

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

4.00pm 12 NOVEMBER 2014

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Randall (Chair) Councillor Phillips (Deputy Chair), Barnett, Daniel, Meadows, Kennedy, Mears, Peltzer Dunn (Opposition Spokesperson), Rufus and Wilson (Group Spokesperson)

PART ONE

32 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

32(a) Declarations of Substitute Members

32.1 There were none.

32b) Declarations of Interests

32.2 There were none.

32(c) Exclusion of the Press and Public

32.3 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in section 100I (1) of the said Act.

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

33 MINUTES

33.1 Councillor Meadows referred to paragraph 23.5. She stated that this minute was not entirely accurate. She had asked that the decision of who won the contract should be communicated to the Executive Director in conjunction with the Chair and Opposition Spokesperson. She also suggested that if two tenants were on the panel to look at the *process* of the evaluation, then two councillors should also be on that panel. She received an email from the Executive Director to say that councillors were not entitled to be involved in the process. She felt that councillors were being sidelined as part of the

process and that no other monitoring steps were in place to ensure contracts were let properly.

- 33.2 The Executive Director of Environment Development and Housing replied that he took legal advice on the issue. The Committee Lawyer stated that she had not seen the exchange. She would be happy to review the exchange if it was sent to her. The Chair thought that there had been a misunderstanding about this issue and stated that this situation should be reviewed as soon as possible.
- 33.3 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 14.5 relating to Supporting People. The comment made by the Executive Director of Environment Development and Housing was misleading. He had said that there had been a good response from staff to the changes. Councillor Mears stressed that there had still not been a report on the subject of moving the Supporting People function from Housing to Adult Social Care. Members were entitled to have a report on decisions taken by senior officers.
- 33.4 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 23.2 regarding the open book process in relation to the contract for gas servicing, maintenance and installations. She wanted to know when the process was going to commence. James Crier, Mears Ltd explained that there was currently a pilot stage for open book accounting. The Executive Director explained that a report would be brought back to the Committee when the pilot was completed. In relation to the comment about Supporting People, he could confirm that there had been a high number of responses from staff. Councillor Mears asked the minute to be changed to say full rather than good response. This was agreed.
- 33.5 The Chair stressed that a report on Supporting People was submitted to Policy and Resources Committee. Councillor Mears replied that one of the functions of housing was homelessness. She felt the Housing Committee had been sidelined. She wanted to register her dissatisfaction. She asked for a report to the Housing Committee on why officers felt the need to use emergency powers. The Chair replied that a report would be submitted to full Council.
- 33.6 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 10 September 2014 be agreed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendments suggested above.

34 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 34.1 The Chair reported that the Community Land Trust had received a grant of £10,000 from the Central Community Land Trust organisation to develop its case and viability in the city. The Chair had discussed this matter with Helen Russell from the Trust at the Strategic Housing Partnership meeting on 11 November. The Strategic Housing Partnership meeting was devoted principally to the Housing Strategy. There was a very helpful discussion with many ideas coming forward from the private sector, housing associations and public health. It was recognised that there was a clear link between housing and good public health.
- 34.2 The Chair reported that there had been progress with improvements to sheltered housing schemes with regard to showers. Work was proceeding at Sanders House and the show flat at Evelyn Court was completed. Work would be finalised in the New Year

to ensure everyone in sheltered housing would have showers. The only exception would be a small number of people who did not want a shower.

35 CALL OVER

35.1 It was agreed that all items be reserved for discussion.

36 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(a) Petitions

(i) Support the Campaign for a Living Rent

36.1 The Committee considered the following petition which was signed by 2164 people as an online petition and 506 people as a paper petition. Total signatures - 2506. The petition was considered by Council on 23 October 2014 and was now referred to Housing Committee. An extract from the Council meeting was attached to the agenda with recommendations for the Housing Committee.

“We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to 1) Acknowledge that the massive increase in private sector rents is causing unacceptable harm to many residents in the city. Some of whom are faced with not having enough to feed their families once their rent has been paid. 2) Make a public statement deploring the hardship caused to residents of the city by unaffordable private sector rents that rose by up to 27% last year forcing many people to move away from areas where they have lived all their lives or live in unsuitable overcrowded accommodation 3) Develop an ethical landlord scheme, whereby landlords voluntarily commit: to charge living rent, to cap increases by inflation, to provide a good standard of property maintenance 4) Support the development of an ethical lettings agency 5) Call on the government to institute rent controls on private sector rents”

36.2 The Chair responded as follows:

“We are looking now at the six recommendations that were agreed at the last full Council as an amendment to the petition above. I agree with all the recommendations in principal.

We need to develop the licensing scheme, dealing with the first worst. We are looking now at 4 or 5 other wards where there are big concentrations of bedsits and HMO's. Unaffordability in the city is a big issue. We have said before that we want tenancies to be longer as they are already in Germany & France & many American cities. We also think that there should be a cap on rents as there is on public rents, tied to inflation with the proviso that if the inflation goes through a huge period of growth such as 15%, which we have experienced in the past, that it would be pegged at a maximum of 5% or so.

We are looking at the ethical landlord system. I am very pleased with the work Sussex University has carried out. Their president of the union is with us today and was at the

Strategic Housing Partnership yesterday and made a very valuable contribution. They have produced their report 'Rate Your Landlord'. Sussex University itself was at the Strategic Housing Partnership meeting. They also were talking about the work they were carrying out. They told us that they now house as many students in halls and in direct lettings in the city, as those in the private rented sector. Of course, the lettings they have in the city are in the private rented sector. That is through agreement with other landlords.

We do know that there is an issue about student housing and HMO's generally. It has changed the nature of some streets. I am glad there is support for all these things and we will take them forward and will be working on them."

36.3 **RESOLVED-** (1) That the petition be noted.

(2) That the six recommendations that were agreed at full Council be agreed in principal.

(ii) Demand for Affordable Housing

36.4 The Committee considered the following Petition which was signed by 503 people and was presented at the Council meeting on 23 October 2014.

"We the undersigned, petition Brighton & Hove Council to ensure any future residential proposals in sustainable development locations, which include identified brownfield and urban fringe sites (we say no to development in the National Park), are positively planned to ensure Brighton's full housing requirements are met. Proposed developments should comply with Brighton's requirement of 40% affordable housing to address the vast shortfall in supply of affordable homes in the City."

36.5 The Chair responded as follows:

"We are working on a programme of council housing at the moment and there are three schemes coming forward later in this meeting which will produce nearly 100 homes. Added to the other things we are working on, by the election, we will have a programme of more than 200 new local authority homes in the City. Now there is a problem about that. In the past two years we have sold 107 council homes, 76 of them in the second year, and no matter how fast we can build them, it is slow process. The procurement is something we have to learn. We are better at it now and are better placed for schemes in the future. But as we go on selling more houses it does make it difficult to increase the stock and I would hope we could have a change of mind on that issue. We have an Estate Regeneration Programme. We have brought more than 700 empty homes back into use in the last three years and there will be another 150 or so, probably nearer 200 or so next year taking into account work we do in the private sector and the work that Brighton Seaside Homes is doing. It has been a great success. We have opportunities for self financing for the HRA. We are using Right to Buy receipts. We have got the money and should use it, although we don't get enough back in my view to provide subsidy. And we are also looking at another possibility in the future. Rather than build ourselves, we will buy off plan, to complete some of the new schemes that are coming up, which might be a short term better route. And it is possible we might get deals on the price of buying off plan. And of course, it will give better security to those

developers to know that is going to happen. I am as concerned as anybody in the city about the problems of housing. I think it is the biggest problem facing the city. Where the sons and daughters in the city are going to live is an issue for all of us. All those people who have got their own homes should think about that and we do need to do something about rents so be assured we are doing all we can to tackle these problems.”

36.6 **RESOLVED-** (1) That the petition be noted.

37 ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

37.1 There were no Petitions, Written Questions, Letters or Notices of Motion from Councillors.

38 STAR TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2014

- 38.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which provided feedback from a satisfaction survey of a sample of council tenants carried out in June 2014. The survey results provided an up-to-date and statistically significant indication of customer satisfaction on a range of council housing services. The report was presented by the Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement.
- 38.2 Councillor Wilson noted that the report had some blank areas. She had to work out for herself how many tenants had been selected. She was not sure if these were tenants or households. It would have been useful to know the percentage of overall tenant numbers or tenant households as it would provide context to the findings. Several times the report referred to different groups such as young people, older people, LGBT people but it did not say how many within the group were surveyed. It would be useful to know the percentages within groups. There was a reference to a 26% interest in digital media. However at the beginning of the report it mentioned that 7% of people were interested in using the internet. It would be useful to look at that issue.
- 38.3 Councillor Mears referred to the Community Engagement and Consultation paragraphs. She considered that the report should have been submitted to the Area Panels before the Housing Committee. The Chair emphasised that the report would be submitted to the Area Panels and was submitted to the Committee purely for noting.
- 38.4 Councillor Daniel referred to the Equalities Implications in paragraph 5.3. This stated that most groups within equalities strands are well presented. The report should have said which groups were not included. For example, paragraph 3.5.3 mentioned that younger people also expressed less satisfaction with the service. Poverty could have been mentioned and ward data given. E services/future planning could have been included in paragraph 5.4 – Sustainability Implications. Paragraph 5.5 stated that there were no Crime and Disorder Implications. Anti Social behaviour was not mentioned. Corporate Implications could have mentioned the Contact Centre.

- 38.5 Councillor Meadows stated that she was still getting case work about poor satisfaction with work carried out. There were concerns regarding repairs.
- 38.6 Councillor Peltzer Dunn noted that there was a multitude of information in the report. He felt that some of it was superfluous. He referred to paragraph 3.3 which detailed the response rate – 24% - 724 respondents. He felt that this was a disappointing response. The council were relying on a base of 60% of what it achieved last year. He felt it was important to have an authoritative response.
- 38.7 Councillor Peltzer Dunn considered that many figures looked very good in the satisfaction survey. However of the six indicators 4 showed a decline of satisfaction. He welcomed the report but felt it naïve to spend money on the survey and then say our figures are actually better than those shown. This belittled the survey. He felt it was a sad that one third of tenants felt did not feel the council listened or acted upon their views. Councillor Peltzer Dunn asked for more details about repairs.
- 38.8 James Crier reported that Mears Ltd had moved away from using PDAs (personal data assistants). Mears had attempted to have postal returns, and then moved to telephone surveys. This had lead to an increase in the satisfaction rate. Texts were now being used and people appeared to like live information. The telephone service had been operating for six weeks. Mears were already seeing an improvement in the rate of responses and satisfaction. Mears did engage with people when phoning them.
- 38.9 The Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing stated that the council were keen to have a variety of information. This included the Star Survey and performance indicators. All of this information was useful in trying to improve the service.
- 38.10 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement stressed that the report did highlight an anomaly with the report on performance. She stressed the importance of ensuring tenant satisfaction was maintained. With regard to tenant involvement, the score this time was 64%. This was higher than last time and higher than other organisations. She acknowledged that the response rate was quite low. Advice had been taken on this issue and the numbers were considered statistically significant.
- 38.11 With regard to the comment about the equalities implication, she acknowledged that there was data that could have been included. This data was in the detailed report. The survey went out to 3000 tenants and there was a 24% response rate.
- 38.12 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted.

39 HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2014/15

- 39.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which set out the performance for quarter 1 of the financial year 2014/15. The report included the new indicators for Tenants in Arrears, Decisions on Mutual Exchanges made within 42 calendar days, and Repairs completed at first visit. The report was presented by the Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement.

- 39.2 Councillor Wilson referred to Rent Collection and arrears. She referred to 2 and 3 and asked if debt and arrears were becoming polarised. Councillor Wilson did not think that 4 – Tenants in arrears served a Notice of Seeking Possession should be deleted, unless there was another indicator which showed when court action commenced. Councillor Wilson considered 7 – Former tenant arrears collected – to be a massive leap from quarter 1. She asked if something had been done to improve the indicator.
- 39.3 Councillor Wilson referred to paragraph 4.1.1 and asked for more detail about the average re-let times. Councillor Wilson referred to paragraph 4.4.1 – Reports of ASB incidents by type. She would like to see the differential between the top three, spilt off from environment and recorded on a ward by ward basis.
- 39.4 The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement referred to Indicators 2 & 3 in paragraph 4.0 – Rent Collection and current arrears. Data could be presented to future committees. Some younger and older tenants were in arrears. Information about court action could be added as an indicator as suggested. Targeted action was being taken with regard to Indicator 7 on Rent collection and arrears – Former tenant arrears collected. It was hoped that further improvements would be seen next year. Work was being completed on improving average re-let times. More detail could be provided on ASB in future reports.
- 39.5 The Chair requested that the indicator relating to Tenants in arrears served a Notice of Seeking Possession should remain an indicator in future reports.
- 39.6 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to Indicators 1 to 3 and 6 in paragraph 4.0 – Rent Collection and Arrears. He found it difficult to get a true picture of the percentages. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that Indicators 1 to 3 were providing information, and information had many different breakdowns. She could provide more detail to a future meeting. The Principal Accountant stated that she would check and clarify these figures and report back.
- 39.7 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to paragraph 4.5. He congratulated the team in Tenancy Fraud. However, he noted that 6 tenancy fraud cases had been closed with just 2 resulting in eviction. He asked if the other 4 cases were found ‘not guilty’. The Head of Tenancy Services explained that some cases were abandoned as the intelligence had been found to be malicious. Councillor Peltzer Dunn stated that he would like to see more information about this area of work.
- 39.8 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to paragraph 5 – Community Engagement and Consultation. He asked why the Committee had not seen a report on the tenants’ views and recommendations relating to the performance measures. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that a report was submitted to the Area Panels where there was some discussion. She could provide details of the discussion in future reports. The Chair stated that this was the agreed procedure. Any recommendations from tenants should be reported to the Committee. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement explained that on this occasion there were not any recommendations or requests from tenants.
- 39.9 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to Appendix 2 – Long Term Empty Properties. The List of General needs and sheltered long term properties (6 weeks or more) looked similar to what was presented last time. It was very noticeable that 21 properties were ready to

let. He noted that discussions were underway in relation to Westbourne (Temporary accommodation long term empty property) after three years. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement stated that officers were not happy that it had taken that long. It might have been more helpful to the Committee if officers had included the history of the property. There were historical problems in terms of the budget and the property. More detail could be provided on that issue. It was not known why 21 properties were ready to let. This could fluctuate and was a snapshot in time. 10 of these properties were sheltered housing flats. The Chair stated that 21 properties in the context of the whole stock was a very small number.

- 39.10 Councillor Daniel referred to paragraph 4.2 – Property and Investment. She would like information at some stage on the acceleration rate of Indicator 11 – energy efficiency. She asked if Indicator 19 – Repairs Helpdesk – calls answered within 20 seconds was incorrect in showing amber. The result for quarter 1 was 80%. Councillor Daniel referred to 4.3 – Estate Service. She asked why Indicator 7 – Graffiti removals completed within 3 working days had a lower target than the year end 13/14. The Head of Income, Involvement & Improvement replied that all these matters would be looked at. However she pointed out that there had only been 5 cases of graffiti removal in Quarter 1, which made it easier to achieve 100%.
- 39.11 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 4.4.2 – Reports of ASB incidents by ward. She would like to see a specific action plan in relation to East Brighton which was not improving. Councillor Mears asked if support plans were in place for vulnerable people who were being brought into the area. It was possible that this matter was affecting rent collection in the area. Councillor Mears referred to Seaside Homes in relation to Appendix 2 – Long Term Empty Properties. She asked if the remit had changed in relation properties going over to Seaside Homes. The Chair replied that there had been problems in Eastern Road in relation to drugs and alcohol. One key area was sheltered housing, where there were three tenants with drug and alcohol problems. Seaside Homes had batches. It was always agreed that some were long term and some were short term.
- 39.12 The Head of Tenancy Services informed Members that four reports would be submitted to future meetings. A report would be submitted to the Area Panels and the next Housing Committee providing an update on the issue of the Eastern Road corridor. A report on the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act would be submitted to the City Assembly and the Housing Committee. A report would be submitted to a future Housing Committee on the remodelling of the service offer to housing and a report would be submitted on the Sheltered Housing Stock Review. These four reports would address many of the issues raised at this meeting.
- 39.13 Councillor Mears mentioned that approximately 2 years ago, there was a proposal to look at 30 sheltered housing units changing to extra care housing. Was this in the proposals going ahead? Councillor Mears stated that in the budget papers £2m was still shown as a pressure in Adult Social Care. The Committee needed to know how secure the sheltered housing stock was. There was a waiting list of 500 plus to go into sheltered housing. The Executive Director, Environment, Development and Housing replied that the Brookmead scheme was going ahead but nothing else. Housing worked closely with Adult Social Care and any proposals would be submitted to the Housing Committee.

- 39.14 Councillor Meadows confirmed what Councillor Mears had said. Councillors had been told at the Adult Care & Health Committee that schemes had been decommissioned and turned into extra care housing. The Executive Director stressed that there was no plan to decant HRA tenants. A new housing supply was being planned rather than using HRA money.
- 39.15 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the report, which was submitted to Area Panels in September 2014, be noted along with comments made by the Committee.
- (2) That it is noted that future performance reports will show arrears in bands as a subset.

40 TENANCY POLICY

- 40.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which explained that the council was required under the Localism Act 2011 and the current Homes & Community Agency (HCA) regulatory framework for social housing, to publish a Tenancy Policy. The draft Tenancy Policy was attached as appendix 1. The Tenancy Policy had been produced in line with the council's Tenancy Strategy 2013 which was approved at Housing Committee on 6 March 2013. The report was presented by the Head of Tenancy Services.
- 40.2 The Head of Tenancy Services informed Members of an amendment to the Tenancy Policy on page 63 of the agenda. This was on Appendix 1 – Discretionary Succession Policy – Criteria. The second sentence of i) should read 'Electoral registration and registration for benefits or as a tax payer from the address will be required, as will evidence that they were **the family member** of the deceased'.
- 40.3 Councillor Daniel referred to paragraph 10 – Exceptional Circumstances in the Tenancy Policy. She asked for an indication of what that meant and how it would be scrutinised. The Head of Tenancy Services replied that one example would be the case of a long term foster child. The foster parents would not legally be the parents. There would be an audit trail of decisions made.
- 40.4 Councillor Meadows stated that the succession issue occupied much of her case work. Councillor Meadows stressed that there was much confusion about the succession rules. She understood that no-one had succession rights except partners.
- 40.5 The Head of Housing Services explained that prior to 1 April 2012, the law allowed for one statutory succession to either a partner, or any member of the family living with the tenant for the last 12 months. The law now stated that only the partner had succession rights.
- 40.6 Councillor Wilson asked for clarity about introductory tenancies. She asked what happened to a partner if the tenant passed away after 11 months of a 12 month introductory tenancy. The Head of Tenancy Services replied that the partner could still succeed. She referred to page 60 of the agenda. The Head of Housing Services stated that a partner did not need to have been living at the property for 12 months. They needed to be living at the property at the time of death.

40.7 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the draft Tenancy Policy be approved.

(2) That it is agreed that the tenancy agreement for new tenants is amended with effect from 1 January 2015 to reflect the proposed new succession rules for new tenants and discretionary succession outlined in the report.

41 HOUSING STRATEGY 2015

- 41.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director, Environment, Development and Housing which explained that the city's current Housing Strategy expired in 2014. The report summarised the development of the new Housing Strategy 2015 and presented the Review Draft of the strategy for Member approval prior to the final strategy being submitted early in the New Year. The report was presented by the Head of Housing Strategy & Development – Private Sector Housing.
- 41.2 Councillor Meadows expressed concern that most of the consultation on the document had been carried out online. She stressed that 40% of people in her ward did not have online facilities. She asked if there would be a full public consultation on the document.
- 41.3 The Head of Housing Strategy & Development – Private Sector Housing explained that draft strategy had been developed through consultation with a wide range of community groups. He had tried to make the consultation as wide as possible and was happy to consult further if it was felt that anyone had been missed out.
- 41.4 Councillor Meadows stated that all tenants' organisations should be consulted on the document.
- 41.5 The Chair stressed that there had been a great deal of consultation. For example, on 11 November, the document had been considered by the Strategic Housing Partnership.
- 41.6 Councillor Meadows noted that the document had many acronyms. She felt that a summary would have been useful.
- 41.7 Councillor Daniel stated that she was not comfortable with the wording of the Conclusion paragraph at 6.1 of the cover report. This stated that resolution of many of the city's housing needs is very much in the hands of national government policy and the economy. Councillor Daniel considered that there were many things that could be done locally. Councillor Daniel referred to the Action Plan and stressed the need for targets. The Chair agreed that there should be targets.
- 41.8 Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.8 on page 67 which mentioned the acute shortage of affordable homes. She stressed that there needed to be discussion about what 'affordable' meant. She was not aware how much the rental side was in shared ownership schemes. Councillor Mears referred to paragraph 3.16 which reported that Policy & Resources Committee had agreed to proposals that the housing related support function was shared between the Executive Director of Adult Services (who would act as the overall Lead Director responsible for co-ordinated commissioning and management of associated funds) and the Executive Director Environment, Development & Housing who would have concurrent delegated powers so as to be able

to discharge parts of the housing related support function. Councillor Mears stated that she would not support the Housing Strategy report until she saw a report on the proposals in paragraph 3.16.

- 41.9 Councillor Mears referred to page 48 of the Housing Strategy document which related to People in Need (housing related support). Councillor Mears stressed that this area was no longer within the control of the Housing Committee and the section was misleading to members of the Committee.
- 41.10 Councillor Peltzer Dunn noted that a great deal of work had been carried out in completing the document. However he had doubts about the consultation process. He accepted the approach so far in consulting organisations on what should be included in the strategy but was concerned that the public did not have an opportunity to comment on the draft strategy. Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to the timetable on page 71 – paragraph 3.29. He asked if there would be an opportunity for members of the public to comment on the draft recommendations. 168 people had responded to the earlier consultation. He proposed a period of public consultation on the draft document.
- 41.11 The Head of Housing Strategy & Development – Private Sector Housing stressed that reports on the strategy had been submitted to the Committee twice already and there had been consultation with a wide range of community groups. He felt that officers had followed best practice. He had sought to speak to as many people as possible.
- 41.12 Councillor Peltzer Dunn stressed that residents had not seen or been consulted on the draft Housing Strategy document. He believed the council should have a six week consultation period.
- 41.13 Councillor Daniel considered that it was more meaningful to work with people before the strategy was produced. However, she felt there was no harm in placing the documents online to enable the public to comment on the draft strategy. She commended the approach taken so far.
- 41.14 The Chair emphasised that many community groups had been consulted. The draft strategy could be put on the online portal for further comment. He felt the approach so far was very good and that comments from community groups and organisations had been taken on board. He agreed that the draft strategy should be made available for people who wanted to see it.
- 41.15 Councillor Rufus made the point that the 168 responses mentioned in the report were in addition to all the other consultation work, including the online consultation.
- 41.16 Councillor Phillips agreed with Councillor Mears that it was unfortunate that a decision on supporting people was taken by Policy & Resources Committee. She asked if the committee could receive information on matters that affect the Committee, even if it no longer held the budget for the matter concerned. The Chair agreed that the Committee could be kept informed.
- 41.17 Councillor Phillips referred to paragraph 3.1.2. This stated that half of all residents earned less than £28,240 per annum. It would be helpful quote the average amount earned by people working in the City. Councillor Phillip's noted an alarming figure in the

Strategy document. This stated on page 8, that only 59% of those in need could afford social rented housing rather than affordable housing. It later explained that the Local Authority provided more social housing and it might be helpful to elaborate on that issue. Councillor Philip's referred to Community Land Trusts. She asked how this would work out in practice.

- 41.18 The Chair replied that there would be a financial section to the strategy. Helen Russell from the Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust was happy with the report. This matter had been discussed at the Strategic Housing Partnership on 11 November.
- 41.19 Councillor Peltzer Dunn referred to the timetable set out in paragraph 3.29. He asked if the workshops and meetings would take place before the final draft was worked on. This was confirmed by the Executive Director. Councillor Peltzer Dunn formally moved that residents should be consulted in a formal consultation exercise lasting six weeks. There should be a press release about the consultation and information should be available on the council's online portal. Councillor Mears seconded the recommendation.
- 41.20 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the city's housing challenges, the Council's response, and how this has shaped the development of the new strategy (summarised in section 3) be noted.
- (2) That a formal consultation process start as soon as possible after the Housing Committee meeting and expiring before Brighton & Hove Connected on 16 December 2014.

42 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HOMES ON GENERAL FUND LAND

- 42.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed Members that the Estate Regeneration Team had continued to explore opportunities to build much needed new homes on council land and to commission initial feasibility and design studies for sites which have potential for council development. The report included the findings of two business case studies of potential development sites on General Fund land for the New Homes for Neighbourhoods Estates Regeneration Programme at the former library site, Whitehawk Road, and the Wellsbourne site, Whitehawk Road.
- 42.2 The report also discussed the possibility of delivering new housing on the car parking site at 7-9 Frederick Street, Brighton. The report was presented by the Housing Programme Manager.
- 42.3 The Housing Programme Manager reminded members that revised recommendations had been circulated before the meeting.
- 42.4 Councillor Mears referred to money being moved from the general fund a few years ago. The new library in Whitehawk had been financed from a grant but there had been a shortfall. Two pieces of land had been put up for sale. The old library site and the

Greenhouse. £2.5m had been borrowed from the general fund. Councillor Mears referred to the financial implications and asked if the £1.3m (money needed to be paid to the general fund) was a contribution towards the money borrowed. If this was not the case, Councillor Mears asked what happened with regard to the money that had been borrowed and which needed to be repaid to the general fund.

- 42.5 Councillor Mears stated that she did not see any parking on the old library site and asked how this would be brought forward.
- 42.6 Councillor Mears was concerned about the financial implications. She stressed the need to understand the finances and what happened to clear the debt in the general fund.
- 42.7 The Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing replied that the General Fund had to achieve best consideration for the site. He would have to investigate the history of the site and advise Councillor Mears in due course.
- 42.8 The Housing Programme Manager referred to paragraph 3.8 in the report which reported that the total capital receipt from both sites was required to be in excess of £1m as this had been identified to help fund part of the construction of the co-location building in a report agreed by the former Cabinet on 14 January 2010. The money was forward funded from the education capital programme and needed to be repaid. Meanwhile, there would be car parking on the former library site. He would inform Councillor Mears of the exact figure following the meeting. There were a considerable number of spaces.
- 42.9 Councillor Meadows questioned whether planning were being too cautious about the design of the schemes. She stressed the severe need for housing and considered that the blocks at the former library site, and the Wellsbourne site, could have been a couple of storeys higher.
- 42.10 Councillor Wilson referred to community engagement and consultation and asked if there had been feedback to date. The Housing Programme Manager replied that the general feeling was that people want to see housing on those sites. There was a desire for more affordable housing in the city.
- 42.11 **RESOLVED** - (1) That the initial design and viability modelling be noted and that it be recommended to Policy & Resources Committee that they agree in principle that each of the following sites is appropriated to the Housing Revenue Account for the development of new housing, subject to Housing and Policy & Resources Committees agreeing a further report detailing the final feasibility and design and associated financial implications:
- (i) Former library site, Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk, Brighton and
 - (ii) Wellsbourne site, Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk, Brighton.
- (2) That it is agreed that the Estate Regeneration team, in conjunction with the council's Sustainable Futures strategic construction partnership, undertake final feasibility studies, design and development of new housing on sites (i) and (ii).
- (3) That initial feasibility/viability studies, consultation, analysis and research to identify potential wider regeneration opportunities in the vicinity of site (i) be agreed.

(4) That Policy & Resources is recommended to approve the transfer of a sum of £1.3M from the HRA to the General Fund for sites (i) and (ii) for best consideration for the land value (as detailed in paragraph 3.8-3.9) as and when the final scheme is approved by Policy & Resources.

(5) That it is agreed that the Estate Regeneration team explore opportunities and options for the delivery of new housing on the car parking site at 7-9 Frederick Street with a view to seeking agreement to appropriate the land for housing purposes if suitable housing development is subsequently agreed by Housing Committee and Policy & resources Committee.

43 NEW HOMES FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS - DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HOMES ON HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT LAND

- 43.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed Members that the Estate Regeneration Team had continued to explore opportunities to build much needed new homes on council land and to commission initial feasibility and design studies for sites which have potential for council residential development. The report sought approval of the rent model and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy for development of new homes on the larger, western HRA feasibility study and design. Housing Committee agreed to the final feasibility study, design and development of new council housing on this site through the council's Sustainable Futures strategic construction partnership at its meeting in April 2014. The report was presented by the Housing Programme Manager.
- 43.2 Councillor Mears asked if the views of the Housing Area Panels had been sought on the roof garden. She expressed concern about the safety of young children and noted that she could not find details about the height of the wall surrounding the roof garden. She asked if this matter had been considered.
- 43.3 The Housing Programme Manager replied that he would investigate the safety issue. This matter would be considered along with any revisions that might affect the space. The roof garden had been proposed to provide an outside space.
- 43.4 **RESOLVED** - (1) That it be agreed that in relation to the HRA owned car park site at Ardingly Street, Kemp Town, Brighton that the proposed design is submitted for planning approval and that an indicative capital budget of £1.1m and borrowing requirement of £0.56 m is included in the 2015/16 Capital Programme to fund this scheme.
- (2) That it is noted that this scheme is based on the rent model set at 80% market rent capped at LHA rate.
- (3) That the estimated levels of subsidy required from the HRA be approved if the rents are set at 80% market rent capped at LHA rate and that delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Environment, Development and Housing and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Estate Regeneration Member Board to agree reasonable amendments to that subsidy if changes arise.

44 RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY PANEL ON HOMELESSNESS

- 44.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing which informed Members that the Scrutiny Panel on Homelessness was set up to look at and highlight the issues of Homelessness in the City in light of increased levels of homelessness, including the number of accepted households in temporary accommodation (statutory homeless) and rising numbers of rough sleepers. The Panel set out to look at the provision across the city, and to see if all that could be done was being carried out by services across the city.
- 44.2 The Council's Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of 4 February 2014 agreed and endorsed the Scrutiny Panel report. The Homelessness Scrutiny Panel report 2014 had 17 recommendations. The current report set out these recommendations in appendix 1 and noted the progress Housing had made against their areas. The report was presented by the Service Improvement Manager.
- 44.3 Councillor Daniel expressed disappointment that the response to the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations appeared vague and did not set dates against tasks to be completed. She mentioned recommendations 4 & 7 as examples. These recommendations related to a request for a more diverse range of supported accommodation and a request for new and refreshed BHCC housing strategies to explicitly address the housing needs of victims of domestic violence. Councillor Daniel felt that there was a need to state what new action would be taken rather than detail the work that was already being carried out. Councillor Daniel said she could note the report but felt another report should be brought back to the Committee with more detail.
- 44.4 The Chair agreed that dates and targets were required. The current report accepted most of the recommendations and detailed work in progress. The Chair agreed that there needed to be more clarity and that the Committee should receive a further report.
- 44.5 Councillor Peltzer Dunn considered that there was a need to come back with more structure and timetabled implementation. There was a need to do justice to the Scrutiny Panel and to provide a positive, rather than a passive response.
- 44.6 The Chair agreed that there needed to be a timetable. Recommendation 2 – That a senior BHCC officer should be appointed as 'homelessness services integration champion' across statutory services and other sectors – was imperative and should be adopted.
- 44.7 Councillor Mears thanked the Homelessness Team. She acknowledged that they were under pressure and carried out tremendous work. Councillor Mears referred to Recommendation 2 and said she would like to see a policy from Adult Social Care and Children's Services on homelessness (for example with regards to safeguarding). Councillor Mears mentioned that 4 years ago contracts had been signed in relation to adult providers. These were now up for renewal. She asked if councillors would see the contracts. The Executive Director Environment, Development and Housing replied that contracts were being reviewed. Adult Social Care and Children's Services would review the contracts and some recommendations would be presented to the relevant committees. If any of the contracts related to housing they would be brought back to the Housing Committee. Decisions would be made in the light of the budget position.

44.8 **RESOLVED** - That the progress made against the Recommendations by Housing be noted.

45 ITEMS REFERRED FOR COUNCIL

45.1 No items were referred to the next Council meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of