

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel (to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 11 July 2019

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor S Dugan (Chairman)

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

Also Present: Councillor N J Walker (for item 6)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from the Chairman, Councillor Mrs K Mandry.

In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman, Councillor S Dugan.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 07 March 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements made at this meeting.

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. DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Panel considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer which provided an overview of the Draft Affordable Housing Strategy that has been put out for consultation.

Members were invited to put forward any comments for inclusion in the referral document back to the Executive once the consultation period on the document has closed.

Members commented positively about the strategy, noting that it was very easy and understandable to read.

Referencing page 23 of the document, Members questioned whether a household with an income of £80,000 could be considered in need of affordable housing. Officers explained that the income brackets referred to are official figures set by central government.

In considering the final paragraph of objective 2 on page 32, Members enquired whether there has been any improvement in the accountability of partnership Affordable Housing Providers. Officers advised that whilst there have been some issues to address, the Council will continue to work positively with these partners, who have access to considerable levels of funding, to ensure that affordable homes are provided in Fareham.

7. 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.

(1) Void Property Works and Component Improvement Package Works Contract 2019-2022

There were no points for clarification raised by Members in respect of this item.

(2) Use of Flexible Homeless Support Grant

There were no points for clarification raised by Members in respect of this item.

(3) Draft Affordable Housing Strategy

There were no points for clarification raised by Members in respect of this item.

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

The presentation gave an overview of the stages reached for each of the sites. Assheton Court has now been added to Tranche #3 and is at the concept/ideas stage. Contractors are on site at Hampshire Rose and Bridge Road, Architects have been appointed at Sea Lane and Wynton Way, planning permission will soon be submitted at Stubbington Lane, new plans are being finalised at Station Road and a possible partner is being sought to help deliver Coldeast Scout Hut.

Members commented that the ability to deliver Affordable Housing depends on funding and that they would be interested to see the financial plans for delivering these sites. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer advised that the funding arrangements are clearly outlined in the Capital plans that were approved by the Executive earlier this month and are available for Members to review should they wish to do so.

9. REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Housing and Benefits which measures achievement against the existing Homelessness Strategy and puts forward for consideration the objectives for inclusion in the new draft Homelessness Strategy Consultation document.

Members were given the opportunity to consider and comment upon the proposed objectives before they are used to produce a draft homelessness strategy which will be presented to the Executive in September for approval to undertake a period of public consultation.

Members commented and agreed that the report was excellent work and that the proposed objectives, whilst high level, are very worthy and well done.

10. DRAFT ALLOCATIONS POLICY CONSULTATION

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Housing and Benefits on the Draft Allocations Policy Consultation document.

Members commented that there might be a better way to categorise the different levels of housing need so that the hierarchy of need was less obvious. They also felt that avoiding the use of the term waiting "list" might help to move away from the perception that over time, people will automatically move up the list regardless of their level of need.

Members queried whether the wording used in paragraph 30.2 on page 79, sufficiently reflects all aspects of multiculturalism.

The Chairman thanked Officers for providing such well thought out and detailed reports.

11. HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

Members considered the priorities for the Housing Scrutiny Panel and agreed that in order to fit in with the timing of information becoming available, the item to inform Members on proposed provision of affordable housing at Welborne and the item to inform Members of the intentions to provide affordable housing through the new Local Plan be deferred to the March meeting.

Members also requested that a brief presentation on the funding arrangements of the Affordable Housing projects be brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 8.00 pm).