

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 21 September 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, D L Steadman
and S D Martin (deputising for Mrs C L A Hockley)

**Also
Present:**



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs C L A Hockley.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the Housing Policy Development and Review Panel meeting held on 20 July 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised Members that a special e-bulletin had been issued earlier in the day regarding a report that will be presented to Full Council on 12 October 2017 proposing a new senior management structure to take effect from 01 November 2017. A key factor for driving this change is the growing need to manage the delivery of affordable housing across the Borough in a more coordinated and business-like way. Members were advised to read the e-bulletin as soon as possible and to contact the Chairman with any questions.

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. TENANCY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Operations which provided Members with general information about the Council's housing stock and staffing structures but also went into greater detail for five service areas (Sheltered Housing, Empty Property Management, Right to Buy, Mutual Exchanges, Kitchen/Bathroom Modernisations).

Members were advised that if the proposed new senior management structure is approved by Council it will result in a more focussed, fully integrated Housing department. In addition to managing the day to day operation of the Council's housing services, the new department would consider a new approach to the provision of social and affordable housing to ensure that the right type of housing is delivered in the right areas based on demographic trends and population increases. A report will be brought to Panel in due course to provide Members with more information regarding the aims and objectives of the new department.

Members were encouraged that future provision of new affordable housing will take account of residents' needs and will be provided in locations where it is required, thus building on the good work already done to change the approach

to new allocations to one of making sure that the right person is placed in the right property.

The Head of Housing, Revenue and Benefits provided some additional data to demonstrate how successful the new approach to allocating homes has been. There has been a significant reduction in the number of tenants falling into arrears with their rent or reporting repairs within the first few months of their tenancy.

It was AGREED that the information contained in the report be noted.

7. EMPTY PROPERTIES UPDATE

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Operations which provided members with an update on the activities being undertaken to bring empty, private sector, properties across the Borough back in to residential use.

Councillor S Martin left the meeting during this item.

The Panel also received a presentation showing the clearing of an abandoned property in Larkspur Close and detailing the renovation work done to transform it into a habitable property that the Council will now be able to lease out.

Members enquired whether a large property in Stubbington, which has been empty for many years, could be brought back into use by the Council. The Head of Housing, Revenue and Benefits advised that whilst decisions do need to be made regarding this property, its suitability for a leasing arrangement was questionable due to its size and significant renovation costs.

8. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Operations which reviewed the Panel's Work Programme for 2017/18.

Members were invited to note that, as requested at the last meeting of the Panel, agenda items regarding Fire Issues and Precautions and an Update on Homelessness have been added to the meeting scheduled to take place on 16 November 2017.

Members were also invited to submit any further requests for additional items to be added to the Work Programme to the Chairman.

It was AGREED that the Panel notes and agrees the Work Programme for 2017/18.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 6.55 pm).