

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Date: Thursday, 13 July 2023

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs K Mandry (Chairman)

Councillor (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: F Birkett, H P Davis, Mrs C L A Hockley, Mrs K K Trott and
M R Daniells (deputising for R Bird)

Also Present: Councillor D G Foot (Executive Member for Housing)



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Bird and S Ingram.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 09 February 2023 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 no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

(1) Crossfell Walk Development Update

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

(2) Draft Empty Homes Strategy

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

(3) Fareham Housing Stock Conditions Survey

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

(4) Fareham Housing Void Property Works and Improvements Contract

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

7. OPPORTUNITIES PLAN 2023-2027

The Panel received a presentation which provided an overview of the Council's Opportunities Plan and how the Year 1 project proposals relate to the Housing Portfolio. A copy of the presentation slides is attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

Members of the Panel asked a series of questions pertaining to the various projects outlined in the report with a focus on the reduced costs of Bed and Breakfasts facilities and the challenges faced to improve void turnaround times. Officers explained that more detail on these projects was to be

presented to the Panel at item 8 and highlighted that these are a key focus for the Housing department at this time.

Questions were raised around the challenges faced in producing savings in Housing which is a statutory service. Officers explained that the focus is to introduce efficiencies which save money. One of the key areas currently being developed to achieve this, is to improve residents' ability to make initial contact to the Housing Options department via an online form. Although Members agreed that this would free up officer time and allow urgent cases to be prioritised, the Panel asked that face to face contact should always be maintained as an option for anyone using the service.

RESOLVED that the Housing Scrutiny Panel notes the content of the presentation and commented on the proposals as appropriate.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

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

The Head of Housing delivery highlighted to Members that this is the highest number of completed projects that she has ever been able to report to Members and explained how this has a knock-on effect throughout the housing department as these properties are occupied.

Councillor Mrs C Hockley asked that a special thanks be passed to all those officers involved in the development of Assheton Court. Members are truly grateful for the hard work from officers in not only developing the site, but also in decanting residents into Sir Randal Cremer House with such care.

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

9. UPDATE ON THE HOUSING REGISTER

The Panel received a report by the Head of Housing Delivery which provided information to members regarding the Council's housing register, its recent review, and ongoing monitoring of new affordable housing delivery.

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

10. HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL PRIORITIES

Members were asked to consider the Scrutiny Priorities for the Panel.

Members agreed that a scoping report be drafted to formulate an invitation to Vivid Housing limited to present to the Panel. In consultation with the Chairman, Officers will draft a report focusing key points around; repairs, renewals and customer service, before bringing to a future meeting of the Panel for consideration.

Members also requested that an update on the Welborne delivery of affordable homes be brought to the Panel within this municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Priorities for the Housing Scrutiny Panel were reviewed.

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