hospital discharge grant assisted support.
- (4) That Committee approves a variation to the *dispensing with the means test* from dispensing with the means test altogether for works costing up to £5,000, to making a contribution of up to £5,000 toward the cost of works where the disabled person has an assessed contribution to pay.
- (5) That Committee approves an increase to the maximum amount of assistance available under the *warm, safe homes assistance* from £5,000 to £7,500.
- (6) That a report be submitted to the Committee in a year's time outlining how the grant money had been spent.

## **28 YOUTH SERVICE UPDATE AND USE OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FUNDING**

- 28.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Families, Children and Learning which provided members with an update on youth services including the use of the Housing Revenue Account's (HRA) annual £250,000 contribution to the budget. The report included information on performance from October 2017 to March 2018 including outcomes for Council tenants and their families. The report was considered by the Children, Young People and Skills Committee on 18 June. The report was presented by the Head of Early Years, Youth and Family Support. She was accompanied by Adam Muirhead, from the Trust for Developing Communities and Georgina and Hayden, two young people involved with the Coldean Youth Centre.
- 28.2 Mr Muirhead explained that he was one of the project managers from the Trust for Developing Communities who were one of the external organisations who looked after contracts for youth work. They worked in a complementary model across the city with other partners. He explained that four overarching outcomes were being worked on from funding from the HRA. Those were community cohesion, greater self-awareness, raised and positive aspirations and skills development.
- 28.3 Mr Muirhead stated that the two young people present came from Coldean Youth Centre which was one of the Youth Clubs being supported. In the last six months there had been 25 young people through the door. 56% of those were council tenants.
- 28.4 Georgina and Hayden introduced themselves to the Committee. Hayden lived in council housing; Georgina did not live in council housing, but her grandmother did live in a council house. Both young people had taken part in the Coldean Youth Club over the last year. Georgina informed the committee that they had painted the youth club over the summer, using their own paint and having chosen the colours. They had brought cushions and other items to the club. Mr Muirhead asked what the young people had got out of the different types of youth work. Hayden stated that he had learnt to socialise and talk to people who were able to help him. Georgina stated that the people who ran the youth centre believed in them and respected them. They were treated as equals.

- 28.5 Councillor Mears congratulated the young people and remarked that they had come across really well. She referred to page 179 and pointed out that the Saltdean Youth Centre had closed. Councillor Mears welcomed the report which was very informative. The fact that the Youth Participation Team was involved in bringing it forward was very positive.
- 28.6 Councillor Gibson welcomed the report and the beginning of a process. He was pleased that more outcomes would be developed in future and looked forward to seeing more detail on how the goals were achieved and good measures for outcomes. Councillor Gibson noted that the report detailed antisocial behaviour in East & North but there was not similar information for Central and West. He would appreciate if this could be circulated in future.
- 28.7 The Head of Early Years, Youth and Family Support explained that each monitoring report was carried out by the lead partner in the area. She would look at how this was done for the next report and bring it up to date. It was important that the council tracked interventions.
- 26.8 Councillor Druitt stated that hearing the young people speak had been one of the most moving five minutes on the committee. He thanked the officers present for all the work they carried out.
- 26.9 Councillor Bell thanked Adam and the youth workers. He informed the young people that they had been very honest and he reassured them that they were worthwhile and respected.
- 26.10 Councillor Cattell thanked the young people and told them they could watch the webcast.
- 26.11 The Chair thanked officers and the young people for coming to the committee and hoped they could come back in a year.
- 28.12 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That the report be noted.
  - (2) That a progress report is considered by the Committee in June 2019.

## **29 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2018/19**

- 29.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing which covered Quarter 1 of the financial year 2018/19. Notable results were covered in appendix 1 and were summarised in paragraph 1.1. The report was presented by the Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement.
- 29.2 Councillor Barnett referred to a house in Hangleton & Knoll Ward which had been empty for 526 days. New turf had been placed in the front garden which had been ruined by the hot weather. She asked why a three bed house had been empty. The Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement stated that the property had been visited by an

officer and a person had been identified for the property. She would provide more detail to Councillor Barnett and circulate the answer to all members of the committee.

- 29.3 Councillor Druitt thanked officers for the report and asked for an explanation regarding rechargeable debt. He referred to paragraph 4.16 of Appendix One in relation to Lifts – average time to restore service when not within 24 hours. This was 2 days in quarter 4 in 2017/18 and was 12 days in quarter 4 of 2018/19. He further asked about stage 1 complaints on page 234. It was explained that in relation to rechargeable debt, officers were reviewing policy and procedures. They were currently working on an old policy which was being reviewed. With regard to the recovery rate there were several staff vacancies. Staff were concentrating on working on Universal Credit. With regard to lifts it was stressed that the target was not 2 days. Information was given on those that had taken more than 24 hours. A couple of faults had not been diagnosed properly and other reasons were due to a question of parts. However, some blocks had a second lift. Complaints were essentially around not responding to someone as fully as possible. Officers had been asked to talk to residents to understand what the issues were. Councillor Druitt stated that this was an honest and comprehensive reply.
- 29.4 Councillor Gibson referred to page 231 relating to Universal Credit. Tenant's arrears were increasing. He asked how much worse it was likely to become. Councillor Gibson questioned why responsive repairs post inspection were below target. He referred to page 247 regarding bulk waste removal. Performance was 81% last quarter and 80% now. Councillor Gibson asked if the target would be reached by the New Year.
- 29.5 The Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement explained that tenants' arrears were likely to get worse but would plateau out in time. More people would be moving on to Universal Credit. The arrears would not be as bad as last year as the government had made some changes to the roll out of Universal Credit. Post inspection responsive repairs had got slightly worse. Officers were hopeful it would get better. Inspections were being carried out and issues taken up. It was explained that there should be an improvement in post inspections in the next quarter. There should also be an improvement in bulk waste removal.
- 29.6 Councillor Moonan referred to Universal Credit. Arrears had increased and resulted in evictions. There was a cumulative effect of the debt tenants experienced. The Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement explained that although arrears had increased for individual people, there had been much work to mitigate these problems, such as Money Advice Plus. The service was making sure that all officers were aware of this problem and were able to provide support. The bulk of the arrears had resulted from a gap of 6 to 7 weeks before Universal Credit was paid. This had now lessened. The council had not evicted anyone on the basis of Universal Credit arrears. However, there were many cases where people had received Universal Credit and had still not paid arrears.
- 29.7 The Chair referred to page 225 – Tenancy Management. This stated that five properties had returned to stock due to housing fraud. She asked if this was part of an amnesty and this was confirmed to be correct. The Chair asked about the number of properties the council was investigating due to intelligence. The Head of Income, Involvement and Improvement replied that she would report back on that matter.

**29.8 RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the report along with the comments of the Committee be noted.

**30 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL**

- 30.1 No items were referred to full Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.43pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of