

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

4.00pm 18 NOVEMBER 2020

VIRTUAL

MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors: Gibson (Joint Chair), Hugh-Jones (Joint Chair), Phillips (Deputy Chair), Williams (Opposition Spokesperson), Mears (Group Spokesperson), Atkinson, Barnett, Fowler, Hill and Osborne.

### PART ONE

#### 107 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

- (a) **Declaration of Substitutes:** None
- (b) **Declarations of Interest:** Councillors Hugh-Jones, Osborne, Williams and Hill declared they were members of the Brighton and Hove Land Trust and would not be voting on items 116 and 117. Councillors Hugh-Jones, Osborne and Hill stated they had been granted dispensation to speak on the items from the monitoring officer.
- (c) **Exclusion of Press and Public:** The press and public should not be excluded from the meeting when any items are under consideration.

***NOTE:** Any item appearing in Part Two of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.*

*A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.*

#### 108 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 108.1 The minutes of the Housing Committee meeting held on 16 September 2020 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

#### 109 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

- 109.1 *Can I remind everyone that this meeting is being webcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing.*

*To assist with the management of the meeting I would ask that Members ensure their connection is working and that microphones and video links are turned off when you are*

*not speaking. It is important that everyone can be heard, and you will therefore need to unmute your microphone and enable your video link when you are speaking.*

*Can I ask that Members wishing to speak in any of the debates should indicate their intention by registering their request through the Teams 'Hand' icon or the conversation panel. You will simply need to type; may I speak or the word 'hand'. I will then call you as appropriate.*

*I would remind you that the instant messaging facility should only be used for this or to raise a point of order and please note it is visible to all those present in the session.*

---

## **Social Housing White Paper**

*The government has released its social housing white paper this week. The paper is titled "The charter for social housing residents" and sets out a range of changes for the social housing sector. The council will now begin reviewing the paper and the requirements for our residents alongside our joint committee work plan and service plans*

## **Homemove**

*My thanks to Daniel Harris for ensuring we covered this. On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November we implemented our new IT system for Homemove and for Housing Options.*

*We anticipate this will bring about many improvements for customers.*

*We are aware there have been some teething issues which is not unusual when there is a significant IT upgrade and the team have been working with Home Connections, to resolve these as they have come up. We apologise for any inconvenience or concerns arising.*

*We are aware that the password re-set, to enable customers to log in, was problematic and this has been resolved. When we emailed everyone to let them know it was resolved, this resulted in a lot of people trying to log in at the same time, which jammed the system. This should now be working normally, and applicants should be able to log in. If there are issues, we have set up a specific email for customers ([Sussex.Homemove@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Sussex.Homemove@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) so we can ensure everyone can set up their new password and ID and begin bidding.*

*The improvements the system provides include:*

- Applicants can complete forms online themselves;*
- Applicants can upload documents to support their application and no longer have to email or post copies to us;*
- The system can be set to automatic bidding and it can do automatic assisted bidding for those unable to bid for themselves.*

*We will still deal with any emergency situations and will operate homelessness via our out of hours service. Service has been restricted since Monday for three working days. Normal service will resume from tomorrow. The temporary restriction was to allow staff*

*time to become familiar with the system and to resolve issues relating to implementation. There are some additional enhancements that will be phased in over the coming weeks. We have set up video tutorials regarding various aspects of the system so that applicants can self-serve where this will be quicker for them and which will free up staff so they can focus on those who need more assistance. It is still early days and things are bedding in so we ask for some patience while we work through any remaining teething issues. All available properties have been advertised on the new system last week and we will be monitoring bidding to identify any further issues of access*

### **Mutual Exchanges**

*We have re-started processing Mutual Exchange applications, beginning with those 19 applications we cancelled at the start of lockdown before opening up the service to new enquiries. We are aiming to get all 19 cleared by Christmas. This involves 44 households, 27 of these are council tenants whose properties will require gas, electrical and other Health and safety related inspections, and may require works to be carried out before an exchange can go ahead. Wherever possible, we will give conditional consent to avoid further delays to the process.*

*We are trialling a new way of doing the mutual exchange process to ensure we can target the most urgent cases within that cohort, based on personal circumstances and priority, and are currently processing 6 exchange applications. We are recruiting new members of staff into the Rehousing Team so this work will gain momentum once the team is back to normal capacity, and we will continue to work our way through the backlog of cancelled applications before processing any new applications.*

### **Industrial action**

Members will be aware of the ongoing industrial dispute involving GMB members of the housing repairs team. This was a dispute inherited by the council when the team came in-house at the beginning of April. I am grateful to the GMB, officers, my co-chair Cllr David Gibson and the leader of the council, Cllr Phelim Mac Cafferty for their commitment to resolving the remaining outstanding issues with minimum disruption to the service. I very much hope that we will be in a position to move ahead with the job evaluation panels with the GMB's involvement within the next few weeks. In the meantime, I would like to apologise to the members of the service for the delay to the harmonisation process but would like to reassure them of our resolve to minimise any such delay and to reiterate that:

1. All staff who receive increases in pay through acceptance of harmonisation to council terms and conditions, will have those increases backdated to 1 April
2. Any improved terms that are provided and accepted, are back-dated to the point of transfer, 1 April 2020
3. We will not be imposing any pay decreases on staff, and anyone who wishes to do so can remain on their Mears pay and conditions rather than transfer onto Council terms

4. The Covid19 special leave arrangements have been in place since the transfer to ensure all staff who are absent from work due to Covid19 related sickness are paid full pay. These arrangements will continue during the current public health crisis and will be reviewed in 3 months.

To residents, I would say “Please bear with us. We hope to have the service restored to full capacity as soon as possible, at which point we can start to make inroads into the backlog of work”.

### **Services for tenants and leaseholders**

We are continuing to comply with government guidance around the safe delivery of services during the pandemic while undertaking all the necessary risk assessments to protect our residents, customers, staff and contractors.

### **Extension of the Green Homes Grant**

We are committed to achieving carbon reductions and sustainability in housing, including addressing fuel poverty and moving our council housing stock towards zero carbon by 2030. We will be reviewing all available options and opportunities to enable delivery, including preparation for a report to Housing Committee.

Some of you may have seen the announcement that the Green Homes Grant has been extended for a further year (it was to have ended in March next year). Funding will be available for Local Authorities to bid for and we will be exploring ways that we can do so to deliver improvements to our homes.

## **110 CALL OVER**

96.1 All agenda items were called for discussion by the Committee.

## **111 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

**(a) Petitions:** None

**(b) Written Questions:** Five questions were received:

**111.1 Dave Croydon** Question: *Earlier this year, the panels for the unsuccessful recruitment, selection and appointment of a permanent Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities included public involvement.*

*The current, temporary appointment did not have such involvement.*

*Can I ask what the plan is when this temporary appointment comes to an end and how will the public involvement be handled?*

**111.2** Answer: Thank you for your question. As part of the panel last year you will be aware of the difficulties, we faced in filling the role of Executive Director for HNC. Following on from this process, and at the point that Pinaki Ghoshal left the organisation we recruited Rachel Sharpe on an interim basis to support us with capacity issues in particular faced during Covid19.

We will be deciding on our permanent arrangements in consultation with councillors, and at the appropriate time will arrange the appropriate recruitment processes. When we do this and given the importance of decisions to appoint Executive Directors, we will involve stakeholders and partners in the city.

Thank you for your support when we last advertised.

111.3 No supplementary question.

111.4 **Rebecca Rieley** Question: *Following the deputation shared at the September Housing Committee meeting, Justlife and Fulfilling Lives would like to ask what progress is being made to take forward the agreed actions for the proposed Emergency Accommodation Charter?*

111.5 Answer: Thank you for your question. At September Housing Committee we agreed that there would be one or two meetings between representatives of the Temporary Accommodation Action Group, council officers, a joint chair of Housing Committee and legal advisors to firm up agreed wording that can be recommended to a future Housing Committee. Due to the ongoing exceptional circumstances arising from the current pandemic, including a second lockdown and issues arising for our services that we have had to prioritise, this has been delayed. However, we propose to liaise over arrangements to meet before Christmas.

111.6 No supplementary question.

111.7 **Jim Deans** Question: *I am founder of Sussex Homeless Support, every year council does a head count of rough sleepers, this year due to Covid-19 it will change but. Are Councillors aware as part of this change charities are being asked to identify, "Name, DOB, Nationality and Rough Sleeper Location" why does Government require this information more than just a street count.*

111.8 Answer: Thank you for your question, there has been no change to the national guidance for counts and estimates in regard to the information gathered. The same information has been gathered from partners as part of counts and estimates for at least the last 5 years. This guidance can be found on the website for Homeless Link.

The information gathered in both a count and estimate include the name, date of birth, nationality and sleep site of the individual found. This data is used to prevent duplication. A data protection agreement is in place for this process between all parties taking part.

The forms used for the count and estimate process are designed by Homeless Link and provided as part of the guidance to local authorities, they are publicly available on the Homeless Link website.

The count / estimate data which is sent to the MHCLG as part of this process does not include any information which would identify individuals. The information returned is purely statistical and includes the number of people found, the number of those aged over and under 25, the gender and nationality of those found.

111.9 No supplementary question.

111.10

**David Thomas** Question: *On behalf of the Brighton & Hove Housing Coalition: We are pleased that the Council have maintained an unconditional offer of accommodation to rough sleepers since the Spring, though we note unhappily that this will no longer apply to persons with no recourse to public funds. We know that there are a significant and increasing number of people sleeping rough, nevertheless. What are the arrangements for the SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) shelters this winter; has it yet been in operation, and if so, who was responsible, and when and where was it open, and what were the arrangements to make sure rough sleepers knew of its operation?*

111.11

Answer: Thank you for your question. SWEP provision is being managed and run by Brighton & Hove City Council this winter. Due to the pandemic and the fact that we are still operating everybody in for rough sleepers this year's SWEP provision is being operated differently.

We will be providing a central SWEP triage venue which will assess rough sleepers and ensure they are placed in accommodation, this may be our No Second Night Out Service, one of our Covid response hotels or self-contained accommodation which we are leasing specifically for SWEP. The offer of self-contained accommodation is in line with guidance provided by Public Health and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Our central triage venue will offer a socially distanced sleeping space should we be unable to accommodate everyone in self-contained accommodation, this has been set up in conjunction with an infection control specialist to ensure it is as safe as possible.

Rough sleepers will be notified about SWEP by the Street Outreach Service who will be working on the streets 7 days a week. If members of the public see people rough-sleeping we would ask them to report to Streetlink to ensure that they can be found and offered shelter.

SWEP has not opened yet this winter.

111.12

No supplementary question.

111.13

**Sue Forrest / Isabella Brodniewicz**

Question: *At Galvanise Brighton & Hove we are aware from our own interviews with people rough sleeping of the huge risks to any person forced to sleep rough - even for one night. Research shows that rough sleepers are particularly vulnerable to physical, sexual and verbal abuse as well as significant detrimental effects to their physical and mental wellbeing.*

*We would like to know if the Committee can confirm that all people found rough sleeping in the city are still being offered accommodation as soon as they are found on the*

*streets (the Everyone In initiative) , so they do not need to sleep out longer than necessary.*

*Can you clarify the process of how people are being accommodated when the hotels are full, what accommodation is being offered and if people are being offered accommodation outside the city? Please can you confirm how people are being given the right support from local organisations. Can you also outline how much of this support is face to face?*

*Would the committee also share a report relating to the number of people found rough sleeping since the beginning of April 2020, the number of people rough sleeping who were accommodated and where (type of accommodation) and the number of people moved on to long term sustainable accommodation (by breakdown of type of accommodation and tenancy type).*

*Lastly, can the committee share some examples of how the council has consulted with people rough sleeping over the last few months to ensure that the council's response has met their needs.*

111.14

Answer: Thank you for your question. We are continuing to offer accommodation to anyone found rough sleeping in the city, where we are lawfully entitled to do so. Where rough sleepers have an immigration status which prohibits the use of public funds then their cases will have to be assessed on an individual basis.

Housing Committee are being asked to note that the Leader of the Council and leader of the opposition are together writing to the Home Secretary asking that all necessary measures are taken to avoid pushing migrants into homelessness for the duration of the pandemic. This includes asylum seekers and others with no recourse to public funds as well as recently recognised refugees whose asylum support is being withdrawn.

When No Second Night Out and/ or the direct access hotel is full the Street Outreach Service (SOS) are referring people to the Housing Options service, who will place people where there is available accommodation. Due to significant demand during the pandemic period, this accommodation may not always be within city.

We don't have this information for services we don't commission. We are aware that many services are continuing to provide services remotely. Some services, including Arch Health, Mental Health Homeless Team and the Homeless Nursing Team are working face to face.

Our commissioned Street Outreach Service is working directly with people on the street delivering street shifts six days a week (stepping up to seven days a week from the end of this month). The Navigator Team that works with very vulnerable people who are or did sleep rough and includes a Social Worker, an Occupational Therapist, a Housing Advice Worker, and a Substance Misuse Support Worker continues to engage with clients face to face. First Base continues to provide a Monday to Friday Covid secure face to face service for people who are rough sleeping.

Housing Options provide some face to face services in the hotels where we have placed people in addition to our Welfare Officers who are undertaking drop in face to face sessions at the hotels.

This report is currently being finalised and we are happy to share this when completed. We anticipate this will be shared with the next Homelessness Reduction Board.

Feedback from people who have or are using the services is integral to our annual reviews with services. The current exceptional circumstances arising from the pandemic fall outside this usual annual review process.

All of our service providers have client engagement and feedback as a core element of their service contracts, and we have encouraged them to feedback to us on client concerns, questions and aspirations.

For example, feedback from providers on client views during this period has:

- resulted in changes to our food provision to better meet the needs of the people we are accommodating.
- Led to us looking at how we can deliver more emergency accommodation in city.
- Shaped the bids we have made to the MHCLG onward accommodation and support provision.

We have also asked our commissioned Charity Link worker to complete a piece of engagement and feedback work with people currently living in Covid related accommodation on their experiences and feelings so we can better review the impact of our work and what we could do differently in the future.

111.15

No supplementary question.

**(c) Deputations:** None

## 112 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

**a) Petitions:** None.

**b) Written Questions:** One question has been received from a Member.

**112.1 From Councillor Brennan** Question: *Great the council bought Gladstone Court for Temporary accommodation, but the name Gladstone is associated with the slave trade. Sir John Gladstone, one of the biggest owners of plantations in the West Indies, was also accused of maltreating the men and woman he "Owned". His son, William gave his maiden speech in defence of the plantation owners and carried on receiving income from his father's cruel industry. We as a council have pledged to look at names in B&H that are associated with this huge social injustice, so I am asking the housing committee to change the name.*

**112.2** Answer: Thank you for your question. The re-naming of Gladstone Court is being considered as part of the Gladstone Court redevelopment programme. The subject was



discussed at a recent meeting with representatives of St Martins School and positively received by those from the school community who would be interested in further involvement in this. The possibility of a name change has also been shared with the Brighton & Hove Black History Group and with the Hanover & Elm Grove Communities Forum.

A name change for Gladstone Court has been supported by those so far included in the discussion, and it also reflects priorities identified within the council pledge and actions to become an anti-racist city. More work needs now to be carried out to share this with the wider community, and around how we might select an alternative name, who should be involved in this and how it should take place. The council Community Engagement Team will be working with colleagues from Housing and resident and community stakeholders including those representing BAME community voices to consider and progress this proposal.

**c) Letters:** No letters have been submitted from Members.

**d) Notices of Motion:** None.

### **113 NEXT STEPS - ROUGH SLEEPING AND ACCOMMODATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RECOVERY**

- 113.1 The Head of Housing Needs introduced the report which informs Members that in response to the Covid-19 emergency and in line with Government guidance the Council made an accommodation offer during the first lockdown available to all rough sleepers and those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping in the city. The Council have worked with Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England (HE) to secure funding to cover the cost of this accommodation and provide for move on options through our Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) bid.
- 113.2 Councillor Atkinson was informed that as of the date of the meeting, 107 persons have been moved on, which equates to 40%. The Councillor was also informed that that local authorities must ensure that any support offered to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance complies with legal restrictions under legislation such as the complex Schedule 3 to the Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002. The funding was for verified rough sleepers only, however basic shelter can be provided for others. Reconnections are enacted as soon as possible and there is no way to dissuade people from coming to Brighton and Hove. The shortfall indicated in the report related to the capital support where no funding would be available until March 2021.
- 113.3 Councillor Phillips was informed that the officers are working with the street community to explain the position and supply information to those with no access to public funds. Spot purchase has extended to Eastbourne and other areas. Moving persons to other areas is a challenge, however the sheer volume of people arriving in Brighton and Hove means the city cannot accommodate all. Welfare officers are active in these areas.
- 113.4 Councillor Gibson was informed that more staff to collect housing benefit was being looked at. The sustainability of the cost of moving on was being looked at in light of

improving prevention activities. Reconnections are not as fast as would be preferred. The Council has looked at the London Borough of Camden and noted their reconnections programme. Hotel rates during lockdown have been looked in respect of the best rates available to the Council. The Protect Programme funding bid is proceeding. The YHA is being used as a 'no second night out' hub at this time.

113.5 Councillor Williams was informed that the Council does ensure that accommodation is in place at the other end of reconnections through the Council and St Mungo's. East and West Sussex are working with Brighton and Hove to ensure the accommodation is suitable. The Council will continue to support those in need after the government set date of 20 September 2020.

113.6 Councillor Mears was informed that the letter from the Co-Chair of Housing to the Home Secretary asking that all necessary measures are taken to avoid pushing migrants into homelessness for the duration of the pandemic has not been finalised yet. The costs to the HRA are neutral as funds are coming from government and rental stream. The Councillor expressed concerns relating to the budget.

#### Debate

113.6 Councillor Gibson noted that the Floating Support fund has acted as a stop gap between rough sleeping funding for those moving out of hotels and guest houses. The Councillor considered that a plan was needed to prevent getting into temporary accommodation. Unlocking the potential government funding would be good. Housing First has always worked well and needs to be continued. Funding support is crucial. The councillor supported the report.

113.7 Councillor Atkinson noted the predictions for next year were not good with many private rented evictions possible across England. It was noted that there was a six months ban on evictions in Brighton and Hove. The Councillor considered a package of support would be needed for private renters and noted that as much as £2m maybe required. It was a concern that as many as 50 people arrive in the city each month looking for accommodation. The Councillor supported the report.

113.8 Councillor Williams noted the report was very detailed and a living document, where information could be included later. The Councillor supported the report.

113.9 Councillor Mears expressed concerns at the lack of budget papers, and this did not inspire confidence, The Conservative group would be abstaining from the vote.

113.10

The Chair put the recommendations to vote and they were agreed by 8 votes with 2 abstentions.

#### **RESOLVED:**

2.1 That Housing Committee note the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) funding allocation with the projected shortfall in funding required, and the conditions set out in the grant award.

- 2.2 That Housing Committee note that NSAP funding is ring-fenced for those who have been accommodated up until 30 September 2020, and those who are subsequently brought in as verified rough sleepers.
- 2.3 That Housing committee note MHCLG guidance dated 22 September 2020 that local authorities must ensure that any support offered to non-UK nationals who are not eligible for homelessness assistance complies with legal restrictions (for example, the restrictions contained in Schedule 3 to the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002).
- 2.4 That Housing Committee approve proposals (in paragraph 3.10) for officers to work with the local community and voluntary sector organisations to provide clear information for rough sleepers with NRPF who the Council cannot accommodate including sources of support and assistance.
- 2.5 That Housing Committee note that the Co-Chair of Housing has written to the Home Secretary asking that all necessary measures are taken to avoid pushing migrants into homelessness for the duration of the pandemic. This includes asylum seekers and others with no recourse to public funds as well as recently recognised refugees whose asylum support is being withdrawn.
- 2.6 That Housing Committee note the action plan set out in Appendix 3 to deliver progress and meet the conditions of the NSAP funding allocation.
- 2.7 That Housing Committee agree that progress on meeting the conditions of NSAP funding and next steps – ‘Rough Sleeping and Accommodation during Covid 19 Pandemic and recovery’ as outlined in 1.2, be reported to future meetings of Homeless Reduction Board.
- 2.8 That Housing Committee note the assumptions in paragraphs 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 of costs of continuing to accommodate those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions during the on-going pandemic (excluding those who have NRPFs except those to whom we have a statutory duty as outlined elsewhere in the report).
- 2.9 That Housing Committee agree that officers report back on the implications to the Homelessness Reduction Board and a future Housing Committee on systems and resources needed to enhance the Council’s offer to homeless people including those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions, during the on-going pandemic, subject to funding.
- 2.10 That Housing Committee agree an additional £7.5m expenditure in the HRA capital programme for 2020/21 to be funded by £1.752m grant and £5.748m borrowing and notes that this will be subject to formal approval by the Policy & Resources Committee when it considers the TBM Month 7 report at its December meeting as set out in the recommendation at paragraph 2.17.

**That Housing Committee recommends to Policy & Resources Committee:**

- 2.11 That Policy & Resources Committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Housing Neighbourhoods & Communities and the Executive Director of Health and Adult Social Care to secure accommodation up to the end of March 2021, by entering into contracts to extend existing arrangements or alternative arrangements where necessary to extend the provision of shorter-term/interim accommodation acquired in response to the Covid 19 pandemic to 31st March 2021.
- 2.12 That Policy & Resources Committee agree to funding until 31st March 2021 the floating support required to enable people to move on to private rented accommodation who are in need of support to sustain and manage a tenancy so it is a viable option at an estimated cost of £0.086m, as detailed in paragraph 3.14. If agreed, this financial pressure will be reflected in future Targeted Budget Management (TBM) reports to P&R committee.
- 2.13 In line with the NSAP funding allocation, agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Health and Adult Social Care to enter into a contract with St Mungo's as a partner to the bid and as set out in the bid to deliver 20 units of high support accommodation as set out in paragraph 3.14.
- 2.14 To note the NSAP funding allocation & agree spend in line with grant conditions.
- 2.15 Consider continuing to accommodate those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping who do not who do not fall within NSAP funding conditions beyond 30 September 2020 or statutory provisions (excluding those who have NRPFs except those to whom we have a statutory duty as outlined elsewhere in the report) during the on-going pandemic at a maximum cost of £0.986m for 2020/21, as outlined in in paragraphs 7.3 & 7.4 and 7.5.
- 2.16 To note that if recommendation 2.15 is approved, this could create a potential commitment in 2021/22 of between £1.4m and £1.9m. This will need to be reflected in the budget process for 2021/22.
- 2.17 Note the MHCLG contribution of £1.752m in capital funding towards the purchase of 30 new homes for rough sleepers and that approval of the new HRA capital budget for this purchase will be brought as part of the TBM 7 report to the December P&R Committee.

#### **114 REVIEW OF ALLOCATION PLAN 2020**

- 114.1 The Head of Housing Needs introduced the report which noted that the first operational review of the Allocations Plan was presented to the Housing & New Homes Committee on 19 September 2018. The Committee noted the report and maintained the percentage lets to the four groups in the Allocations Plan to those agreed by the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee in 2016. It also recommended that the Committee receive a report, in two years' time, setting out the performance against the Allocations Plan, for the period January 2017-March 2020.
- 114.2 Councillor Atkinson was informed that a tenant not able to move within the transfer time limit will not be penalised.
- 114.3 Councillor Mears expressed concerns that papers from 16 Sept 2020 were not shared with opposition spokespersons and not being consulted was not right. The Councillor

was informed that 60% of rough sleepers with no local connections were housed and there has been no change to the five year local connection rules, those in temporary accommodation for a long time will be moved on under policy. The Council has a statutory duty to those with local connection, and those not able to return to previous location, and they will be added to the housing register.

- 114.4 Councillor Barnett was informed that the assisted automatic bidding system is in place and the information that was formally included in 'Home Move Book' has been sent out recently. The councillor was also informed that letting of empty properties would recommence when it was safe for staff and residents. It was noted that elderly and vulnerable did not want to move during the pandemic. The backlog of transfers is being worked through as quickly as possible and will hopefully be cleared before Christmas.

#### Debate

- 114.5 Councillor Williams considered they understood the issues as the pandemic was still in place. The Councillor requested that each resident be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and noted the allocations policy was very necessary and was happy for the review next year.
- 114.6 Councillor Hugh-Jones noted that the allocations policy did not change.
- 114.7 Councillor Gibson noted that the allocations plan involved a lot of hard work for officers and stakeholders and agreeing the policy was lengthy process.
- 114.8 The Chair put the recommendations to the vote, and they were agreed unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That Housing Committee note the current position and that a further report will be presented to Housing Committee in April 2021 when more is understood on the wider impact of the pandemic on housing need.
- 2.2 That Housing Committee agree that a review of the Allocation Policy is started in 2021/22 once more is understood about the full impacts of Covid 19 pandemic for the housing market and economy; including housing supply pressures and homelessness.

#### **115 PROVISION OF HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SERVICES**

- 115.1 The Housing Adaptations Operations Manager introduced the report which provided context and background to the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service and outline the options for future provision and the bringing of the service inhouse.
- 115.2 Councillor Atkinson was informed that the manager is working with Human Resources to ensure harmonisation and a smooth take-over of the small number of staff.
- 115.3 Councillor Osborne was informed that the report had taken since January to come to committee as the pandemic had raised more urgent issues. Savings would the prevention of tenants being moved out of properties and into care homes.

- 115.4 Councillor Osborne was informed that the Home Improvement Service was directly funded from capital grant funding and the transfer would benefit staff.
- 115.5 Councillor Hugh-Jones was informed that services were already integrated to ensure savings.
- Debate
- 115.6 Councillor Williams wanted to note that there was no criticism of the current service provider and the general budget would show savings.
- 115.7 Councillor Mears noted the service works well and expressed concerns at bringing inhouse, having noted the serious problems with the repairs service currently on strike. The Councillor considered the procurement decisions were not clear and would be voting against the recommendations.
- 115.8 Councillor Gibson approved of the move to inhouse and supported the recommendations.
- 115.9 The Chair put the recommendations to the vote, and it was agreed by a vote of 8 with 2 against.

**RESOLVED: That Housing Committee:**

- 2.1 Recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that the service is brought inhouse.

**That Policy & Resources Committee:**

- 2.2 Agrees that the service is brought in-house; and
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Interim Executive Director, Housing to take all steps necessary to implement the recommendations in 2.1 and 2.2 above to bring the service in-house.

**116 DISPOSAL BY LEASE OF EX GARAGE SITE AT HINTON CLOSE, HOLLINGDEAN, BN1 7BS**

- 116.1 The Empty Property Officer introduced the report which notes that the council are working with community-led housing partners to increase housing supply in the city and bringing reports to committee identifying suitable sites to work in partnership with Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust (BHCLT) for development is a key priority of the Housing Committee Work Plan 2019-23. The Council's Corporate Plan, 2020-23, includes a commitment to identifying 10 sites and to work with community housing providers to develop them.
- 116.2 Councillor Fowler was informed that the site was considered too small for viable development by the Council. It was noted that lessons had been learnt from Dunster Close and letters had been sent to neighbours. Bunker Housing Co-Op has started virtual consultations via Zoom. Any disruption to residents would be dealt with by condition under planning permission. It was noted that the Bunker Housing allocations

plan aligned with the Council plan and a nominations agreement would be required. It would be looked into if the development was car free.

Debate

- 116.3 Councillor Hugh-Jones considered the development by Bunker Housing to be good and they supported community lead housing and it was noted that lessons had been learnt from Dunster Close.
- 116.4 Councillor Mears stated their support for the development of the small site by Bunker Housing.
- 116.5 Councillor Gibson considered the development to be a good use of the small quirky site and there would be no right-to-buy and the dwellings would remain a city asset in perpetuity.
- 116.6 Councillor Osborne supported the development of this complex site which is underused. The project would be a good use of the asset and would provide affordable and environmentally friendly homes. Community engagement would be good, and it was noted that lessons had been learnt from Dunster Close. The Councillor supported the recommendations.
- 116.7 The Chair put the recommendations to the vote, and they were agreed by Councillors Gibson, Philips, Mears, Atkinson, Barnett and Fowler. (Councillors Hugh-Jones, Hill, Osborne and Williams did not vote as they are members of the Brighton and Hove Land Trust).

**RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That Housing Committee recommend to Policy & Resources Committee the disposal by lease of the area of land identified at Hinton Close to Bunker Housing Co-operative Limited for a 125 year period with the freehold retained by the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Such disposal to be subject to achieving planning permission and signing a nominations agreement.
- 2.2 That Housing Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director, Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities to take all necessary steps to implement the decision at 2.1 and report details and progress to the Housing Supply Member Board and Housing Committee including progress against the proposed delivery timetable provided by Bunker.

**117 DISPOSAL BY LEASE OF SMALL SITE AT NATAL ROAD, MOULSECOOMB, BN2 4BN**

- 117.1 The Empty Property Officer introduced the report which showed that the council is working with community led housing partners to increase housing supply in the city and bringing reports to committee identifying suitable sites to work in partnership with Brighton & Hove Community Land Trust (BHCLT) for development is a key priority of the Housing Committee Work Plan 2019-23. The Council's Corporate Plan, 2020-23,

includes a commitment to identifying 10 sites and to work with community housing providers to develop them.

117.2 Councillor Fowler expressed support for the recommendations and the community land trust.

117.3 Councillor Mears thanked the officers and stated that it was good to work with the Community Land Trust and supported the report.

117.4 Councillor Hugh-Jones stated support for the development noted in the joint plan included 10 sites, with more in the future.

117.5 Councillor Gibson stated support for the development.

117.6 The Chair put the recommendations to the vote, and they were agreed by Councillors Gibson, Philips, Mears, Atkinson, Barnett and Fowler. (Councillors Hugh-Jones, Hill, Osborne and Williams did not vote as they are members of the Brighton and Hove Land Trust).

**RESOLVED:**

2.1 That Housing Committee recommend to Policy & Resources Committee the disposal by lease of the area of land identified at Natal Road to Bunker Housing Co-operative Limited for a 125 year period with the freehold retained by the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Such disposal to be subject to achieving planning permission and signing a nominations agreement.

2.2 That Housing Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director, Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities to take all necessary steps to implement the decision at 2.1 and report details and progress to the Housing Supply Member Board and Housing Committee including progress against the proposed delivery timetable provided by Bunker.

**118 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL**

118.1 None.

**119 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS**

119.1 None.

The meeting concluded at 6.52pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of