

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 25 May 2017

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor F Birkett (Chairman)

Councillor B Bayford (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs M Brady, Mrs C Heneghan, Ms S Pankhurst and S D Martin
(deputising for Mrs C L A Hockley)

Also Present: Councillor Mrs K Mandry (for item 8)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C L A Hockley and D L Steadman.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel held on 09 March 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the remit of the Panel has now changed and will no longer cover Health issues.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. INTRODUCTION TO THE PANEL, ACHIEVEMENTS, PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Panel received a presentation from the Director of Operations on the Achievements, Priorities and Challenges for the Panel.

The presentation gave an overview of the Housing Portfolio Services which include:-

- The Role of the Panel in reviewing performance of housing services, developing and reviewing policies and submitting recommendations to the Executive.
- An introduction to the Management Team and their areas of responsibility.
- Responsibilities of the Tenancy Services Team in the management of council-owned properties in the Borough.
- Responsibilities of the Responsive Repairs Team and the Finance and Resources Property Team in maintaining and improving housing stock.
- Responsibilities of the Housing Options Team in dealing with Housing Allocations, Housing waiting lists, providing assistance and support for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, providing Housing advice, managing the Farelets scheme and providing temporary accommodation.
- The delivery of new affordable housing which is a corporate priority.

Members were also advised of the key challenges ahead, which are:-

- Pressures on the Housing Revenue account
- The Housing and Planning Act
- The Homelessness Reduction Act
- Welfare Reforms
- Housing Strategy and the vision for Housing.

The Director of Operations was thanked for providing a very informative presentation.

7. ANNUAL REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

The Panel received a report by the Head of Housing, Revenues and Benefits on an annual review of the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Scheme.

Members commented on how the level of DHP funding allocated to rent/deposit advances in 2016/17 and the level of overall funding received for 2017/18 highlight the difficulties that are encountered by residents in trying to move into the private rental market.

It was AGREED that the Panel notes the information contained in the report.

8. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Operations on a review of the current Work Programme 2017/18.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs K Mandry, Executive Member for Housing, addressed the Panel on this item.

As a result of discussion that arose in connection with the possibility of empty properties across the Borough being brought back into use, it was AGREED that a report on Empty Properties in the Borough be brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 6.45 pm).