

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

4.00pm 29 APRIL 2009

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Caulfield (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Simpson (Labour Opposition Spokesperson) and Randall (Green Opposition Spokesperson)

PART ONE

116. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

116(a) Declarations of Interests

116.1 Councillors Randall and Simpson declared a personal interest in Item 127, as they are both on the Board of Trustees of Brighton and Hove Seaside Homes Company Ltd.

116(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

116.2 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Cabinet Member considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

116.3 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

117. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

117.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting held on 11 March 2009 be agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member.

118. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS**CMM Communication – responses to Mortgage Repossessions**

118.1 The Cabinet Member reported that Brighton & Hove City Council Housing Options, in partnership with Brighton Housing Trust Advice, had developed a booklet to give people information and advice on steps they can take to prevent the loss of their home due to mortgage arrears. This was available in libraries, GP surgeries and other agencies and was available online. The number of mortgage repossession claims brought to court in Brighton & Hove increased by 21% for the first ¾ of 2008/9 as compared to 2007/8. The Council could help 80% of cases even when they reached a court stage.

Local Lettings Plan – Sheltered Housing

118.2 The Cabinet Member reported that there had been a consultation process on the Local Lettings Plan. A report would be presented to Housing Management Consultative Committee on June 22 2009 for consultation and a decision sought at the Cabinet Member Meeting on 15 July 2009.

Government Announcement on Reduction in Rent Increases

118.3 The Cabinet Member reported that the Government had announced that they would like to offer help to council tenants by reducing the national average rent increase for this year from 6.2% to 3.1%. This offer had been accepted.

119. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

119.1 **RESOLVED** – All items were reserved for discussion.

120. PETITIONS

120.1 There were none.

121. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

121.1 There were none.

122. DEPUTATIONS

122.1 There were none.

123. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

123.1 There were none.

124. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

124.1 There were none.

125. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

125.1 There were none.

126. MINUTES OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

126.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 5 March 2009 (for copy see minute book).

126.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes be noted.

127. 10 YEAR LEASING - TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

127.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which sought a general authority for the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing to enter into leases and Management Agreements of up to 10 years for the purposes of providing accommodation for households who would otherwise be homeless or overcrowded (for copy see minute book).

127.2 The scheme would provide an alternative to the existing shorter-term arrangements the council uses for leasing property thereby providing more settled and secure accommodation.

127.3 Councillor Randall thought the proposals to be a good idea but in reference to paragraph 3.2 of the report he asked about the standard expected of a landlord before taking on a long lease. He stressed that there should be decent standards and that standards needed to be maintained.

127.4 Councillor Simpson agreed that the proposals were a good idea and also referred to paragraph 3.2. There would be advantages to the landlord as a predictable income was guaranteed. She asked if the scheme ensured that any major damages to the properties would be repaired.

127.5 The Head of Temporary Accommodation and Adaptations replied that property standards were set so that the property was viable for 10 years. If the property was damaged by tenants then the council would carry out the repairs. However, the landlord was responsible for structural repairs. All the properties involved in the scheme would be brought up to the required set of standards.

127.6 The Cabinet Member considered the proposals to be a helpful step forward. She stressed the need for decent homes in the private sector.

127.7 **RESOLVED** - Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

(1) That the Council be authorised to enter into leases for up to 10 years in accordance with the terms of the report.

- (2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing to negotiate the final Heads of Terms with each landlord in consultation with the Council's Valuer, the Head of Law and Finance and Property.

128. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS AND EXTRA CARE

- 128.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing which explored how a model of allocation for extra care housing could be developed that provided transparency, addressed value for money, and met the care and support needs of vulnerable people in the City within a framework of Choice Based Lettings (for copy see minute book).
- 128.2 Councillor Simpson asked about the age criteria. She noted it was not the same criteria as sheltered housing. She asked why the age was chosen and if there was any flexibility in the age range. What alternatives would there be for people under the age range?
- 128.3 The General Manager, Adult Social Care replied to explain that funding for Patching Lodge and other extra care housing was governed by criteria. Extra Care Housing was for people over 55; however it was negotiated on a case by case basis when people were close to that age. The average age for extra care was in the 80's. In terms of younger people, there was funding at Vernon Gardens for a new resource.
- 128.4 Councillor Randall thought the proposals to be sensible. He asked how they would be publicised. The General Manager, Adult Social Care replied that there was an advertisement in Home Move Magazine. The Director of Adult Social Care & Housing stressed that there had been a number of communications about Patching Lodge. The Hanover Housing Association advertised widely.
- 128.5 The Cabinet Member thanked the team for the work carried out on Extra Care Housing.
- 128.6 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
 - (1) That it be endorsed that Extra Care Housing should be allocated through Choice Base Lettings in line with the allocation of other affordable housing across the City
 - (2) That it be endorsed that all extra care vacancies are marked as such within the Homemove publications and are available only for people following an Adult Social Care assessment and confirmation that they meet Adult Social Care eligibility for extra care housing.

129. REVIEW OF LEARNING DISABILITY HOUSING STRATEGY

- 129.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which presented the annual update of the Learning Disability Housing Strategy, 2007-2010 (for copy see minute book). The strategy was reviewed in the context of the new Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy 2009-2012, the new Housing Strategy 2008-2013 and Valuing People now, 2009. The Summary of progress achieved so far and the ongoing action plan was attached to the report.

- 129.2 The Cabinet Member was pleased to note the work being carried out and the exciting proposals for the city.
- 129.3 Councillor Randall asked about the out of town placement numbers. The Head of Supporting People and Lead Commissioner for Learning Disabilities replied that numbers were down to 107 from 121. Around 40 people were outside Sussex. Some people did not want to move. By expanding what was available locally, some people would be encouraged to move back.
- 129.4 Councillor Randall asked about self directive support working with voluntary agencies. He further asked if any savings had been achieved through self directive support. It was explained that this work was going well. Officers were working with an independent broker and feedback so far was positive. Some savings had been achieved, but there had also been additional costs. Personalisation was about using money more wisely.
- 129.5 Councillor Simpson congratulated officers on the progress to date.
- 129.6 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the report and attached progress report “the Learning Disability Housing Strategy, 2007-2010” be noted.
 - (2) That it be agreed that that future updates will be made as part of the annual review of the Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy.

130. UPDATE ON YOUTH HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

- 130.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing which covered key actions from the Youth Homelessness Strategy (launched in November 2006) that had been completed in the two years since publication. The Youth Homelessness Strategy was written in the context of the Children and Young Person’s Plan, and the Homelessness Strategy, incorporating actions from both. The national policy context of the strategy was directed by the government white paper ‘Every Child Matters’ and the Homelessness Prevention agenda.
- 130.2 The Cabinet Member thanked the Housing Options Team for the work carried out on the action plan.
- 130.3 Councillor Simpson congratulated officers. She considered the work to be a great achievement particularly in relation to early intervention and respite. There was an issue around people leaving home precipitately. She asked for more information about support for teenager parents.
- 130.4 The Housing Options Manager explained that there were housing projects which were run with a provider. These projects linked up with the health service. A life coach would be available to help challenging behaviour and to address psychological issues.
- 130.5 Councillor Randall commended the report. He was pleased to note that 53 people had been persuaded to go back home.

130.6 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendation:

- (1) That the reported be noted and that the delivery of the final year of the Youth Homelessness Strategy Action Plan be approved.

The meeting concluded at 4.53pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of