

MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 18 April 2017, 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Carl Handley (Chair), Peter Bernards (Vice Chair), John Coughlin, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Jonathan Slater, Bill Brown, Pat Raven, Sophie McGeevor.

Also present: Genevieve Macklin (Head of Strategic Housing), Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager), Osama Shoush (Strategic Housing Delivery Manager), Charlotte Dale (Overview and Scrutiny Manager), John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager).

1. Confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair

John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) opened the meeting and asked Members to confirm the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

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

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2017

2.1 The Chair referred back to a letter from the Mayor of London, presented at the last meeting of the committee, in response to the Housing and Sustainable Development Committees' questions about housing zones in Lewisham. In particular, the Chair referred to the Mayor's comment that he would like levels of affordable housing in housing zones to be closer to 35%.

2.2 The Scrutiny Manager informed the committee, having spoken to the relevant officers, that the levels of affordable housing in the New Bermondsey housing zones will not be known until the scheme has been considered by the Strategic Planning Committee. The Chair said that he intended to send the letter from the Mayor to the Strategic Planning Committee to inform its consideration of the New Bermondsey housing zone.

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

3. Declarations of interest

3.3 The following non-prejudicial interests were declared:

- Councillor Slater is a member of the board of Phoenix Community Housing.
- Councillor Raven is a campaigner for Lewisham Autistic Spectrum Housing.

4. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

- 4.1 The Committee noted the response to its referral on the handypersons service.
- 4.2 The Chair informed the committee that the Mayor and Cabinet response to the in-depth review on mental health and housing is expected to go to Mayor and Cabinet in June.

5. New Homes Programme update

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

- 5.1 Lewisham council's council home building programme is part of a wider programme of delivering affordable housing in the borough – which includes providing more temporary accommodation and more new homes through housing regeneration.
- 5.2 More than 3,500 new affordable homes have been built in the last 10 years. The reduction of social rents by 1% for four years has, however, removed £25m of investment capacity.
- 5.3 The financial model for the delivery of 500 new council homes is based on each new home costing £190,000 to build. 30% of this cost can be claimed as a subsidy from right-to-buy receipts.
- 5.4 Around 120 council homes are sold every year in Lewisham under right to buy.
- 5.5 The tenure approach agreed by Mayor and Cabinet and is for 80% council homes and 20% private sale – with sale homes cross-subsidising the programme.
- 5.6 Out of the 500 new council homes planned, around 350 will be eligible for right to buy. There will be no right to buy with older people's housing or with the Church Grove self-build project.
- 5.7 There are a number of different ways the Council is delivering more housing. This includes developing pockets of underused land (infill), providing further older people's housing, widescale estate regeneration, intervention in the private rented sector with Living Rent, and further off-site construction developments like PLACE/Ladywell.
- 5.8 The proposed location for the second off-site construction development in Lewisham is in Deptford, on the site of a rundown ball court. PLACE/Deptford would provide around 35 new two and three-bed homes using the same off-site construction methods used at PLACE/Ladywell. It will be flexible accommodation, not just temporary accommodation.
- 5.9 Like PLACE/Ladywell, there will also be the option for community/commercial units on the ground floor. Officers are continuing to consult with the local community to find out what community/commercial space would be of most use. Ideas so far have included a nursery, art studios, and workspace for local businesses.

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

- 5.10 New homes at PLACE/Deptford will come with white goods, kitchen and bathroom already fitted. Grants will be available for furniture. The home will be of high quality – each will have a 60-year guarantee. The expected completion date for PLACE/Deptford is summer 2018.
- 5.11 PLACE/Deptford is expected to pay for itself within seven years. PLACE/Ladywell will pay for itself in 12 years (this includes the cost of one move at £800k).
- 5.12 PLACE/Ladywell features 6-month tenancies, which can be rolled over. It takes 2 years on average for someone in temporary accommodation to find a placement. PLACE/Ladywell residents are already making bids and moving out. There can be issues with repeatedly rolling over short-term tenancies where the nature of housing is permanent.
- 5.13 Lewisham has not yet considered cooperative housing management models – the current focus has been on getting as many new homes built as possible.
- 5.14 The large majority of households on the housing waiting list are families as opposed to individuals.

The Committee made a number of comments. The following were noted:

- 5.15 The Committee asked if officers could explain in all future reports the different types of affordable housing being referred to and the exact definition. The term affordable housing is not always clear.
- 5.16 The Committee asked if officers could share the formula for Living Rent.

Resolved: the Committee noted the update.

6. Select Committee work programme

John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the report. The following was noted:

- An item on mental health support in private housing was suggested for later in the year, once the committee has had the Mayor and Cabinet response to its review of mental health support in social housing.
- A review of different housing-management models, such as cooperatives, self-builds, community land trusts, temporary housing – including the relationship with developers – was also discussed. The committee agreed for a scoping paper to be produced.

Resolved: the Committee noted the work programme and agreed for a scoping paper on different housing-management models to be produced.

7. Referrals

There were no referrals at this meeting

The meeting ended at 21.15pm

Chair:

Date:
