

# MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Monday, 7 June 2021 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Bernards (Chair), Stephen Penfold (Vice-Chair), Aisling Gallagher (remotely), Silvana Kelleher (remotely), Olurotimi Ogunbadewa and Tauseef Anwar and Paul Maslin

ALSO PRESENT: Fenella Beckman (Director of Housing), Councillor Paul Bell (Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning), Rachel Dunn (Service Group Manager - Partnerships and Service Improvement) and Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm)

## 1. Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair

Resolved: that Councillor Peter Bernards be confirmed as the Chair and Councillor Stephen Penfold be confirmed as the Vice-Chair of the Select Committee.

## 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021

Resolved: the minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

## 3. Declarations of interest

The following interests were declared:

- Cllr Olurotimi Ogunbadewa is a board member of Phoenix Housing
- Cllr Aisling Gallagher is a Lewisham Homes tenant.
- Cllr Silvana Kelleher is a Lewisham Homes tenant.

## 4. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

No responses due.

## 5. Allocations policy

**Rachel Dunn** (Service Group Manager, Partnerships and Service Improvement) introduced the item with a presentation of analysis of consultation responses. There was a discussion, the committee asked a number of questions and the following key points were noted:

- 5.1 This is the Officers responded to questions on the proposal in the consultation to remove eligibility for non-dependent, adult children in the new *overcrowded by 3 bed* primary rehousing reason.

- 5.2 It was noted that a very small number of large properties come forward for let each year and that this proposal is intended to ensure that these lets go to those in the most urgent need.
- 5.3 It was noted that there are a significant number of families with young children in Lewisham who have been living in overcrowded housing for a very long time.
- 5.4 There were a lot of comments on this proposal during the consultation. Many queried, for example, how the council would make a judgement around whether or not an adult is non-dependent.
- 5.5 In relation to the proposed *overcrowded by 3 bed* primary housing reason, the committee queried what would happen to families whose children become adults while they are in this category.
- 5.6 The committee expressed concern that removing them from this priority category might be difficult to explain when all that's changed is that their children have got a bit older.
- 5.7 It was noted that officers are still considering consultation responses.
- 5.8 It was also noted that there are no proposed changes to the way the length of time spent in each priority banding is recorded.
- 5.9 Officers noted that overall the responses to the consultation were positive and that a report with final proposals would come to this committee in September, prior to Mayor & Cabinet.
- 5.10 It was noted that it had been a challenge to consult during a pandemic but that officers did monitor and act on gaps in the responses received and the BME response rate was representative of the housing register. Officers agreed to share the more detailed analysis of this.
- 5.11 Officers also agreed to share the responses received from local housing associations.
- 5.12 It was noted that the council has a number of schemes and incentives in place to encourage people who can to downsize. Officers agreed to provide the more detailed analysis of these.
- 5.13 The committee noted that lots of people on the housing register, including those who could downsize, are very reluctant to leave the area and asked if there is more we can do to encourage those who are under-occupying.
- 5.14 The committee queried whether there are any proposed changes to the council's position on out-of-borough placements for temporary accommodation.
- 5.15 The Cabinet Member explained that the council's aspiration is not place anyone outside of London unless they chose but that some people still have to be placed out of borough due to the severe lack of temporary accommodation.

Resolved: the committee noted the responses to the consultation and requested further information on the points raised in the minutes relating to: the consultation responses; banding listing dates; and housing mobility schemes.

## 6. Select Committee work programme

The Scrutiny Manager introduced the item. The committee discussed the following topics and asked for them to be covered by the work programme:

- The Building for Lewisham programme to deliver new social homes.
- Lewisham Homes update on repairs and complaints.
- Cladding costs for shared owners.

Resolved: the committee agreed the work programme for the year ahead taking into account the points raised in the minutes relating to: an update on housing development from our development partners; an update from Lewisham Homes on repairs and complaints; and the consideration of cladding costs as part of the committee's work on shared ownership.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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