

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 8 July 2021

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Chairman)

Councillor N R Gregory (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: S Dugan, G Fazackarley, Mrs C L A Hockley, Ms S Pankhurst
and J G Kelly

Also Present: Councillor F Birkett, Executive Member for Housing (for item 9)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs K K Trott.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 25 March 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Council has been successful in securing an extra £294,000 from the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative this year. £95,000 of funding has already been received to reflect the extra cost of protecting rough sleepers during the Pandemic and, with the additional funding, it brings the total amount of support from the Rough Sleeping Initiative to £389,000 this year.

The Chairman commented that this is welcome news because it means that not only will the existing support be continued, but it builds on this too. The Council bid for funding to continue the personal support at East Street, Fareham, the current Outreach Workers, Complex Needs Navigator and Accommodation Officer, and put in place further support for those with Complex Needs as well as a post to assist with Homelessness Prevention and Mediation. Some of these are shared resources with Gosport Borough Council, which recognises the importance of a joined-up approach to tackling homelessness.

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

(1) Property Naming for Fareham Housing Development at Station Road, Portchester

There were no questions or comments for clarification.

(2) Policy on Assistance with Home Adaptations, Repairs and Improvements

There were no questions or comments for clarification.

(3) Town Centre Property Acquisition

There were no questions or comments for clarification.

7. THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

The Panel received a presentation by the Head of Housing Delivery which provided Members with an overview of the role and functions of the Housing Scrutiny Panel. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

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

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation by the Head of Housing Delivery which updated Members on the progress being made with Fareham Housing sites and other relevant strategic housing matters. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as Appendix B.

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

9. TENANCY MANAGEMENT, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL-OWNED PROPERTIES

Councillor Birkett, Executive Member for Housing, addressed the Panel on this item.

The Panel received a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer which provided information about the housing management and maintenance services provided by the neighbourhood Team and the Repairs & Maintenance Team.

During the discussion of this item it was agreed that officers would provide details of the Right to Buy sliding scale discounts for members' information.

It was also agreed that tenancy arrears information detailing the number of tenants involved would be provided to members for information.

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

10. HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

Members considered and discussed the Scrutiny Priorities for the Panel.

Members noted that at the last meeting of the Panel it was agreed that scrutiny of service standards being achieved by Housing Associations be added to the Priorities Plan. As a result of ongoing complaints being received from residents about levels of service, Members stressed the importance of carrying out this scrutiny.

The following additional items were put forward for scrutiny:

- (i) the effect of the Covid Pandemic on Council tenants being able to make their rental payments. It was noted however that a report will be taken to a meeting of the Executive later in the year which will provide a full review of the Council's response to the Pandemic.

(ii) the cleaning contract standards for Council owned flats in the Borough and how these standards are monitored.

(iii) a further update on the Rough Sleeping Initiatives.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel considered the priorities for the Panel and agreed that items (ii) and (iii) be added to the Scrutiny Priorities Plan.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.29 pm).