

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Date: Thursday, 9 February 2023

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Chairman)

Councillor (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: R Bird, F Birkett, H P Davis, D G Foot and Mrs K K Trott

Also Present: Councillor Mrs T L Ellis (for items 7 and 10)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence made at this meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel held on 29 September 2022 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 declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

(1) Appendix B to the Fareham Housing Regeneration Strategy (Fort Fareham Housing Estate Regeneration)

There were no questions or comments for clarification in respect of this item.

(2) Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptation Policy

There were no questions or comments for clarification in respect of this item.

(3) Fareham Housing Development of Ophelia Court, Montefiore Drive, Park Gate

There were no questions or comments for clarification in respect of this item.

7. DRAFT EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs T L Ellis addressed the Panel on this item.

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Housing Delivery which provided members with an overview of the Draft Empty Homes Strategy.

A correction at page 12 of the draft Strategy was noted in respect of Empty Dwelling Management Orders in that an Order can be applied for after 6 months of the property being empty not 2 years as stated in the draft Strategy.

A query was raised regarding the accuracy of the empty homes data provided at paragraph 7 of the report. The Head of Housing Delivery explained that this data has been taken directly from an external source and undertook to validate it.

Councillor Bird raised concern that the draft Strategy sets low expectations of outcomes and proposed that additions could be made to the Strategy to include a point based system to determine when action is needed, as undertaken by Rushmoor Borough Council. There was no seconder to this proposal and a vote was therefore not taken. Members did, however, request that officers investigate the possibility of incorporating something similar within the Strategy, in discussion with the Executive Member for Housing, to make it clearer how the characteristics of each empty property would be used to determine whether action is warranted.

The Panel discussed the Council's resource allocation for dealing with empty homes and noted that the Council does not have a dedicated resource for this purpose. It was suggested that there could be an opportunity to work collaboratively with other local authorities to maximise resourcing and expertise. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer agreed that this could be taken forward for further investigation.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the report and has no changes to recommend to the Executive when the Draft Empty Homes Strategy is considered for adoption.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation by the Head of Housing Delivery which informed Members of the progress with Fareham Housing Sites and other relevant strategic housing matters. 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.

9. TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

The Panel received a presentation by the Head of Housing & Benefits which outlined the new way of measuring tenant satisfaction with services the Council provides. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes as Appendix B.

It was agreed that, going forward, the current report on Tenancy Management Services that is presented to the Panel twice a year be replaced with an annual report and presentation based on the results of the Council's Tenant Satisfaction Measures, along with any further local measures that members wish to consider.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel:

- (a) notes the content of the presentation; and

- (b) agrees that, as outlined above, the Tenancy Management Services report be replaced with an annual report and presentation on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

10. GREENER MEASURES & INSTALLATIONS ON COUNCIL OWNED HOMES

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs T L Ellis addressed the Panel on this item.

The Panel considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer which provided members with an update on the greener measures undertaken on Council owned housing. This included work carried out as part of Government funding as well future initiatives.

Members were advised that the findings from the Capacity funding provided by South West Energy Hub will hopefully be more fully understood following further investigation on one of the Council's properties. It is anticipated that an update will be available later in the spring.

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

11. HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

RESOLVED that members considered the future scrutiny priorities for the Panel and agreed that there were no changes to be made at the present time.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.34 pm).