

Geoff Raw – Chief Executive  
Brighton & Hove City Council

4<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Dear Geoff

**HOMELESS MOVE ON SCHEME – HOLLINGBURY LIBRARY PROPOSALS**

We are submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Housing & New Homes Committee meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> March.

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, by email timed at 18.20 hours, we received for the first time the report to be presented to Committee in confidential draft form relating to the above. The sharing of this report to Ward Members was after the 10am deadline on the 1<sup>st</sup> March for Members to make submissions to Committee. In these circumstances we trust this letter will be accepted by the Chair of the Committee as a late submission and that the content will be given due consideration.

For the following reasons we feel that only recommendation 2.1 of the report should be considered by Committee.

The report as presented appears to concentrate on the development element of the project and the procurement of a medium support service contract. The report, other than referring to the Housing and Rough Sleeper Strategies, is completely devoid of any argument or rationale making no case whatsoever for the Homeless Move On scheme to be suitably provided at the former Hollingbury Library site.

In previous discussions with officers it has been advised to us that clients will be older adults (60+) with complex needs such as support with mental health, drug and alcohol dependencies that have been in hostels, emergency and temporary accommodation (with a connection with the City) for between 5 and 7 years. This has not been made clear in the report that provides latitude for other occupants to be considered by the Allocations Panel without further referral to Committee. The report should make clear the absolute criteria for being allocated accommodation.

It has also been previously advised (prior Committee report) that the support solution, subject to tendering, might be either offices on site with out-of-hours contacts or 24/7 live-in. The latter seems to have been discounted prior to tendering and without any rationale being provided.

Further, officers have previously advised that clients will need access to support services (although there is no mention where these services are located), access to community projects and support and the ability to find local employment. None of these subjects have been discussed in the report and it appears, by omission, that

little or no work has taken place to consider these issues; this is contrary to the assertion in para 4.4 that clearly states the eventual service provider must be “mindful of supporting them to live positively within the community”.

It would appear therefore that the decision to use the former Hollingbury Library site is not based on suitability for the benefit of clients but more to do with the Council, having applied for and received Government funding, now seeking to spend the money somewhere with the present location being the only one they can currently find. This project feels like one that is akin to spend the money and then try and make the scheme work as opposed to being the optimum solution for the benefit of those it seeks to support.

Concern is expressed at the “Equalities” and “Any Other Significant” Implications of the report. The latter in para 8.5 states “None identified”. As well as a lack of narrative on the location of support services, suitable community projects and employment prospects for clients, there is no attempt to consider the equalities impact on residents or other significant implications such as the proximity of the scheme being next door to a public house and opposite a school: unless of course the inference is that none of these matters are considered issues.

It is acknowledged that the Council will hold “extensive resident consultation” but in doing so, the omissions highlighted above should form part of the justifications for this report to be considered by Committee and for residents to be made aware of all the implications during consultation (both positive and negative).

It is considered that recommendations 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 should not be progressed until the public consultation in 2.1 is completed and the results informed back to Committee. To do otherwise is to risk spending tax payer money and officer time on matters to which it cannot reasonably consider prior to public consultation.

We would respectfully request therefore that the omissions above are included in the report (as opposed to just being discussed in Committee and summarised in minutes) and the recommendations be reduced to just 2.1.

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Lee Wares and Cllr. Geoffrey Theobald