

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING
4.00pm 11 NOVEMBER 2009
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL
MINUTES

Present: Councillor Caulfield (Cabinet Member)

Also in attendance: Councillor Simpson (Opposition Spokesperson – Labour)

PART ONE

44. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

44 (a) Declarations of Interests

44.1 There were none.

44 (b) Exclusion of Press and Public

44.2 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).

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

45. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

45.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Housing Cabinet Member Meeting held on 9 September 2009 be agreed and signed by the Cabinet Member.

46. CABINET MEMBER'S COMMUNICATIONS

46.1 There were none.

47. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

47.1 **RESOLVED** – That with the exception of the items reserved (and marked with an asterisk), the recommendations and resolutions contained therein be approved and adopted without debate.

48. PETITIONS

48.1 There were none.

49. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

49.1 There were none.

50. DEPUTATIONS

50.1 There were none.

51. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

51.1 There were none.

52. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

52.1 There were none.

53. NOTICES OF MOTIONS

53.1 There were none.

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

54.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committees held on the 3 September and 22 October 2009 (for copy see minute book).

54.2 Councillor Simpson made reference to Item 31.2 and 31.3 of the minutes of 22 October 2009. She had asked if changes in the way in which housing repairs are undertaken had been adequately communicated to the council's tenants. The minutes at paragraph 31.2 recorded that the Assistant Director, Housing Management had said that there was no change in policy. However in paragraph 31.3 it recorded that he stated there had been some changes made in policy.

54.3 Councillor Simpson felt that there was no clear explanation of the programme. Some repairs would not be carried out for three years. She felt that there was a missed opportunity to consult the tenants. After the article in the Argus there had been miscommunication with staff in housing. Some officers had said that extensive repairs were not being carried out. She considered that there should have been more information to housing officers as well as tenants.

- 54.4 The Cabinet Member replied that this issue had been raised at the Housing Management Consultative Committee. The people quoted in the Argus report were not Housing tenants. A three year repairs programme was being drawn up to meet decent home standards. The three year draft programme would be submitted to the next Housing Management Consultative Committee. There had been issues around repairs and the Assistant Director, Housing Management was communicating with staff, so that they were fully aware of the facts.
- 54.5 The Assistant Director, Housing Management explained that his comments in paragraph 31.2 were referring to Councillor Simpson's concern that there had been changes to the Tenants' Handbook response times. There had been no changes to the response time. This matter would be raised at the next Adult Social Care & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He would bring the draft 3 year programme to the Housing Management Consultative Committee. Meanwhile, he noted Councillor Simpson's comments about communicating clearly about what would be included in the programme

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

55. MINUTES OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE*

55.1 The Cabinet Member considered the minutes of the Housing Management Consultative Committee held on the 12 October 2009 (for copy see minute book).

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

56. SUSSEX PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION TRUST (SPFT) CONTRACT

56.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which set out the changes in the contractual arrangements between the Primary Care Trust and Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust. These linked to changes in the publication of a Department of Health National Circular for Mental Health. The report also provided detail of the current contractual position. Prior to this, the Primary Care Trust had signed a 5 year contract with the Trust (for copy see minute book).

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

- (1) That the current contractual position be noted.
- (2) That there be a further update report from officers.

57. PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACT FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF LAUNDRY FACILITIES FOR COUNCIL MANAGED HOMES*

57.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which explained that a procurement process had been entered into whereby tenders were sought from service providers in relation to a contract for the management & maintenance of laundries facilities in both sheltered and non-sheltered

housing (for copy see minute book). Following an evaluation of the tenders received, it was proposed that a contract be entered into with the preferred supplier, PHS Laundryserv, for a period of five years, starting 31 December 2009, with a possible extension of two years.

- 57.2 The Housing Management Consultative Committee meeting on 12 October had recommended approval of the proposal outlined.
- 57.3 The Senior Project Manager confirmed that the contract would commence on 31 December 2009. Officers would be asking PHS Laundryserv to install the machines as soon as possible, with installations in sheltered housing first. The Cabinet Member commented that she considered the procurement of the contract to be an excellent piece of work.
- 57.4 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the tender submitted by PHS Laundryserv for the management & maintenance of laundry facilities for sheltered and non-sheltered housing be accepted.
 - (2) That the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing be authorised to amend the service charges for sheltered housing to reflect the new laundry service from 31 December 2009.
58. **LOCAL LETTINGS PLANS- LETTINGS RESTRICTED TO PERSONS OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE AND BUNGALOWS***
- 58.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which explained that the council currently operated a practice of letting flats in some blocks only to people aged fifty or older. The council's current practice was not compatible with the legislative requirements in terms of justifying the need or review. Some practices were not compliant with current equalities requirements (for copy see minutes book). Current arrangements were reviewed and new proposals considered. There had been extensive stakeholder consultation, the outcome of which was included in the report.
- 58.2 The views of the Housing Management Consultative Committee meeting held on 12 October were set out in the consultation paragraph of the report. An indicative vote demonstrated that a majority of members and co-optees were in favour of the recommendations.
- 58.3 Councillor Simpson raised the issue of bungalows in sheltered housing. She noted that the report did not make reference to bungalows such as the properties in Ditchling Gardens.
- 58.4 The Cabinet Member replied that there would be no change to the policy for bungalows in sheltered housing. Councillor Simpson replied that she would be happier if it was mentioned in the report that some bungalows were termed as sheltered housing and were outside the policy. The Cabinet Member agreed that this information could be inserted into the next report to be submitted to the meeting in December.

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

- (1) That a Local Lettings Plan be approved in respect of blocks for people over 50 years of age and for bungalows with the effect that:
 - (a) Restrictions limiting letting flats in Livingstone House, Philip Court, Ardingly Court, Nettleton Court, Dudeney Lodge and Hampshire Court to people aged over 50 years are confirmed as council policy and adopted as a local lettings plan. That this excludes adapted and mobility standard property which, in the interest of disability equality, is available to people of any age with that specific need. That this is reviewed in 2012.
 - (b) Flats in Robert Lodge are offered as with priority to people over 50, but in the event of there being no bids received from people in that age group; the council may let flats to younger tenants. This will be reviewed in June 2010.
 - (c) Bungalows meeting the council's housing mobility standards will be available to people of any age with that specific mobility need. This will be reviewed in September 2010
 - (d) Bungalows that do not meet the needs of people in mobility groups 1, 2 or 3 are let with priority to households releasing 3 and 2 bedroom houses and 3 bedroom flats. This will be reviewed in September 2010.
 - (e) Bungalows in Lockwood Crescent and Kipling Avenue, Woodingdean, are exempted from the main local lettings plan for bungalows. That a report with options for the future letting of these six properties be presented to HMCC in December 2009.
 - (f) A feasibility study, including community consultation, takes place to assess the viability of expanding the 50 plus local lettings plan to include 385 Kingsway, Clarke Court, Malthouse Court and other suitable blocks. This would report to Housing Management Consultative Committee in December 2009.

59. **AMENDMENT TO LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN***

- 59.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which recommended a variation to the Local Lettings Plan, agreed on 17 July 2009 (for copy see minute book).
- 59.2 The original report agreed that 25% of 2 bed and larger property in 9 deprived areas of the city should be let with priority to working households. 25% had proved too small a proportion of lettings by which to effectively evaluate the impact of the scheme. It was therefore recommended that for the remainder of the pilot period 50% of vacant 2 bed and larger properties in the 9 areas named in the Cabinet Member report of July 2009 were let with priority to working households.
- 59.3 Councillor Simpson expressed concern that the proposals were effectively a new initiative. She asked what proportion of stock, 50% of 9 areas covered. It could potentially be quite massive and the impact could be considerable. She also wondered how officers would gauge the impact, even by doubling numbers in the six month

period. She stressed that the effect of the policy on communities would only show over a long period of time.

- 59.4 The Cabinet Member stressed that 25% was only one property every two weeks. The aim of the study was to see if people in lower bands were being helped into the housing system. The study would also look at those people in high priority need. There might be a need to extend the pilot study.
- 59.5 The Assistant Director of Housing Management reported that he did not have figures to hand but a significant proportion of housing stock was situated in the most deprived areas of the city. His understanding was that the pilot period might be a longer period than 6 months. It might be 9 or 12 months. He would clarify this issue for Councillor Simpson.
- 59.6 Councillor Simpson asked if the proposals could be regularly monitored and reported back to the Cabinet Member Meeting, in order to measure the impact of how people were being re-housed.
- 59.7 The Cabinet Member agreed to receive regular update reports and suggested a report to the Housing Management Consultative Committee in order to obtain a view from the tenants. The Assistant Director of Housing Management agreed that information could be provided on the number of lets.
- 59.8 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the proportion of property allocated under the Working Households Local Lettings Plan pilot is increased from 25% to 50% of 2 bed and larger property. Adapted property and that meeting the council's mobility 1, 2 or 3 standard is exempt.
- (2) That regular update reports are received.

60. TERM CONTRACT FOR DISABLED ADAPTATIONS*

- 60.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which sought approval for the re-tendering of the Adaptations Framework agreement, which currently has four contractors on it, to supply adaptations works in the council's 12,000 public sector homes (for copy see minute book).
- 60.2 The Cabinet Member stressed that the report on changes to the adaptations policy would be submitted to the Housing Management Consultative Committee in December.
- 60.3 Councillor Simpson commented that she had a query concerning the levels of satisfaction, which were not for all adaptations but only in relation to a particular contractor for 08/09. She asked what proportion of clients who had requested and received agreement for adaptations, actually progressed to having the adaptations carried out.

- 60.4 The Cabinet Member replied that the report to Housing Management Consultative Committee would provide more detail about this issue. This was confirmed by the Assistant Director of Housing Strategy.
- 60.5 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the procurement of the new Adaptations Framework Agreement for the next three years be approved, subject to annual review within the term.
 - (2) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing be authorised to enter into a framework agreement with contractors following a compliant procurement process.
 - (3) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing be authorised to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of recommendations 2.1 and 2.2.
- 61. CONTRACT UNIT PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING WORKING AGE ADULT LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICE, JANUARY TO JUNE 2009***
- 61.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which provided governance information on the performance and monitoring of Under 65's (working age adult) services to people with learning disabilities, for the period 1 January to 30 June 2009, in order to drive up quality through robust and transparent monitoring procedures (for copy see minute book).
- 61.2 Councillor Simpson made the point that monitoring was very important in helping to protect vulnerable people in the city. It was a great credit that investigations and monitoring were carried out so regularly. She stressed that it was important that reports were presented to the Cabinet Member Meeting to enable them to be examined publicly. She asked for a clearer explanation of the statistics in appendix 2.
- 61.3 The Contacts Manager reported that the data related to the local authority compared to the rest of England. She highlighted "Shared Lives" where only three schemes were in operation, as opposed to 129 for the rest of England. 2 out of the three schemes did not meet the required standard of performance. The Contract Team were investigating how to quality assure more effectively in such instances.
- 61.4 The Director of Adult Social Care & Housing stressed that people would not necessarily experience poor service as a result of the performance data. The Contracts Manager agreed that service users in homes might be quite happy with the service, however, more needed to be done to meet service standards.
- 61.5 The Cabinet Member commented that these issues could be investigated in the next report to the Cabinet Member Meeting.
- 61.6 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the report be noted.

- (2) That reports be produced on a regular basis. The next report will cover the period 1 July to 31 March 2010, and thereafter every 6 months.

62. KEEPING PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY SAFE - SAFEGUARDING REPORT 08/09*

- 62.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which outlined key issues and current and future action to ensure that the council were safeguarding people with learning disabilities in the city (for copy see minute book).
- 62.2 Councillor Simpson made the point that monitoring was very important in helping to protect vulnerable people in the city. It was a great credit that investigations and monitoring were carried out so regularly. She stressed that it was important that reports were presented to the Cabinet Member Meeting to enable them to be examined publicly.
- 62.3 The Cabinet Member concurred with the above comments and said she would consider requesting an extra report between November and March 2010. She would also consider asking the Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee or the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the issues raised in the report.
- 62.4 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:
- (1) That the content of the 08/09 Annual Safeguarding Report for people with Learning Disabilities be noted.
- (2) That in order to support the Cabinet Member in discharging her governance responsibilities in relation to the safeguarding of people with learning disabilities in the city, the Cabinet Member will receive a quarterly report that provides statistical information and reassurance regarding the safeguarding work being undertaken in the city by the Community Learning Disability Team.
- (3) That it is agreed that the format and content of the current report is sufficient to meet the Cabinet Member's requirements.

63. WATER HYGIENE CONTRACT

- 63.1 The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Care & Housing which sought approval for the procurement of a term partnering contract for the provision of water hygiene services (for copy see minute book). The Council's constitution required that the procurement of goods or services valued in excess of £500,000 shall be authorised by the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 63.2 **RESOLVED** – Having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Member accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That the procurement of a term partnering contract for the provision of water hygiene services and risk assessment be approved in accordance with ACOP L8 for a term of 10 years.
- (2) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing be authorised to enter into a suitable contract with the successful tenderer following an approved procurement process.
- (3) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing be authorised to take all steps necessary or incidental to the implementation of resolutions (1) and (2).

The meeting concluded at 5.00pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

