

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 7 March 2019

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Chairman)

Councillor S Dugan (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: I Bastable, J M Englefield, Mrs C L A Hockley, Ms S Pankhurst
and Mrs K K Trott

**Also
Present:**



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were tabled for Members' information.

The Chairman advised Members that Vivid Housing has declined the invitation to attend a future meeting of the Panel. However, they have agreed to attend an informal briefing where they will provide an overview of their tenancy management services and new housing development plans.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 13 November 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that in October 2018, the Government launched the Private Rented Sector Access Fund and invited local authorities to bid for funds to provide additional support for single homeless people. Officers submitted a bid for funds and the Chairman was pleased to advise Members that confirmation was received last week that the bid was successful.

The Chairman also announced that a report on the future housing numbers in the Borough will be brought to the next meeting of the Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel which will be held on 12 March 2019. The Chairman of the Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Tom Davies, would like to invite Members of the Housing Scrutiny Panel to attend the meeting as this item may be of interest. The report describes the process for compiling the Housing Need for the Borough using the standard methodology and population projections along with an explanation of why the housing need figures have changed in recent years.

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

The Panel considered the Executive items of business which fall under the remit of the Housing portfolio, including individual Executive Member decisions, that have taken place since the last meeting of the Panel.

The Panel considered the decision shown at item 6(1) of the agenda.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel considered the following item of Executive Business:

(1) Fareham Housing Development Sites

The Panel discussed the lengthy process involved in preparing sites ready for development and heard how the delegated authority agreed by the Executive in respect of the contract award and appointment of contractor(s) for the Hampshire Rose and Bridge Road development sites has helped to accelerate the delivery of the sites.

7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

Members received a presentation by the Strategic Lead for Affordable Housing which provided the Panel with an update on the progress being made in developing the key sites that are being led by Fareham Housing. The presentation also gave a summary of the processes and procedures that need to be followed in delivering the sites and gave an update on the progress being made with preparing the Council's Affordable Housing Strategy.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

8. TENANCY MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE REPORT

The Panel considered a report by the Managing Director of Fareham Housing which provided Members with information about the Housing management and maintenance services provided by the Neighbourhood Team and the Repairs and Maintenance Team.

Members discussed the forthcoming informal meeting to be held with Vivid Housing Association and requested that background information such as the numbers of properties held by Vivid and details of other Housing Associations that own properties across the Borough be provided as background information in advance of the meeting.

On considering the report, Members raised a number of questions and comments for clarification which included nomination rights for Housing Association properties, the differences in the levels of Social rents and Affordable rents, some indication that tenancy arrears are rising as a result of the implementation of Universal Credit, responsibilities for people who are made homeless as a result of being evicted from Council properties, reporting measures for responsive repairs and actions arising from Fire Risk Assessments.

The Chairman invited Members who have not yet had the opportunity to visit the depot, to contact the Head of Building Repairs and Maintenance Service to arrange to do so.

RESOLVED that the Managing Director of Fareham Housing be thanked for providing the report.

9. CHANGES TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FUNDED SOCIAL INCLUSION SERVICES IN FAREHAM

The Panel received a report by the Managing Director of Fareham Housing which sets out the findings of the County's 'Transformation to 2019 Review', the implications to provision of Social Inclusion services in Fareham, and work being undertaken by Fareham Borough Council to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the Borough.

On considering the report, Members raised a number of questions and made comments for clarification which included the changes to the level of floating support as a result of the reduction in County funding.

The Head of Housing and Benefits outlined the successful bid made to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The funding will be used to improve access to private rented accommodation.

Members enquired whether there was anything they could do to assist officers with the provision that is made for rough sleepers. The Head of Housing & Benefits referred Members to the Fareham StreetAid website, which is an online resource that comprises a number of agencies working together to help vulnerable people off the streets of Fareham.

The Panel thanked the Managing Director of Fareham Housing and the Head of Housing and Benefits for providing an extremely well prepared and informative report.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive that the Flexible Homeless Support Grant is used to fund the commissioning of Social Inclusion Services in partnership with Hampshire County Council from 01 August 2019.

10. HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

The Panel considered the tabled item – Housing Scrutiny Panel Priorities Plan, attached as Appendix B to these minutes.

Members felt that the plan is a good reflection of the current priorities for the Panel and agreed that changes can be made in due course if necessary.

RESOLVED that the scrutiny priorities for the Panel be approved.

The Chairman announced that the Managing Director of Fareham Housing, Paul Doran, will be retiring at the end of March and that this had been his final meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel. The Chairman placed on record her thanks to Paul for the support and advice he has given over the years and wished him a long and happy retirement.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.55 pm).