

MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 6 July 2016, 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Carl Handley (Chair), Peter Bernards (Vice Chair), Maja Hilton, Simon Hooks, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, John Paschoud and Jonathan Slater.

Apologies: Councillors John Coughlin and Joan Reid.

Also present: Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager), Genevieve Macklin (Head of Strategic Housing), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services), John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager).

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016

Resolved: the Committee agreed the minutes of the last meeting as true record.

2. Declarations of interest

The following non-prejudicial interests were declared:

- Councillor Slater is a member of the board of Phoenix Community Housing.

3. New Homes Programme

Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- There are currently 7 projects on site and plans for a further 528 homes are going through – full details are in the report provided.

Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager) answered questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- The result of the EU referendum has, so far, mainly affected the commercial property sector – not so much the residential sector. Many London residential developers have healthy balance sheets and are still looking to invest. But the full impact won't be known until the Council goes to market again.
- The flow of people to London may slow following the result of the referendum, and this may impact house prices. But while there may be some uncertainty around sale prices – the rental market is often counter-cyclical.
- Pressure on resources will change as the new homes programme progresses – at the moment, for example, there's a lot of pressure on planning – but this can be managed within existing resources.
- The 1% reduction in social rents will have a significant impact in Lewisham, but the current programme of 500 new homes won't be affected. The 1% reduction

will have more of a long-term impact, but there are ways of adapting – for example by changing the current 80% rent and 20% sale ratio for new homes.

Resolved: the Committee noted the report.

4. Housing and older people

Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- Specialist housing for older people is a good idea. Appropriately designed housing, which is flexible to people's needs, can help reduce other costs – for example health and social care.
- Lewisham's housing for older people strategy is part of the wider housing strategy for 2015-20 and includes building new specialist and sheltered housing and providing the right help and adaptations.
- 90% of older people in Lewisham are living in non-specialist housing and, as the population grows and ages, there'll be a need for more specialist housing of all types. There are currently two new-build schemes – with £20 million being invested in 100 new "extra care" homes.

Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager) answered questions from the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- Lewisham's Trading Places scheme applies to all housing providers – not just Lewisham Homes.
- While research and statistics suggest that there is a significant demand for downsizing – it's a decision that people often find very hard to go through with.
- As the Lewisham population changes, estimates show that there is going to be a significant increase in demand for sheltered housing between 2025 and 2030.
- Given the growth of the private rented sector, the Council need to look at an appropriate product for older people. The private rented sector is currently mainly aimed at younger people.

The Committee made a number of comments. The following key point was noted:

- The Committee noted that the projected increase in demand for sheltered housing between 2015 and 2030 seemed unrealistic.

Resolved: the Committee noted the report.

5. Key Housing Issues

Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The result of the EU referendum has created considerable uncertainty – much will depend on the result of future negotiations.
- The full impact of new government legislation won't be understood until the relevant regulations are published.
- 183 homes in Lewisham have been bought with help from the Government's Help to Buy (equity loans) scheme so far – less than 2% of all house purchases.

Resolved: the Committee noted the update.

6. Housing and mental health – scoping report

John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- The review should consider how any best practice identified could also be applied in the private rented sector.
- The review should also look into the information-sharing problems faced by different services.

Resolved: the Committee agreed the key lines of enquiry.

7. Select Committee work programme

Resolved: the Committee agreed the work programme.

8. Referrals

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

Chair:

Date:
