

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 28 September 2023

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Chairman)

Councillor (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: R Bird, H P Davis, Mrs C L A Hockley and Mrs K K Trott

**Also
Present:**



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor F Birkett.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

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. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

There were no items of Executive Business for the panel to consider at this meeting.

7. PILOT TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES SURVEY

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing which presented the results of the pilot tenant satisfaction survey and further local measures relating to the management and maintenance of Council homes.

In discussing this item, members were advised that a new post will be created in the Housing team which will look at how communication with tenants can be improved and how the level of engagement with them can be increased.

It was highlighted during discussion that, whilst key performance indicators look to be positive, it is important to understand how performance compares with other providers. Members were advised that all providers will be required to submit annual survey results and that this should result in comparison data being circulated so that performance can be benchmarked. The earliest benchmarking opportunity is expected in Autumn 2024.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the report.

8. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND WITHIN THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing which informed Members of the Council's approach to resident requests for electric vehicle charging on council owned land within the Housing portfolio.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel:

(a) agrees with the stance put forward in the report in respect of resident requests for electric vehicle charging on council owned land within the housing department's portfolio; and

(b) acknowledges that this stance may evolve as circumstances change.

9. AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation by the Housing Development Officer which updated Members on progress with Fareham Housing sites and other relevant strategic Housing matters. A copy of the presentation slides is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

Members were particularly pleased to hear that progress is now being made with the development at Assheton Court and thanked the Housing team for all the hard work that has been put into moving the project forward.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation.

10. ALLOCATIONS POLICY REFRESH

The Panel received a presentation by the Interim Consultant - Housing and Benefits, which outlined intended changes to the existing 'Optimising Social Housing Applications and Allocations Policy 2020'. A copy of the presentation slides is attached to these minutes as Appendix B.

Members expressed an interest in scrutinising the draft updated policy once it has been prepared prior to it being presented to the Executive for approval to proceed to public consultation.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation.

11. AGREEMENT OF SCOPING REPORT TO VIVID HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The Panel received a draft scoping report which invites Vivid Housing Association to attend a future meeting of the Panel to provide members with information in respect of services provided.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel approves the draft scoping report for inclusion in an invitation to Vivid Housing Association to attend a future meeting of the Panel.

12. HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

Members considered the scrutiny priorities for the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

The following items were requested and agreed for inclusion in the scrutiny priorities once an appointment to the vacant Head of Housing (Pathways and Neighbourhoods) post has been made.

- (i) an update on the changes to the County Council funded social inclusion services in Fareham since these were implemented in March 2019.
- (ii) an update on the impact of Homelessness funding which was used to create 2 new posts following a successful bid to the Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund in March 2021.
- (iii) an update on the structure chart of the new Housing team.

Councillor Bird requested that the Panel be given an opportunity to review the annual Housing Revenue Account report that is presented and considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Panel as it may contain information that is of interest to members of the Housing Scrutiny Panel. The Director of Housing agreed that this could be investigated with finance colleagues to see if it would be possible but asked that the Panel note that this would have a cost implication in terms of additional officer time.

RESOLVED that the priorities for the Housing Scrutiny Panel were reviewed.

(The meeting started at 6.01 pm
and ended at 7.10 pm).

..... Chairman

..... Date



Affordable Housing Update *(Item 9)*

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Minute Item 9

September 2023



Sales Completions – Capella

Capella Close

- 11No. Shared ownership homes
- Average share purchased approx. 40%
- 10 homes occupied
- Initial capital receipt from sales so far: £1.2m

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Aerial shot of Capella Close

Site Updates – Ophelia Court

Ophelia Court

- 9No. Shared ownership homes
- Site acquired from Homes England
- Delay due to electricity meter relocation required for start on site
- New building regulation requirements
- Start on Site Autumn 2023

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Artist Impression Ophelia Court

- FE Chase & Sons build contractor
- Homes England grant of £447,000

Site Updates – Assheton Court

Assheton Court

60No. Sheltered flats

October 2023:

- Demolition due to complete
- Section 73 planning application – Air Source Heat Pumps
- Stage 1 tender process
- Grant funding discussions with Homes England

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Site Updates – 51 Bellfield

51 Bellfield

1 No. 3 bed house

- Tender process complete
- Contractor appointment imminent
- SOS estimated February 2024
- Approx. 9 month build programme
- Funded using 1-4-1 receipts (*therefore no grant*)

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Potential Acquisition



Potential town centre acquisition for emergency housing/ temporary accommodation

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- Report to Executive October 2023 for approval to proceed
- Proposal addresses Housing Sufficiency workstream objectives:
 - Improve access to suitable accommodation
 - Reduce B&B emergency accommodation
- Positive early grant funding enquiries

Any Questions

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Allocations Policy Refresh

Executive Member Briefing

23rd August 2023



Introduction

- The Housing Act requires all housing authorities to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures in allocating social accommodation
- Social housing and affordable rent housing is assigned
- The Housing Register and Allocation Scheme is operated on behalf of all Registered Providers that work with the Council.
- 'Optimising Social Housing - Applications and Allocations Policy' published in 2020

Introduction

The properties allocated in this policy include:

- General needs housing (such as houses and flats)
- Retirement living accommodation (properties for older people who need support in line with the accommodation they are applying for)
- Specially adapted properties for people with disabilities

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The properties **not** allocated in this policy include:

- Temporary accommodation
- Managed moves
- 'Local letting plan' schemes

Why change?

- Legal requirements
- Transparency and clarity for customers*
- More inclusive
- Better reflects the needs of the community

The changes required?

- Many! General and specific

Examples of general;

- additional information and increased transparency around the whole process
- clarity around certain areas of the policy where this is lacking, to enable better understanding and application
- information about Registered Providers and their policies
- information on the different types of sheltered schemes available in the borough and the level of support provided.

The changes required?

Examples of specific;

- requirement to provide evidence of close family connections which are required to prove an applicant's local connection (to prevent fraud)
- expand the groups of people who qualify to join the list to ensure that there is no discrimination against any group who may not qualify currently, e.g. home owners under 55 who may be fleeing abuse/violence, home owners under 55 in negative equity

Decisions (for later)?

- Expand the qualification criteria to ensure there are adequate numbers of applicants on the housing register to fill the flow of new build housing in the pipeline, e.g. people in privately rented accommodation who may otherwise be considered to be adequately housed
- Increasing priority for current qualifying groups
- Local lettings plans

Timeline - *to consultation

Meeting/Activity	Target date
Initial engagement of housing scrutiny panel	Autumn
HSP Meeting	Autumn
NOKD to CXMT	Winter
Executive report sign off (inc EM & Leader)	Winter
Executive meeting and call off	Winter
Prepare for consultation	Winter
Full consultation end	Early spring
Target date for go live	Spring