

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 23 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, SHIP STREET, BRIGHTON**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Meadows (Chair); Councillors Hill (Deputy Chair), Mears (Opposition Spokesperson, Gibson (Group Spokesperson), Atkinson, Barnett, Lewry, MacCafferty, Miller and Moonan.

**PART ONE**

**17 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**17a) Declarations of Substitutes**

17.1 Councillor MacCafferty declared that he was attending as a substitute for Councillor Phillips.

**17b) Declarations of Interests**

17.2 There were none.

**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 be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item contained in part two of the agenda.

**18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

18.1 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 2.4. She was pleased to see a report on Supporting People on the agenda but had also asked for a report on the Oxford Street Housing Office. Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 13.6 and stated that she had

had no response to her query about office accommodation in Bartholomew House for Housing Services staff.

- 18.2 The Acting Director Environment, Development & Housing explained that there would be a report on Oxford Street at the next meeting of the Committee. The consultation period on the Housing Services staff accommodation at Bartholomew House had just closed. There would be a report on the outcome when the process was completed. The Acting Director confirmed that there would be no moves until the consultation responses were reviewed.
- 18.3 Councillor Gibson referred to paragraph 8.27 which stated that 2 members had abstained from voting. Councillor Gibson reported that Councillor Philips abstained from voting but he had supported the Findon Road scheme.
- 18.4 Councillor Gibson referred to paragraph 13.7 which stated that he considered that there needed to be robust evidence to show that call centres were cost effective. Councillor Gibson stated that he had been talking in terms of customer satisfaction rather than cost effectiveness. He was concerned that the quality of service was sustained.
- 18.5 Councillor Gibson referred to paragraph 14.10 and stated that this should read '...scheme costs per **square** metre'.
- 18.6 Councillor Miller referred to paragraph 8.1 in relation to the Findon Road scheme. He asked if there could be a breakdown of costs. The Acting Executive Director Environment, Development & Housing replied that officers could supply costings of the site.
- 18.7 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 17 June 2015 be agreed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendments outlined in paragraphs 18.3, 18.4 and 18.5 above.

## 19 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

- 19.1 The Chair reported that all Committee members would have received the latest edition of the New Homes for Neighbourhoods Update, which reports progress with the council's programme of building much needed new homes across the city. Some hard copies were also available at the Committee meeting.
- 19.2 The Chair reported that she was very pleased to open 2 new wheelchair accessible family bungalows this summer, both of which had now been let.
- 19.3 The Chair reported that another 77 new council homes for affordable rent were now being built at six sites in Brighton, Hove and Portslade, with more in the pipeline.

## 20 CALL OVER

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

## 21 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

21.1 There were no petitions, written questions or deputations from members of the public.

## **22 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

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

## **23 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - SMALL SITE STRATEGY**

23.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which sought approval for a fourth pilot under the small site strategy; to test whether system and modular build can achieve economic and viable development on other small, challenging sites, in order to help meet the target of 500 new homes on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land. The report also updated the new Housing & New Homes Committee on the first three small site strategy pilots. All proposed schemes coming out of these four pilots would be reported back to the Committee for approval before they proceeded. The report was presented by the Estate Regeneration Project Manager.

23.2 Councillor Atkinson commended the report and the imaginative projects. He considered it important to make best use of the space available for such schemes.

23.3 Councillor Mears asked for it to be recorded that she had not been invited to the site visit to see the KSD system & modular build project undertaken by Lewes District Council. She suggested that site visits could be arranged for Housing & New Homes Committee members to see some examples of such schemes.

23.4 Councillor Mears stressed that garage sites were reviewed in 2010, and there was a need to push forward with the schemes. Councillor Mears noted that £5 million had been set aside in the HRA and asked how this was to be used.

23.5 The Acting Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing explained that a cross party board had visited the Lewes site. He was happy to look at ways in which the Committee were provided with as much information as possible. The Acting Executive Director explained that unfortunately, the Finance Officer had not been able to attend the meeting due to illness. He would therefore have to come back with the information relating to the query about £5 million being set aside in the HRA. A breakdown would be provided.

23.6 Councillor Miller welcomed the three original options, especially the self build project. He also supported Councillor Mears suggestion to visit modular building schemes in other authorities. Councillor Miller suggested bigger as well as smaller sites to maximise value for money.

23.7 Councillor MacCafferty stated that there had been discussions with architects with regard to these projects particularly the RIBA competition. There would be more certainty when the City Plan was adopted in December. The Economic Development and Culture Committee was working in tandem on these projects.

23.8 Councillor Gibson welcomed the report. He hoped that the options could be explored as soon as possible and that visits to schemes could be arranged. Councillor Gibson was pleased to hear about new building techniques which would lead to lower costs and more affordable rent.

**23.9 RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That progress be noted with Pilots 1-3: the RIBA design competition, co-operative housing and Passivhaus pilots to develop new rented homes on small, challenging sites under the New Homes for Neighbourhoods small site strategy.
- (2) That approval be given to the proposed Pilot 4 proposal set out in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.15 of the report to invite proposals from potential development partners for modular or system built new homes on small, challenging council housing land sites; such proposals may involve leasing of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land but any scheme would be subject to prior Housing & New Homes Committee approval and any lease to Policy & Resources Committee approval as set out in paragraph 3.11.

**24 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY**

- 24.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which proposed that the council carried out a fundamental review of the policy used to allocate council housing and to nominate to housing associations. This would mean developing a new Housing Allocations Policy in consultation with a number of statutory and voluntary sector organisations. Residents would also be key stakeholders in the development and consultation of the policy. This was to ensure that the council made the best use of the limited housing resources available. The review would be subject to full ratification at a future meeting of the Committee. The report was presented by the Service Improvement Manager.
- 24.2 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.5 which stated that the current policy did not conform to the latest government guidance. She felt it would have been helpful to have seen the latest policy guidance. Councillor Mears referred to the last two lines of paragraph 3.6 and said she wanted to see the pilot evaluation reported back to the Committee.
- 24.3 Councillor Barnett stated that she welcomed the new review. She was aware that all over the city business people were being housed in social housing. The Service Improvement Manager replied that there were financial caps to deal with fraud. The Chair informed Councillor Barnett that it would be helpful if she was to pass on details of cases that concerned her to officers.
- 24.4 Councillor Miller welcomed the government approach to charge full rent if earnings were £30,000 or more. He welcomed the review and noted that 22,000 were currently on the waiting list. Councillor Miller asked if officers had considered looking at whether some of these people had now moved away. He agreed that there should be focus on those people who would make a positive contribution and who were in most dire need.

- 24.5 The Service Improvement Manager explained that a future report could suggest options for everyone to re-register, caps on income and positive contribution along with other options. The aim was to provide clarity on what decisions could be made by members.
- 24.6 Councillor Atkinson stated that he received many queries about the policy and welcomed the review. He also welcomed the possibility of being able to understand the pieces of legislation behind the policy.
- 24.7 Councillor Gibson referred to paragraph 1.1 which stated that there was a need to ensure the council made the best use of the limited housing resources available. He asked what was meant by 'best use'. He wanted to know by what criteria the review would be measured against. The Head of Temporary Accommodation & Allocation replied that there were several criteria used to allow the list to get down to a manageable size. Subject to the consideration of legal criteria it was up to the council to decide on priorities. For example, the council might want to use the allocations policy to save money in terms of homelessness and to concentrate on housing people on low incomes. There would be a range of options that would be brought to a future meeting.
- 24.8 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That a review and consultation of the Policy used to allocate social housing in the city be approved.
  - (2) That a new Housing Allocation Scheme is submitted for approval to a future Housing & New Homes Committee by the end of March 2016.

## **25 ALLOCATION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

- 25.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which stressed the need to manage the demand for temporary accommodation at a time of budget reduction. There was a need to procure and place households in good quality accommodation and this was increasingly out of the city. The report outlined how the council would allocate temporary accommodation, within and outside of the city, and presented the policy for adoption. The report was presented by the Service Improvement Manager.
- 25.2 Councillor Mears stated that she could not see any details of consultation in the report. She referred to paragraph 1.4 which related to a recent Supreme Court case. Councillor Mears asked what had happened up to now and who was carrying out the checks on how many families had been moved out of the city. Her concern was not about moving people to local towns such as Eastbourne. She was more concerned about people being moved further afield and would not be happy to support the proposal until she had seen details identified in a report.
- 25.3 The Service Improvement Manager explained that if the council failed to have a policy it was in danger of a legal challenge in every case where a person was placed outside of the city. The longer the decision was delayed the more likely a challenge would occur. This could have a huge impact on finding local accommodation. Some people such as victims of domestic violence, wanted to be placed further away. There had been

ongoing consultation for a number of years. The current report was ratifying the situation.

- 25.4 Councillor Mears asked for clarity regarding where the boundaries would be for placing people outside of the city. The Interim Head of Housing explained that members were being asked to agree a policy framework on which decisions are taken. It was a criteria they were being asked to agree not a location. Location was dependent on affordability for the council and the tenant. Brighton was a hotspot for high housing costs. Cheaper housing was found in the near vicinity and families were being placed in areas such as Peacehaven and Newhaven. Recent government reforms would make this situation more difficult. The Interim Head of Housing confirmed that if a policy was agreed the council could not be challenged in court.
- 25.5 Councillor Moonan stressed that it was the reality that the city had higher rents. There was a need to identify people in the highest need and to supply appropriate accommodation.
- 25.6 Councillor Barnett asked if the council would pay moving expenses for people to be relocated out of the city. She was concerned at the effect on people's health and for children who would be taken out of their schools to re-locate. Councillor Barnett was concerned that the policy would lead to mental health problems.
- 25.7 The Service Improvement Manager explained that an assessment would consider education and health needs. This was all contained in the policy. Even if the council could afford suitable accommodation in the city, it was difficult to find. The council could not procure enough accommodation from private landlords. Meanwhile, many people were travelling into the city for schooling, colleges and work. The policy would allow people in the greatest need to stay in the city. Not all cases were vulnerable people.
- 25.8 Councillor Miller referred to page 59, Group C (Location of temporary accommodation). He had concerns about this section. Meanwhile, Group A would only include children in year 11. Councillor Miller felt that the council could be far more inventive about the use of accommodation within the city. For example, he asked if studio flats and new homes for neighbourhood properties could be used as temporary homes; or whether four bedroom properties could be split into smaller units.
- 25.9 The Head of Temporary Accommodation & Allocation assured Councillor Miller that officers had explored every option. There was very little suitable private rented property in the city. The rent of a one bedroom flat averaged £875 to £900 a month. There was a 10% increase projected next year. Affordability was getting more out of people's reach. Officers were maximising the amount of accommodation in the city and were looking further afield. Because the housing benefit rate was static there was a gap between what income was obtained and the money required for leases.
- 25.10 The Interim Head of Housing referred to pages 40 to 41 of the agenda. These pages gave details of placements. Over the last two and a half years the numbers of households outside the city boundaries had increased. There were 1449 homeless households in temporary accommodation. The council had looked at a number of initiatives to reduce costs. For example, the use of Brighton & Hove Seaside Homes properties.

- 25.11 Councillor Miller asked why people who were allocated one bedroom flats could not be given studio flats. The Interim Head of Housing replied that new models would be brought back to a future meeting. Every option was being explored.
- 25.12 Councillor Lewry expressed concern that Brighton & Hove was pushing problems onto other councils. The Service Improvement Manager stressed that the council would keep people in the greatest need in the city, or prioritise them so that they were returned to the city as soon as possible. In terms of procurement, the council were already working with Lewes District Council.
- 25.13 The Interim Head of Housing stressed that the council had a statutory duty to notify the receiving authority. The council took its responsibility with other local authorities very seriously. The council did work closely with other local authorities in a co-operative way.
- 25.14 Councillor Hill mentioned that there had been a recent report on how much it cost to rent and buy in the city. She shared Councillor Barnett's concern about the effect of the policy on children. Councillor Hill referred to paragraph 3.5 of the report which stated that the potential for more vulnerable households to become homeless was increasing. Councillor Hill stated that a great deal of the problems were caused by welfare reforms.
- 25.15 Councillor Gibson considered the report to be thorough. He paid tribute to officers in terms of expanding temporary accommodation. He agreed that there was a need to be inventive and creative, with welfare reforms placing a cap on allowances. For example, there had been discussions about a good landlord scheme, which might lead to a small improvement in expanding the supply of private sector landlords. Tenants could be matched with landlords and there could be a commitment from landlords to continue the tenancy.
- 26.16 Councillor Atkinson stated that many private landlords only wanted to rent their properties to professional people. All councillors wanted to keep accommodation in the city but there was a need to take account of the current financial situation. Councillor Atkinson asked for more information about resettlement. He hoped the policy could be monitored and reviewed carefully on a regular basis.
- 26.17 Councillor Gibson agreed that the policy and criteria needed to be monitored. He wanted to know how many people these options affected. He would like to see this information in due course. The Service Improvement Manager replied that the policy would only be instigated if the council did not have accommodation when the person concerned needed to be housed. Officers could bring back a monitoring report on the numbers of people placed inside and outside the city.
- 26.18 The Chair stated that a monitoring report would be very useful and agreed that this should be in six months.
- 25.19 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That the Allocation of Temporary Accommodation Policy set out in Appendix 3 of the report be adopted.

**26 REVIEW OF THE LONG LEASE HELD BY THE BRIGHTON LIONS AT LIONS COURT**

- 26.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed Members that the Brighton Lions, through its Housing Society, were leased council (Housing) land at Manor Way, Brighton in 1968 in order to build affordable residential accommodation to rent. They built 30 older peoples flats which they managed. The Brighton Lions now wished to buy the freehold to enable them to grow and invest in new projects. The Brighton Lion's Manor Way scheme supported the council's housing strategy and sale of the freehold would provide a capital receipt that could be used to subsidise the housing capital programme. The report was presented by the Housing Stock Review Manager.
- 26.2 Councillor Miller asked why only one valuation had been obtained for the freehold. He also asked why an accurate valuation had not taken place shortly before the Committee decision was made. The Housing Stock Review Manager replied that the valuation had been negotiated by external chartered surveyors. Paragraph 7.1.3 of the report set out how the current freehold price was agreed between the relevant chartered surveyors in April 2015. The delay had been caused by the timing of the committee cycle.
- 26.3 Councillor Mears commented that she had previously been a ward councillor in the Manor Way area. It was a well kept area and residents were happy in Lions Court.
- 26.4 Councillor Moonan asked how the Brighton Lions allocation policy matched up to the council's allocation policy. The Housing Stock Review Manager referred to paragraph 3.2 of the report which related to the allocations process/nomination rights. This stated that the Brighton Lions operated their own waiting list. Applicants must be residents of Brighton and Hove, be over 55 years of age and have been resident for 5 years. Applicants are allowed up to £16,000 'liquid assets' but must not own a property. The Brighton Lions did not have a public scheme. They had a points scheme.
- 26.5 Councillor Moonan asked if the tenants who were allocated homes were people who would otherwise approach the council for help. The Housing Stock Review Manager confirmed that this was the case. The Brighton Lions were meeting housing needs in the city.
- 26.6 Councillor Gibson expressed disappointment that the council were not exercising 100% nomination rights. It was not known whether housing needs were being met by the nomination scheme of the Brighton Lions. Councillor Gibson was concerned that if the freehold was sold, the council was potentially losing an asset. He asked if any of the people housed by Brighton Lions were on the council housing waiting list.
- 26.7 The Housing Stock Review Manager replied that people were always advised to join the council housing list. Brighton Lions were a social housing provider who were committed to social housing.
- 26.8 Councillor Gibson asked if it could be confirmed that the rents charged by Brighton Lions were social rents. The Housing Stock Review Manager confirmed that rents charged would be social rents.

- 26.9 At this point in the proceedings the Chair drew Members' attention to two separate amendments to the recommendations that had been received from the Conservative and Green Groups.
- 26.10 Councillor Mears proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor Miller:

**Delete the word "housing" on line 3 in recommendation 2.4 and replace with the word "HRA" so it would read:**

"That Housing & New Homes Committee recommends to the Policy & Resources Committee that it approves that the capital receipt be used to support the **HRA** capital programme."

- 26.11 Councillor Gibson proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor MacCafferty:

**Amend the recommendations by adding 1 new clause so that it would read:**

Paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 unchanged.

**Add**

**"2.5 The Housing & New Homes Committee negotiate a fixed % of nomination rights and report back to Housing & New Homes Committee for final authorisation to proceed with the sale."**

- 26.12 The Chair pointed out that it was not in the power of the Housing & New Homes Committee to authorise the sale to the Brighton Lions. This was the responsibility of the Policy & Resources Committee.

- 26.13 The Interim Head of Housing suggested that the Committee might want to consider an alternative amendment to set a condition on the sale so that new tenants housed in the scheme were on the housing register prior to their being housed. Paragraph 2.1 could be amended to add "subject to the Lions allocation scheme stating that new tenants should be on the Council's housing register". Councillor Gibson found this acceptable. He wished to see a tighter register and a tighter criteria for people on the housing list.

- 26.14 The Committee voted on paragraph 2.1 as amended below:

"That Housing & New Homes Committee recommends to the Policy and Resources Committee the sale of the freehold of Lions Court to the Brighton Lions for a consideration equal to its market value, in the sum of £670,000, **subject to the Lions allocation scheme stating that new tenants should be on the council's housing register.**"

- 26.15 The amendment was agreed by 8 votes for the amendment. There were two abstentions.

- 26.16 Members agreed recommendations 2.2 and 2.3, and then considered the Conservative amendment as follows:

**"Delete the word "housing" on line 3 in recommendation 2.4 and replace with the word "HRA" so it would then read:**

“That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve that the capital receipt be used to support the **HRA** capital programme. “ This amendment was agreed.

**26.17 RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve the sale of the freehold of Lions Court to the Brighton Lions for a consideration equal to its market value, in the sum of £670,000 subject to the Lions allocations scheme stating that new tenants will be on the council’s housing register.
- (2) It is agreed that if a decision is taken to sell the freehold, a restrictive covenant is placed on the land for social housing use only.
- (3) That it is noted that the council will be offered nominations by the Brighton Lions if they are unable to let a vacant flat.
- (4) That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve that the capital receipt be used to support the HRA capital programme.

**27 HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT BUDGET & COMMISSIONING REPORT**

- 27.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Adult Services, Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing, Director of Public Health, and the Executive Director Children’s Services which provided information of the current position with regard to the Housing Related Support (HRS) Budget, HRS procurement activities and the development of the new Rough Sleeper Strategy. Housing Related Support Services were formally known as Supporting People services and incorporated Homeless Prevention Grant Funded services. These services aimed to prevent homelessness and provide support which help individuals move towards or maintain independent living. The report was presented by the Commissioning Officer, Rough Sleepers, Single Homelessness, Substance Misuse and the Head of Adults Assessment.
- 27.2 Councillor Mears stated that she was pleased to see a report on Supporting People, however there were a number of issues that concerned her. Councillor Mears referred to paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 and stressed that the approach of working with commissioners was not new. It had been happening in housing for 10 years and in 2012 the council had been commended for work on rough sleepers. Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.6 which spoke about the impact of the overall budget reductions. She was concerned about the increased pressures on other services. Councillor Mears was particularly concerned about the proposals in paragraph 3.8 (Single Homeless Supported Accommodation) as there was already a waiting list of over 80 people. Councillor Mears considered that these proposals would increase the waiting list.
- 27.3 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.10 (Mental Health Supported Accommodation) which she felt conflicted with paragraph 3.15 (Tiered Mental Health Pathway). Councillor Mears was concerned at the professional jargon used in the report and felt it was lacking detail. She noted that officers were indicating that there would be a £2 million budget cut and was concerned at the impact of cuts across the city. Councillor Mears felt that Housing & New Homes Committee members had little

control over budget matters and stressed that there was no longer an Adult Services Committee.

- 27.4 Councillor Mears considered that the role of councillors on the Committees was to address inequality. She asked if members were being asked to note recommendations that would lead to more deaths amongst homeless people. Councillor Mears emphasised that Supporting People had been ring fenced by a previous administration. She asked that it be recorded that that she was not prepared to note the report.
- 27.5 The Head of Adults Assessment informed members that the budget cut of £2 million was a Council decision not an officer decision. The Commissioning Officer, Rough Sleepers, Single Homelessness, Substance Misuse informed members that officers were aware of the impact of reductions in adult accommodation. Officers were trying to ensure that as much money as possible went into the single homeless account and were trying to fill the gap with initiatives such as the women only service and Housing First & Severe Weather Emergency Provision. Officers were trying to improve services that were being commissioned to reduce the impact of budget cuts. Mental health tired services were jointly financed and would be remodelled.
- 27.6 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.11 which stated that the Rough Sleepers Outreach Service had been tendered and the contract awarded to St Mungos Broadway. To date she had not seen any details on contracts and was interested in knowing how the contract would be administered.
- 27.7 The Commissioning Officer, Rough Sleepers, Single Homelessness, Substance Misuse replied that she could come back with an overview of the contract. It was also possible to arrange for service providers to meet with Committee members or to attend a future committee meeting.
- 27.8 Councillor Mears stressed that previously the Housing Committee had been able to review all contracts. The Chair referred to paragraph 3.2 which stated that on 22 January, Policy & Resources Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Services to procure and enter into any contract to secure effective delivery of support services for vulnerable people. Councillor Mears replied that the report should have been submitted to Housing Committee before being considered by the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 27.9 Councillor Moonan shared some of Councillor Mear's concerns and would have liked to see more detail in the report. Councillor Moonan agreed that the proposals would have a real impact on homeless people and rough sleepers. She acknowledged that there had been a great deal of good work in the past and a great deal of good practice at the moment. The administration had prioritised rough sleeping. There was a need to implement the remodelling of homeless services before quarter 3. This was a matter of urgency. Councillor Moonan reported on the Neighbourhood approach of the administration and of the important work of the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee. As Deputy Chair of that Committee she had special responsibility for homelessness. She stressed that Brighton & Hove was blessed with a rich diversity of voluntary sector organisations. She would link information to the Housing & New Homes Committee.

- 27.10 Councillor Miller expressed concern at the loss of 136 adult bed spaces. The proposals would impact other services. Councillor Miller asked if there would be better value for money if the contracts were combined.
- 27.11 The Commissioning Officer, Rough Sleepers, Single Homelessness, Substance Misuse replied that some services had been combined into one contract, however officers had not yet considered combining all services together. This would require a consortium bid which would cause an issue when working with individuals. For example, if one person was banned from a source of accommodation, they would be banned from all accommodation whereas they can currently move on elsewhere.
- 27.12 Councillor Gibson stated that he considered that the level of cuts visited on the city were due to the proposals put by the previous administration being turned down. He echoed Councillor Mear's comments and he expressed concern at the equalities implications set out in paragraph 7.3.
- 27.13 Councillor Gibson noted that the financial comments in paragraph 7.1 stated that the risks identified in the report would need to be quantified. He felt this work should have been carried out already. Councillor Gibson noted that the parts of the service being cut were non statutory. This could lead to more problems and he considered that prevention was better than cure. The Commissioning Officer, Rough Sleepers, Single Homelessness, Substance Misuse replied that floating support had been remodelled and this would help to build resilience. Officers were trying to reach people more effectively.
- 27.14 The Head of Adult Assessment informed members that the aim was to target those most in need. Prevention was not always about money. It was about working in a different way. There was a risk involved in the proposals but the work was part of an overarching strategy with regard to wellbeing. This was a city wide issue.
- 27.15 Councillor Mears referred to Councillor Moonan's comments and stated that the voluntary services were exceptional in this field. However, she asked why St Mungos Broadway had been awarded the Rough Sleepers Outreach contract rather than an organisation closer to home. Meanwhile, Councillor Mears stated that many vulnerable people were being discharged from Millview Hospital and there needed to be more work in this area.
- 27.16 Councillor Hill agreed that the budget cuts would have a negative impact but stressed that the local authority was facing budget cuts year on year.
- 27.17 Councillor Atkinson shared the concerns about the report which he did not fully understand. He felt that Councillor Moonan's work on the Neighbourhoods, Communities and Equalities Committee would provide members with more understanding on this issue. Councillor Atkinson expressed concern that winter was approaching and he was not sure how homeless people would cope if there was severe weather.
- 27.18 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That the report be noted.

**NOTES:** A vote was taken. Six members voted for the recommendation and four voted against.

Councillors Mears and Miller requested that it be recorded that they did not wish to note the report.

## **28 FUEL POVERTY & AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY FOR BRIGHTON & HOVE**

- 28.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed Members that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) released guidelines in March 2015 entitled 'Excess winter deaths and morbidity and ill health associated with living with cold homes'. The guidance provided evidence based recommendations on how to reduce the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home. The guidelines proposed that year round planning and action by multiple sectors was needed to reduce these risks. In response to the NICE guidelines and the recent national fuel poverty strategy for England, 'Cutting the cost of keeping warm', a Fuel Poverty and Affordable Warmth Strategy for Brighton & Hove was being developed with an associated action plan. The action plan in response to the NICE guidelines was attached as appendix 1. The report was presented by the Housing Sustainability Contracts Manager. The draft strategy would be presented to the Committee in January 2016.
- 28.2 Councillor Mears found the report very interesting. She referred to paragraph 7.7 relating to travellers and gypsies. She was concerned about the safety issues raised by having calor gas canisters in vehicles on the highway and was not sure interventions would work with travellers. The Housing Sustainability Contracts Manager agreed to send Councillor Mears information on this subject.
- 28.3 Councillor Atkinson considered the report to be very important and stressed that it was vital to give people the best advice. He asked how the council would evaluate whether the strategy was a success or not. The Housing Sustainability Contracts Manager replied this would be from looking at the numbers of excess winter deaths but this would vary from year to year. Officers were reliant on national statistics but there was an 18 month time lag. There would be interventions and an action plan. For example, there would be a number of interventions with regard to financial advice. A key consideration would be to properly manage, review and decide how outcomes were reported.
- 28.4 Councillor Gibson found it a useful report. He stressed that there were two sides to fuel poverty. One was poverty and the other was hard to heat homes. With regard to the poverty there was now a living wage but there was a need to see what more could be done.
- 28.5 **RESOLVED:-**
- (1) That the contents of the report and the NICE guidelines and recommendations be noted.
  - (2) That the ongoing work to develop a wider Fuel Poverty and Affordable Warmth Strategy be noted. A draft of the strategy will be brought to a future meeting for approval.

**29 LIVING RENT**

29.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which outlined some of the key challenges and considerations when developing a Living Rent model. The report was prepared in response to a public question concerning Living Rent calculations on new council housing being developed in the city. The report was presented by the Head of Housing Strategy & Development.

29.2 Councillor Gibson proposed two alternative amendments to the recommendations as follows:

**First amendment**

Amend the recommendations by adding 3 new clauses so they would read:

2.1 "That the Housing & New Homes Committee notes the contents of this report" and add

"2.2 A budget report outlining different HRA and HRA capital budget options for wider consultation be prioritised for the November Housing & New Homes Committee

2.3 The November budget report should set out a proposed budget options consultation timetable with tenants which will include consideration by Housing Area Panels.

2.4 That a working group of members from each group, officers and tenant representatives be set up with immediate effect to review apportionments of expenditure between the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account with a view to identifying changes and consultation with tenants on about what their rent pays for."

**Second amendment**

Amend recommendations by adding 1 new clause so they would read:

2.1 the Housing & New Homes Committee notes the contents of this report and add  
"2.2 In order to consider how best Brighton & Hove City Council support truly affordable renting it is proposed that this report be referred to the Fairness Commission".

29.3 The Chair stated there was already a consultation process with tenants on their part of the budget. Councillor Gibson replied that he was asking for this process to be brought forward.

29.4 The Acting Executive Director Environment, Development & Housing explained that the budget was agreed by Policy & Resources Committee in July 2015. This process had to be followed. If members wanted a report which outlined the July budget, he could bring a report to the November Housing & New Homes Committee. It was confirmed that the July P&R meeting had agreed both the housing general fund and the Housing Revenue Account budgets

29.5 The Chair stated that she was taking a decision as Chair not to accept the first amendment as all amendments should relate to the subject of a report. However, the

second amendment could be put to the vote. The Chair asked if there was a seconder and Councillor MacCafferty seconded the amendment.

- 29.6 The Chair stressed that the budget was a Policy & Resources Committee decision and could not be challenged. The budget had been agreed and there was a proper process. However there could be a report on the implications of the July budget on future budgets.
- 29.7 The Senior Lawyer confirmed that the Chair's action was supported by the Procedural Rule 13.3 as set out in the Council's constitution. The budget was a Policy and Resources Committee function.
- 29.8 The Chair stressed that there was already an existing consultation forum where the council had consulted with tenants very successfully for a number of years. A new one would add to costs and would be adding to an existing forum.
- 29.9 Councillor Gibson asked if the Housing & New Homes Committee had the right to set up a working group. The Senior Lawyer explained that if the matter fell under the remit of the Policy & Resources Committee, then Housing & New Homes Committee did not have the power to set up a working group.
- 29.10 Councillor Gibson asked if the Committee could comment on the budget. The Chair replied that the Committee did help to set budgets through the existing lines of consultation. However, Policy & Resources Committee and Full Council had the final responsibility for the budget.
- 29.11 At this point Members voted on the second amendment as follows:
- Amend recommendations by adding 1 new clause so they would read:  
2.1 the Housing & New Homes Committee notes the contents of this report and add  
**"2.2 In order to consider how best Brighton & Hove City Council support truly affordable renting it is proposed that this report be referred to the Fairness Commission"**.

29.12 The above amendment was agreed

29.13 **RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That in order to consider how best Brighton & Hove City Council support truly affordable renting it is agreed that this report be referred to the Fairness Commission.

### **30 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2015/16**

- 30.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which set out the performance for the first quarter of the financial year 2015/16. The report was presented by the Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement.

- 30.2 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 4.0.1 – Rent collected as proportion of rent due for the year by area. She stated that members used to be presented with previous year's figures so a comparison could be made. Councillor Mears referred to page 116, paragraph 4.2 – Average re-let time, excluding time spent in major works. She asked for an explanation of the figures.
- 30.3 Councillor Mears thanked officers for supplying the paragraph at 4.3.3 on asbestos and legionella safety compliance inspections, but considered that the section did not provide much information about asbestos and the response on legionella concerned her. She stressed that the work was statutory. Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 4.5 – anti-social behaviour and wanted to know whether there was joined up working with the police to ensure the best results.
- 30.4 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that with regard to paragraph 4.0.1, officers had had discussions with members on how they wanted the report to be presented, and it had been hoped that the trend arrow was sufficient. With regard to paragraph 4.2, 1a showed the figures for all properties. Major works could be excluded. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement stated that more information was available about asbestos and legionella and a more detailed report could be provided for the next performance report.
- 30.5 The Head of Housing Strategy & Development referred to the Annual Assurance report and stated that there was a corporate mechanism for reporting. Councillor Mears and the Chair asked for this information to be included in the performance report. Councillor Mears also asked for more information about asbestos.
- 30.6 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that officers did work with the police on anti-social behaviour. The Head of Tenancy Services explained that the council had clusters where housing staff met together. The Police and Environmental Protection would also be involved if relevant. There was a focus on risk management and there was a good working relationship with inspectors.
- 30.7 Councillor Miller asked if it could be explored if empty properties could be used for temporary accommodation if empty for a long period. The Interim Head of Housing explained that properties were considered for temporary accommodation if they were unoccupied for a long time.
- 30.8 Councillor Gibson raised a question about performance data. He asked what went on in terms of resident involvement. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement replied that when the council carried out the last review, officers suggested ways in which other organisations reported on outcomes of resident involvement, but currently there was information on outputs – eg numbers of people involved, costs etc. Councillor Gibson replied that he would be interested to know what information was available.
- 30.9 At this point of the proceedings Councillor Gibson referred to an amendment to the recommendations. He considered that a revision of resident involvement should take place. He was asking for a report to ensure resident involvement was carried out well. The second part of the amendment related to concerns expressed at the Area Panels about the abolition of the Housing Management Consultative Sub-Committee. He was

suggesting that members of the Committee meet with representatives of the Area Panels to understand why they were unhappy.

30.10 Councillor Gibson proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Councillor MacCafferty.

Amend the recommendations by adding 2 new clauses so they would read:

“2.1 That the Housing & New Homes Committee notes and comments on the report, which went to Area Panels in July and August 2015.”

And ADD

“2.2 The Housing and New Homes Committee will receive a report setting out the terms of reference, methodology and proposed timetable for a review of resident involvement for approval at a future Housing and New Homes Committee.”

2.3 That a meeting be arranged between the elected members of the Housing and New Homes Committee and Area Panel representatives to discuss concerns and a way forward.”

30.11 The Chair stated that the amendment had nothing to do with the Housing Management Performance Report. The two recommendations outlined above were about the tenant representative structure. The Chair referred to procedural rule 13.3 of the Council’s constitution which made it clear that an amendment must be relevant to the subject of the report and recommendation. She would therefore not accept the amendment. The Chair stated that there was a review of tenant participation which would be brought forward for full consultation and would be presented to the Committee in due course. The tenant participation strategy would include area panels and other tenant groups.

30.12 Councillor Mears asked if the report would be presented to the next Committee meeting. The Chair stated that the process was unlikely to be completed in time for the next meeting.

30.13 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that there was a resident involvement service review. Officers were looking at making resident involvement more meaningful and purposeful, so the service provided value for money. There would be consultation with tenants and the outcomes would be reported to the Committee.

30.14 The Acting Executive Director of Environment Development & Housing stated that members of the Committee were able to ask for a briefing on resident involvement. Officers were happy to talk to Councillor Gibson or any other member about the process.

30.15 The Interim Head of Housing explained that the timetable for the review was likely to be later than the November Committee meeting. It would involve a large degree of consultation with tenants and leaseholders. It was therefore likely to be presented at the January 2016 meeting.

30.16 **RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the report, which was submitted to the Area Panels in July and August 2015, be noted, along with the comments of the Committee as outlined above.

**31 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL/THANKS TO INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING****31.1 RESOLVED:-**

31.2 That the following items be referred to the next Council meeting on 22 October 2015.

Item 27 – Housing Related Support Budget & Commissioning (referred by Councillor Mears).

Item 29 – Living Rent (referred by Councillor MacCafferty).

**Thanks to the Interim Head of Housing**

31.3 Councillor Mears thanked Patrick Odling-Smee, Interim Head of Housing for his help and support. She wished him all the best for the future following his departure. Councillor Barnett also thanked the Interim Head of Housing for his help. Councillor Gibson stated that he really appreciated the information provided by the Interim Head of Housing and wished him all the best for the future. The Chair thanked the Interim Head of Housing for his support and wished him well.

31.4 The Interim Head of Housing replied that it had been a great pleasure to work in Brighton & Hove. The new Head of Housing, Tracy John, would be a real asset and would start work on Monday 28 September.

**Part Two**

31.5 Members discussed whether the Part Two item should be discussed partly in public. The Senior Lawyer stated that this was a matter for members to decide, however it would be very unfortunate if some of the tenants concerned were identified at this stage. The Chair agreed that she was very concerned about the sensitivity of the report. After a lengthy discussion Members voted to exclude members of the press and public and consider the report in Part Two of the agenda. 8 members were in favour of the proposal and 2 against.

**32 SENIORS HOUSING SCHEME REVIEW - EXEMPT CATEGORIES 1 & 2**

32.1 The Committee considered the report of the Acting Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which set out recommendations for a seniors housing scheme review. The report was presented by the Housing Stock Review Manager.

**32.2 RESOLVED:-**

(1) That the scheme review be noted and action approved as set out in the exempt minute.

**Note:** This item is exempt from disclosure to the press and public under categories 1 & 2. 1) Information relating to any individual. 2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual.

**33 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS**

33.1 **RESOLVED** – That the Part 2 report and minute remain exempt from disclosure from the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 7.54pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

