

MINUTES OF THE Housing Select Committee
Wednesday, 15 April 2015 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Carl Handley (Chair), Peter Bernards (Vice-Chair), Amanda De Ryk, Maja Hilton, Simon Hooks, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Jonathan Slater and Susan Wise.

Apologies: Councillor John Coughlin.

Also present: Councillor Damien Egan, Genevieve Macklin (Head of Strategic Housing), Madeleine Jeffery (Private Sector Housing Agency Manager), Mark Humphreys (Group Finance Manager, Customer Services) and Raymond (Scrutiny Manager).

1. Confirmation of the Chair and Vice Chair

1.1 RESOLVED: to confirm Councillor Carl Handley as Chair and Councillor Peter Bernards as Vice Chair of the Select Committee.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015

2.1 RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2015 be signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 Councillor Wise declared a non-prejudicial interest as a member of the board of Lewisham Homes.

4. Select Committee work programme

4.1 Roger Raymond (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report.

4.2 The Committee discussed the work programme and agreed:

- To add an item looking at the Registered Provider status for Lewisham Homes (Management Agreement) to the September meeting.
- To add an item looking at Community Centres on Estates, with input from the Community Services Directorate (date to be agreed).
- To have an in-Depth Review looking at 'Affordability Across All Housing Tenures', with the Scoping Paper scheduled for 8 July 2015. Because a study on Affordable Rents is being carried by Affinity Sutton with the help of the London School of Economics and because other Registered Housing Providers are also looking at this, Members felt it would be timely for the Committee to review this area of policy.
- That there will be a Key Housing Issues item for 8 July meeting entitled, 'Government Housing Policy & Welfare Reform Changes – Update'.

- To add an item looking at Health and Housing, which will develop some of the findings from the London Health Commission's report 'Better Health for London', for example, having a multi-agency, London wide approach in dealing with the health of the homeless and rough sleepers.
- To move the New Homes Programme item from the October to the September meeting.

The Committee also noted the following:

- The Communal Heating Systems Review Report will be presented at the next meeting on 19 May 2015.
- There will be a BBC Panorama programme on Monday 20 April 2015 which will feature Lewisham Housing and Rogue Landlord Taskforce officers, looking at their work in tackling rogue landlords. Communications would go out to all Councillors to publicise the programme.
- There will be a report on Private Rented Sector Licensing for the meeting on 19 May 2015. It should provide more detailed financial modelling on the proposals for the business case.
- The powers that Councils have to stop Housing Benefit payments to rogue landlords are limited, unless the landlord has been claiming fraudulently. Councils can take legal proceedings to recover payments from these landlords, but it can be a lengthy process for councils to re-claim this money.
- Lewisham concentrates its efforts on the top 10-15 worst landlords in the borough and closing down their operations.
- Generation Rent is developing software to track rogue landlords across London to make it easier to monitor their activities across the capital and Lewisham is talking to Generation Rent about being involved in this project.
- Newham were given £1m by the Government to set up their borough-wide licensing scheme, whereas Lewisham received £125,000. The Committee would like to see the results of Newham's scheme in tackling rogue landlords, but Newham are still evaluating the outcomes.
- The meetings will continue to start at 7.30pm.
- There needed to be space in the work programme later in the year to take into account a number of the proposals in Election Manifestos that may get introduced by the elected Government after 7 May 2015.
- The Committee will consider having one or two members to become Lead Members for particular areas of housing policy, to brief the Committee at each meeting when necessary.

4.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee's suggestions be added to the provisional work programme for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel.

5. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

5.1 None

The meeting ended at 8.30pm

Chair:

Date:
