

Cabinet Housing Panel
6 August 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET HOUSING PANEL held on Monday 6 August 2018 at 7.30pm in the Chestnut Board Room, Council Offices, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors T.Kingsbury (Vice-Chairman)

M.Birleson, H.Bower (substituting for R.Lass), M.Cook,
J.Cragg (substituting for F.Thomson), C.Gillett, S.Glick,
M.Holloway, T.Jackson-Mynott, M.Perkins (substituting
for J.Boulton), H.Quenet

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Co-opted Members:-

Tenants' Panel Representatives

D.Fuller and R.Read

Independent Representative

R.Paris

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) (S.Russell)
Head of Community and Housing Strategy (S.Chambers)
Head of Property Services (P.Gray)
Head of Housing Operations (S.Pearson)
Governance Services Officer (M.Lowe)

11. SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitutions of Committee Members had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22:

Councillor H.Bower for Councillor R.Lass
Councillor J.Cragg for Councillor F.Thomson
Councillor M.Perkins for Councillor J.Boulton

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.Boulton, R.Lass, F.Thomson and Independent Co-opted Representative, S.Smith.

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13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. ACTIONS UPDATE

The status of actions agreed at the Panel meeting on 25 June 2018 in the report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) was noted.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

Independent Co-opted Representative R.Paris declared an interest in Item 9 - Affordable Housing Delivery - Review of Strategic Approach on the agenda by virtue of working, on occasion, as a contractor for the consultant, Campbell Tickell. Campbell Tickell had provided external advice on developing new and innovative delivery models to achieve additional affordable housing in the Borough.

16. CABINET HOUSING PANEL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) provided a summary of the strategic key performance indicators (KPIs), and comments about performance by exception. The KPIs reported were the corporate KPIs published in the Council's Action Plan for 2018-19. Members noted that the KPIs were monitored monthly by Heads of Service.

KPI 29 - The maximum number of households living in temporary accommodation in the Borough (where the Council have a duty)

Members raised concerns regarding the escalation of the number of households across the Borough in temporary accommodation and the impact of this for those residents and the Council. Members requested that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Panel which detailed the numbers involved, type of accommodation and the action being taken by the Council to address this issue.

KPI 34 - The percentage of Council properties with a valid gas safety certificate

Officers, in response to concerns raised, reassured Members that injunctions had been taken out against the three tenants who had not allowed access to their properties with regard to KP34 – The percentage of Council properties with a valid gas safety certificate being 99.97%. The difficulty was in serving the injunctions on the tenants, two of which were long term hospital patients and the third was unavailable.

Members expressed the view that the narrative should be expanded for Performance Indicators 29 and 35 in future performance reports to put the information into context.

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RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That a report on the current situation of temporary accommodation in Borough (where the Council has a duty) be brought to the next meeting of the Panel.
- (3) That the narrative be expanded for Performance Indicators 29 and 35 in future performance reports to put the information into context.

17. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY - REVIEW OF STRATEGIC APPROACH

Report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) set out a summary of the recommendations to develop new and innovative delivery models to enable the Council to achieve additional affordable housing in the Borough. The report also identified steps being taken by the Council to ensure that opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing were maximised.

Members stated that they would be willing to help to identify possible housing development sites in the Borough for the Council, as part of the newly launched 'Spot the Plot' initiative.

Members recommended that the 'Spot the Plot' initiative be publicised via an all-Member Briefing.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That an all Members briefing be circulated to promote the 'Spot the Plot' initiative.
- (3) That a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

18. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The pro-forma setting out the Panel's work programme had been updated since the last meeting to enable forward planning if items to be considered to take place. Further information will be added to the work programme ready for the new Municipal Year.

RESOLVED:

That the updated work programme be noted.

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19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Panel resolved that under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for items 13 and 14 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) and Paragraph 3 (private financial or business information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

In resolving to exclude the public in respect of the exempt information, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

20. HOUSING OPERATIONS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Exempt report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) updated Members on the progress and finalised changes of the Housing Operations Transformation Programme and included the new finalised structure charts.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That an update on the progress for the Housing Operations Transformation Programme be brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

Meeting ended 8.20pm
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