

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**HOUSING COMMITTEE****4.00pm 10 SEPTEMBER 2014****COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

Present: Councillor Randall (Chair), Councillor Phillips (Deputy Chair), Barnett, Daniel, Littman, Meadows, Mears, Peltzer Dunn (Opposition Spokesperson), Wakefield and Wilson (Group Spokesperson).

PART ONE**13 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS****13(a) Declarations of Substitute Members**

13.1 Councillor Littman declared that he was substituting for Councillor Rufus. Councillor Wakefield declared that she was substituting for Councillor Kennedy.

13(b) Declarations of Interests

13.2 Councillor Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 21 as she worked for a housing association.

13(c) Exclusion of the Press and Public

13.3 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.

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

14 MINUTES

14.1 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 9.10 in relation to Supporting People and homelessness. Councillor Mears stated that there had been changes in the

management of Supporting People which was now under Adult Services. She was concerned about that development and wanted clarity about the role of the Head of Supporting People. Housing had kept the Supporting People budget ring fenced. Councillor Mears asked how the change would impact budgets.

- 14.2 The Chair shared these concerns and stated that the proposal would be considered by Policy & Resources Committee. There was a need to guarantee that the Supporting People service continued.
- 14.3 Councillor Mears stressed that there was still ongoing consultation with staff even though the changes were in place.
- 14.4 The Chair agreed that the changes had been implemented and needed to be confirmed. It was regrettable that staff had not been consulted in some areas of Supporting People. The Chair stressed that the complex needs of some people went beyond the remit of housing staff. There was a need to maintain a service to vulnerable people. The concerns of staff would be fully considered.
- 14.5 The Executive Director of Environment Development & Housing explained that Supporting People was being moved to Adult Social Care as there were safeguarding concerns. Many vulnerable people were being placed in hostels. It seemed sensible to move the line management to Adult Social Care as they had responsibility for vulnerable people in the city. The changes in the line management could be made by officers. There had been a good response from staff to the changes. It was up to Members to decide how the Supporting People budget was spent. The delegations needed to be presented to Policy & Resources Committee.
- 14.6 Councillor Mears disagreed with the Executive Director. She felt that notice of the changes should have been given, particularly to the Housing Committee.
- 14.7 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to paragraph 5.15 in relation to the minutes of the Area Panels. He had not received any minutes. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that the minutes had not been published yet. When they were agreed they would be circulated.
- 14.8 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stressed that Housing Committee members needed to know what happened at the Area Panels and that there were items on the agenda today which had been discussed at the Area Panels. The Panels had taken place some time ago. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that there would be feedback from the Area Panels in the relevant committee reports considered at Housing Committee and she would arrange for the minutes to be circulated to members when they became available.
- 14.9 The Chair agreed that the minutes of Area Panels must be circulated to members and that this should happen before the Housing Committee took place.
- 14.10 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 18 June 2014 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

15 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 15.1 The Chair reported that the Housing Strategy Manager had carried out a very good piece of work to support the Family Housing Strategy which would be circulated to Housing Committee Members.
- 15.2 The Chair reported that last month he went to Wimbledon to look at a system produced by South West London YMCA. This was the Y:Cube modular housing system designed by the eminent architect Richard Rogers. The system was already in use by Merton Council who had built 36 family homes. A visit was being arranged to look at the system on Friday 19th September. The Opposition Spokespersons had been invited and the Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing and the Head of City Regeneration would be joining the visit. The invitation was extended to all committee members.
- 15.3 The Chair reported that work on Sanders House has commenced to fit showers to flats that currently did not have them. Work would also be carried out in Evelyn Court. This was one of the last blocks for older people with shared facilities.
- 15.4 The Chair reported that he had had a meeting with DECC (Department of Energy & Climate Change) about a feasibility study for two district heating systems.

16 CALL OVER

- 16.1 It was agreed that all items be reserved for discussion.

17 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 17.1 There were no Petitions
- 17.2 There were no Written Questions
- 17.3 The Committee considered the following deputation which had been submitted to Council on 17th July 2014.

Damp and other tenants' issues

"There is a flat on Brentwood Road which has the Queen's head on the living room wall. Maybe this doesn't sound too unusual, but in this case the Queen's head is a temporary feature caused by the shape of the mould on a permanent damp patch which takes up around four square foot of the wall (photos provided). It's a game the parents play with their two children, both of whom are asthmatic. They clean off the mould on a regular basis but it always returns in a different shape. When it's been raining heavily, there is also running water down the wall.

When the issue was raised with Mears, the residents were offered a dehumidifier, but they are concerned about what this would do to their electricity bill. It is also a short term

fix which will not make the problem go away and needlessly increases energy use. These tenants pay rent for their council property and have the right to a proper solution to be found for the extreme damp in their home.

In another flat on Brentwood Road, a Mears home visit recorded damp levels off the scale in the tenant's bedroom, bathroom, living room and entrance hall. The proposed solution in this ground floor flat has been the removal of a brick above the damp course and new plasterboard, but the underlying cause of the damp does not appear to be being addressed. This seems an expensive and short term measure, particularly if the problem is also affecting other flats in the block. This case has been queried with the repairs team at Mears for the last nine months, and the resident is also asthmatic with other health conditions affected by damp.

In spite of representations made by a ward councillor, the solutions offered to the related damp problems above fail to resolve the problems for tenants, and cost more money in the long term, both involving expenditure in the short term while not fixing the underlying issue causing the damp. These cases also suggest that there may be ongoing damp issues in these particular buildings which would benefit from being investigated as a whole rather than on a flat by flat basis in response to residents' requests.

Will the council acknowledge the failure in these cases to offer satisfactory solutions to these damp problems; make enquiries with Mears as to why there have been such delays with these specific cases; request that the possibility of a larger problem in these buildings which would best be addressed as a whole be investigated; and raise this issue at the next housing committee with a view to avoid similar situations arising in the future?

There is currently no active tenants' association on the Hollingdean estate. Will the council also undertake to support the continuation of tenants' associations when key residents move on, in recognition that they serve an important purpose in highlighting maintenance issues and engaging tenants in the improvement of their homes and living environment?"

- 17.4 The Chair reported that work had now been carried out in both properties. He repeated what he had reported to Council on 17th July 2014.

"As to your other questions about the larger issue of maintenance in our flats and houses, there is a watching brief on this all the time, you might or might not know that we have a tenants scrutiny panel, which was set up when we came into power and the next issue they're going to look at is the whole question of repairs, and you of course will be free to give evidence to that, like anybody else who has got an interest in housing.

There is a larger problem with some of our older blocks, many of them built at the same time, and they are all falling to pieces at the same time. We have an ongoing maintenance program in all of them. We have £23 million this year in the Capital Works Program of which about £18 million will be devoted to this sort of work.

As to the tenants association, we support 55 tenants associations in the city and if they would like to talk to us about starting it again, we would be very happy to do that.

I've also got the performance indicators for this year on repairs and maintenance, on the routine repairs, we have achieved a raise in the last quarter of 99.81, average time to complete routine, 17 days, emergency repairs 99.89 and the percentage of appointments kept 97.79 and tenants' satisfaction with repairs is 99.46. We do a huge amount of repairs, and I admit we don't get it right every time but we are working very hard to make sure these things are done properly and I'll welcome your interests and I hope you'll support us in doing it."

17.5 **RESOLVED** - That the deputation be noted.

18 ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

18.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions, Letters or Notices of Motion from Councillors.

19 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS 2014

19.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed members that the Council was required under the current regulatory framework for social housing landlords to publish a 'timely and relevant' annual report for council tenants. The annual report for the year ending 31 March 2014 had been produced with the involvement of tenants and leaseholders and was attached to the report. The report was presented by the Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement.

19.2 Councillor Peltzer Dunn thought it was a good report with a great deal of information. He asked for clarification on whether the report related to the financial year or the actual year.

19.3 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement confirmed that the report related to the financial year 2013/14. Tenants wanted the report to be produced in this way.

19.4 Councillor Meadows considered the report was good value and was impressed at the production costs. However, she stressed that 40% of the residents in her ward were not digitised and was concerned that these residents would not be able to access information online. She asked what was being done for those people who were not online.

19.5 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement assured Councillor Meadows that officers made sure that all information was made available in printed form. Meanwhile, officers were trying to encourage people to start using the internet. This was particularly important as in a couple of years tenants would need access to the internet to claim benefits and make payments.

19.6 The Chair stressed this was an important issue and mentioned that 85% of people now had smartphones and were able to use their phones in many ways.

- 19.7 Councillor Mears was pleased to see the reference to Seaside Homes on the last page of the Annual Report. Councillor Mears felt it would be helpful for this section to have more detail. Councillor Mears referred to the section of the Annual Report which stated that 100% gas compliance during the year had been achieved first time. She commented that this would depend on the quarter being looked at. The rest of the report had been produced extremely well.
- 19.8 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that officers were trying to report that for the first time ever, 100% gas compliance had been achieved. The aim was to give assurance to tenants that officers can perform on that level.
- 19.9 **RESOLVED** - That the Housing Committee approves the annual report to council tenants and leaseholders 2014 at Appendix 1 for publication and distribution to all council tenants and leaseholders in the autumn edition of *Homing In*.

20 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING HMO LICENSING UPDATE

- 20.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which outlined options to extend coverage of the HMO licensing scheme and widen to scope of the existing schemes to address issues that continued to be raised in relation to management, standards and anti-social behaviour in relation to the expanding private rented sector in the city. The report outlined circumstances set out in the Housing Act where a local authority may consider establishing a Selective Licensing Scheme or any further designation of Additional Licensing subject to statutory requirements in relation to consultation, evidence base and resourcing any new schemes. The report was presented by the Head of Housing Strategy & Development – Private Sector Housing.
- 20.2 Councillor Wilson referred to paragraph 3.11 and asked if the service requests were the result of the licensing scheme or the public having more information about their rights. Councillor Wilson referred to paragraph 3.12 in relation to the loss of private rented sector accommodation as a cause of homelessness. She asked how the council should respond to this situation and whether the council should be talking to landlords.
- 20.3 The Head of Housing Strategy & Development replied that service requests were in addition to HMO licensing. In relation to homelessness, there were preventative strategies. The City had a high proportion of private rented housing and this led to a disproportionate impact.
- 20.4 The Chair reported that the council carried out a great deal of work with people who were homeless and also worked with landlords.
- 20.5 Councillor Meadows referred to paragraph 1.2 in relation to the receipt of 1965 valid additional licence applications. She asked how many of these related to new licenses. Councillor Meadows referred to the graph in paragraph 3.5. This showed that the households living in homes rented via private landlords or letting agencies had increased from 579 to 1259 in Moulsecoomb & Bevendean between 2001 and 2011. Councillor Meadows was concerned that landlords were removing families in order to

attract students as this was more lucrative business. Councillor Meadows asked how the council could influence this issue in order to free up homes for families.

- 20.6 Councillor Meadows referred to paragraph 3.25 in relation to the mandatory licensing scheme. The graph showed that Moulsecomb & Bevendean had 93 licences. She asked if these were full licences and how this information was captured. Councillor Meadows was concerned that landlords might change the business model and move to student accommodation.
- 20.7 Councillor Meadows referred to the enforcement programme targeting unlicensed HMOs on page 41 of the agenda. This section referred to 1000 dwellings having been identified which may be licensable but where licence applications had not been received. Councillor Meadows asked how proactive the council were in receiving more information on the 1000 dwellings. Councillor Meadows referred to the map on page 68 which she noted showed a problem with HMOs in her ward.
- 20.8 The Chair replied that paragraph 1.2 referred to new licenses. 5000 family homes were occupied by students. Sussex University had recently put in a planning application to expand which had been rejected. There was concern that the nature of whole areas was changing and many houses in the BACA area no longer had children living in them. There were good landlords but it was clear that there was more money in moving out families and changing to student accommodation.
- 20.9 The Chair mentioned the problem of party houses. When students moved out in the holidays, some houses were used as party houses. This was a particular problem in Hanover where the houses had no sound proofing. The Chair was talking to Development Control about this issue and he stressed that residents should be asked to let the council know of any unregistered HMO's.
- 20.10 Councillor Daniel stressed that problems in student accommodation caused community tension. It would help to reduce stress if the same tenants were retained in the properties. Rubbish was cleared out in the summer holidays and she saw the inconsiderate dumping of waste by landlords. The Chair agreed this problem was the fault of letting agents and landlords. There needed to be the proper registration of letting agents.
- 20.11 Councillor Mears concurred with the views expressed about student accommodation. Councillor Mears referred to licensing fees and asked where savings were coming from. Councillor Mears asked if there was likely to be a judicial review.
- 20.12 The Head of Housing Strategy & Development – Private Sector Housing explained that the licensing scheme had to self fund. Fees had to generate enough to cover staffing costs. The council would not be subject to a review on the first scheme. The scheme needed to be robust.
- 20.13 Councillor Wakefield thanked the Head of Housing Strategy & Development for a thorough report. She stressed that the current generation were renting and that not only students but young professionals were living in HMO's. Many people had no choice but to live in an HMO.

- 20.14 Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked if there would be a further report as the current report was for noting. He stressed that it was vital to understand the impact of other discretionary schemes. He asked why more people needed to be re-housed from private accommodation. He stressed that registration placed a substantial impact on landlords. This might drive out the smaller landlords. A future report needed to address these issues.
- 20.15 The Chair referred to the table on page 37 of the agenda. This showed that the five most common special conditions applied to additional licensed HMOs were structural fire work, fire alarms, other fire works. Management/repairs and loft insulation. These were improving health and safety and reducing the carbon footprint.
- 20.16 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the progress with the implementation of the Additional Licensing scheme in the five Lewes Road wards since the commencement of designation on 5 November 2012 be noted.
- (2) That the legal parameters around further Additional Licensing and Selective Licensing schemes be noted and that it be agreed that a detailed options paper be reported to a future Housing Committee on extending coverage and / or widening the scope of discretionary licensing schemes in the City.

21 HOUSING ADAPTATIONS UPDATE

- 21.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing in which Members were asked to consider the capital funding pressures this year and going forward in light of the end of the Private Sector Housing capital programme and the options for managing the demand for and expenditure on major housing adaptations where this is forecast to exceed the capital funding available. The report was presented by the Head of Housing Strategy & Development – Private Sector Housing and the Operational Manager, Housing Adaptations.
- 21.2 Councillor Barnett referred the Adaption Panel. Sheltered blocks had not been considered by the Panel. Nothing had been done to help the older blocks. She mentioned Churchill House, an older sheltered block in Hove. She stressed that stair lifts should be provided in this older block as many older people were finding it difficult to use the stairs and were becoming isolated in their flats. The back of these buildings had stairs and should have slopes. Post boxes on back of doors would help prevent the elderly people having to bend. Electronic doors that opened would be expensive but would be a great help. The current doors were very heavy safety doors. The Operational Manager, Housing Adaptations replied that work had been carried out in the past on sheltered housing refurbishment. She agreed that proactive work would increase the supply of successful homes. The Chair promised to look at this request.
- 21.3 Councillor Mears referred to the graph in paragraph 3.14. She raised concern about the significant HRA contribution compared to the contribution of other departments. Contributions were low compared to saving made by people staying in their own homes.

- 21.4 The Chair concurred and stressed that some of the savings were made by the NHS rather than the council. The Health and Wellbeing Board were involved in this issue and the situation needed to be monitored.
- 21.5 Councillor Meadows stated that she was pleased to see that housing associations would be asked to contribute to the cost of adaptations. She asked if the same framework was being used to keep their costs down. Councillor Meadows stressed that the Better Care Fund was not new money and was concerned that the £0.911m which was the indicative allocation for the DFG from the Better Care Fund might be used to support savings in the Better Care Fund.
- 21.6 Councillor Meadows stressed the need for more wheelchair adapted homes and was concerned that all the best sites were taken for student accommodation.
- 21.7 **RESOLVED** – (1) That housing adaptations capital expenditure commitments in 2014/15 and beyond be noted.
- (2) That the potential options outlined in paragraphs 3.18 to 3.29 in the report to mitigate pressures identified be noted, and that the actions identified in the resolutions below be agreed subject to report back to a future Housing Committee on progress & outcomes.
- (3) That the Health & Wellbeing Board be recommended to agree that the allocation for the Disabled Facilities Grant will be monitored as part of the governance arrangements for all schemes in the Better Care Fund.
- (4) That consultation be approved with housing associations to encourage tenant rather than landlord applications for Disabled Facilities Grant and a greater contribution from housing associations toward the overall cost of adaptations to their homes.
- (5) That the use of the Adaptations Framework for adaptations in the private housing sector be approved.
- (6) That the consultation with council tenants and key stakeholders on the introduction of an Adaptations Policy for council tenants be approved.

22 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 AND END OF YEAR 2013/14

- 22.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which set out the performance for quarter 4 of the financial year 2013/14, alongside end year results. Benchmarking figures for the year were provided separately as Appendix 1. The report was presented by the Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement.
- 22.2 Councillor Wilson noted a striking increase in rent arrears and said she would like to see comparative data. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement stated that she would try to obtain more comparative data. However, she stressed that the profile of groups changed and she was not sure how much useful information could be obtained from previous groups.

- 22.3 Councillor Mears asked for more information about average re-let times, average percentage of repairs completed right first time, and percentage of empty properties passing post inspection. Councillor Mears expressed concern about delays in replacing lights in blocks and asked for more information about anti-social behaviour.
- 22.4 The Head of Income & Improvement referred to average re-let times. She explained that some sheltered properties were hard to let. The performance was affected by one particular property that had been empty for 5 years.
- 22.5 The Partnering Business Manager referred to the percentage of repairs completed right first time. He explained that officers were developing a measure to identify repairs completed in one visit. This information would be shared in future reports.
- 22.6 The Head of Income Involvement and Improvement explained that it had been agreed not to give further information on the percentage of empty properties passing post inspection. However this information could be included in future reports. The Partnering Business Manager explained that each property was reported to the Partnering Group. 3 properties failed. Officers wanted to see a robust quality of jobs carried out. Contractors would be challenged about this matter.
- 22.7 The Head of Income Involvement & Improvement referred to the question relating to emergency light replacement. 11 lights had not been replaced in one day. They had been replaced the following day. The delay would be addressed. Meanwhile, officers tried to resolve anti-social behaviour without taking legal action. There had been legal action in which 2 or three people were evicted in 8 cases out of 500. Some cases had involved anti-social behaviour orders.
- 22.8 Councillor Daniel referred to the rent arrears table in Appendix 2. She noted that the welfare reforms were leading to people getting into arrears.
- 22.9 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that residents who were struggling financially would be referred to the Money Advice and Community Support Service (MACS).
- 22.10 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report, which was submitted to the Area Panels in July 2014, be noted.
- (2) That the above comments be noted.

23 PROCUREMENT OF A CONTRACT FOR GAS SERVICING, MAINTENANCE AND INSTALLATIONS.

- 23.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed Members that the Council was required to re-tender a contract to be offered for annual gas servicing and maintenance including full break-down cover, servicing, maintenance, emergency out of hours maintenance and planned system replacements and/or installations. The Council anticipated that procurement of the contract to cover these areas would provide value for money,

reliability and service consistency for tenants. The report was presented by the Partnering Business Manager.

- 23.2 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.12 which stated “..we will be looking to start the contract on an Open Book style of accounting...” Councillor Mears stated that when the Repairs & Improvement Partnership contract was set up with Mears Ltd, it was the intention to have an open book process. She asked if this was the case or not.
- 23.3 The Partnering Business Manager replied that the repairs partnership were in the process of moving to open book in two areas. The gas contract would be an open book style of accounting.
- 23.4 Councillor Mears expressed concern about the timescales for moving to open book on the repairs partnership. Bearing in mind the size of the contract she asked for a more detailed paper on this matter.
- 23.5 Councillor Meadows noted that there had been no feedback from the North Area Panel meeting. She had concern about recommendation (2) which suggested giving delegated power to the Executive Director of Environment and Housing in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance & Resources. She noted in paragraph 5.2 that two tenant representatives would be engaged in the evaluation stage of the tender. Councillor Meadows suggested that it would be useful if two councillors could be included in this process.
- 23.6 The Committee Lawyer stressed that the Committee could only delegate authority to officers. It could however, delegate authority to officers after consultation with councillors.
- 23.7 The Chair suggested amending the recommendation to include the Chair and opposition spokespersons in the evaluation process.
- 23.8 It was confirmed that there had been no specific feedback from the North Area Panel.
- 23.9 **RESOLVED** - (1) That approval be given for the procurement of a contract for the annual gas servicing and maintenance including full break-down cover, servicing, maintenance, emergency out of hours maintenance and planned system replacements and/or installations for a five year period, with an option for extension up to a period of two years.
- (2) That it be agreed to give delegated authority to the Executive Director of Environment and Housing in consultation with Executive Director of Finance and Resources to a) award the contract following the recommendations of the evaluation panel and the results of the tendering process and b) approve an extension to the contract if required dependent on performance.
- (3) That the Chair and Opposition Spokespersons be members of the evaluation panel along with tenants.

24 HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

- 24.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which provided an update on progress on the development of the new city-wide Housing Strategy. The update covered consultation feedback, data analysis, issues, and themes from the consultation phase of the development with key internal and external stakeholders and communities of interest. The report was presented by the Housing Strategy Manager. Copies of the consultation questions for online portal, collated consultation data and feedback and background data report for new Housing Strategy had been placed in the members rooms at Kings House as background papers.
- 24.2 Some Members expressed concern that they had not seen the background papers. It was confirmed that the background papers had been placed in Kings House Members' rooms but not Hove Town Hall Members' rooms. It was agreed that all Members should have the opportunity to view the background papers. Members would be contacted regarding this matter after the meeting.
- 24.3 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the themes and priorities from the consultation of the development of the Housing Strategy be noted.
- (2) That the ongoing methodology for the development of the Housing Strategy be approved.

25 RETRO-FITTING SPRINKLERS TO HIGH RISE BLOCKS

- 25.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing concerning the fitting of sprinkler systems in high rise blocks. The report was presented by the Health & Safety Manager.
- 25.2 Councillor Mears supported the pilot installation of a sprinkler system at Somerset Point but was not prepared to support recommendation 2.3, which would delegated power to officers to undertake a second pilot at St James House.
- 25.3 Councillor Littman stated that the wording of recommendation 2.3 did not make sense and needed clarification.
- 25.4 Councillor Meadows expressed the view that there should be a further report back to the Committee on the issue of a second pilot. The cost implications needed to be fully considered.
- 25.5 **RESOLVED** - (1) That a pilot installation of a sprinkler system at Somerset Point is undertaken.

26 TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS RECOGNITION POLICY

- 26.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which updated the existing Recognition Policy and Model

Constitution and brought it into line with the Code of Conduct agreed at Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee in December 2012. The report was presented by the Resident Involvement Manager.

- 26.2 Councillor Meadows commented that she supported the report but questioned how tenants would benefit from the policy. For example, in paragraph 9.3 of the policy it stated that 'the association will be able to bid for the Estates Development Budget'. However, areas without association would also be able to bid.
- 26.3 The Resident Involvement Manager replied that tenants gained a great deal of satisfaction in working to improve their community and attained sense of neighbourliness. Officers did appreciate the work being undertaken by tenants and this was recognised in the action plan. This might take the form of the presentation of a certificate at the City Assembly.
- 26.4 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to paragraph 5.16 in the covering report and paragraph 8 on page 144. This stated that 'If the Area Panel rep or deputy fails to attend three Area Panel meetings without good reason or apology the association will be written to requesting that a replacement is elected at the next General Meeting.' Councillor Peltzer Dunn requested that the wording be changed to state '...good reason *and* apology.' This was agreed.
- 26.5 **RESOLVED** – That the proposed Recognition Policy and Model Constitution be agreed.

27 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - FINAL SCHEME APPROVAL

- 27.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which reminded Members that at its meeting in November 2013 Housing Committee agreed to the demolition works, final feasibility study, design and development of new council housing on the site of 243-245 Preston Road, Brighton. The report focused on development proposals for the site that the team now wished to progress through planning and construction stages. Members were asked to agree rent level and associated level of HRA subsidy for the scheme. The report was presented by the Housing Programme Manager.
- 27.2 Councillor Phillips mentioned that at the last meeting the Chair had asked members to consider investigating a rent model set at 60% market rent. Councillor Phillips stated that she thought the current scheme should have a rent model set at 60% and that each scheme should be looked at on a case by case basis. She felt that rent levels should not automatically be linked to market rents.
- 27.3 Councillor Mears expressed concern with recommendation 2.1 (iii) which referred to delegating authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources to agree reasonable amendments to the subsidy required from the HRA if changes arise. Councillor Mears stressed that any changes would have an impact on subsidy for future schemes. She asked for an explanation.

- 27.4 The Housing Programme Manager explained that the rate was estimated at the moment. As the scheme progressed the costs would become more accurate. He stressed that if further reports had to be submitted to Housing Committee for approval it would delay the scheme. The Housing Programme Manager referred to paragraph 3.12 and pointed out that there were control methods in within the strategic partnership. It was agreed that any changes to the scheme should be submitted to the Cross Party Member Board.
- 27.5 Councillor Peltzer Dunn supported the report. He considered that the development timeline set out in paragraph 3.12 seemed a very short period. He asked if a planning application had been submitted.
- 27.6 The Housing Programme Manager explained that the current advice he had received from Development Control was that the scheme would not require formal planning permission. It would be permitted development. This meant that the scheme could be delivered significantly quicker than one requiring planning permission.
- 27.7 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the design and change to plans for this site be noted.
- (2) That the rent model set at 80% market rent capped at LHA rate be approved.
- (3) That the estimated levels of subsidy required from the HRA for the chosen rent model(s) be approved and that it be further approved to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources to agree reasonable amendments to that subsidy if changes arise
- (4) That the Cross Party Member Board receives an update regarding any amendments before the delegated authority set out in (3) above is actioned.

28 PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS AND APPROVED LIST OF PROVIDERS - UPDATE REPORT

- 28.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which set out the progress that had been made with respect to the procurement of framework agreements and an approved list of providers for the provision and management of temporary accommodation. The report was presented by the Acquisitions Manager.
- 28.2 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

29 HOUSING ICT BUSINESS PLAN

- 29.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which introduced the Housing ICT business plan which set out the individual ICT projects that had been identified as necessary in the short, medium and long term, following the recent Tenant and Resident Scrutiny Panel report on the Housing Customer Service Team. The plan reflected the importance of ICT in

providing quality services to residents and in giving the right tools to staff to carry out their work. The report also updated Housing Committee on the actions taken in response to recommendations about ICT made by the Tenant and Resident Scrutiny Panel in their report. The report was presented by the Housing Service Operations Manager who was accompanied by Chief Blackbear, Chair of the Tenant and Resident Scrutiny Panel on the Housing Customer Service Team.

- 29.2 Councillor Mears thanked the tenants for the scrutiny panel report. However she did not support the current report. She considered that the council was in a terrible state with its ICT programmes and this was not the time to look at other ideas. The council needed to resolve its current ICT problems.
- 29.3 Councillor Wilson disagreed. Tenants needed ICT systems that worked. She stressed the need to ensure that whatever systems were chosen should link in with other packages.
- 29.4 Councillor Peltzer Dunn quoted the Business Planning template on page 193. The risk description stated 'lack of knowledge and ICT experience in current workforce to deliver projects.' 'Scale and pace of change exceeds staff ICT skill base'. He asked if these comments were in relation to the council as a whole or just housing staff.
- 29.5 The Chair stressed these were descriptions of possible risks. There were actions to mitigate the risks. The Housing Service Operations Manager explained that potential risks related to housing. She was confident the product already implemented in City Clean would work in Housing.
- 29.6 Councillor Daniel understood the concerns about ICT but considered the risk was low. The project involved software in one package used in one area of the council. She liked the approach of the report and was happy to support it.
- 29.7 Chief Blackbear thanked the Council for the thorough ICT Business Plan and asked if there would be a report back to Housing Committee and the Scrutiny Panel. The Housing Service Operations Manager replied that officers could come back with another report. She would let Chief Blackbear know the outcome of the Programme Board.
- 29.8 **RESOLVED** - That the attached Housing ICT business plan and the individual projects set out within it be noted.

30 HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD UPDATE

- 30.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which updated Members on the work that had been undertaken so far this year in relation to tackling housing tenancy fraud and also informed Members of initiatives that were planned for later in this financial year. Details about the recovery of properties was contained in paragraph 3.1. of the report. The report was presented by the Corporate Fraud Manager.
- 30.2 The Chair suggested that it would be a good idea to publicise the successful actions.

- 30.3 Councillor Peltzer Dunn congratulated the Corporate Fraud Manager on the success of investigations and recovery of properties. All members of the Committee concurred.
- 30.4 **RESOLVED** - That the content of this report be noted.

31 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

- 31.1 There were no items to be referred to the next Council meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of