

MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Monday 17 December 2018, 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Susan Wise (Chair), Peter Bernards (Vice Chair), Tom Copley, Aisling Gallagher, Leo Gibbons, Silvana Kelleher, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa and Stephen Penfold.

Also Present: David Syme (Strategic Planning Manager), Lee Georgiou (Housing Needs and Refugee Services Manager), Rachel Dunn (Housing Policy and Partnerships Manager), Simone van Elk (Programme manager, Homelessness Trailblazer), Eric Richardson (Head of Health & Safety, Lewisham Homes), Madeleine Jeffery (Private Sector Housing Agency Manager), Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager), Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services), Cllr Paul Bell (Cabinet Member for Housing) and John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager).

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2018

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

2. Declarations of interest

The following non-prejudicial interests were declared:

- Cllr Peter Bernards is a board member of Lewisham Homes.
- Cllr Olurotimi Ogunbadewa is a board member of Phoenix Housing.
- Cllr Silvana Kelleher is a Lewisham Homes tenant.
- Cllr Aisling Gallagher is a Lewisham Homes tenant.
- Cllr Tom Copley is a member of RUSS (in relation to item 7).

3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

There were no responses.

4. Lewisham HMO Review and Evidence paper

David Syme (Strategic Planning Manager) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- 4.1 In response to increasing concern regarding the concentration of poor quality Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) within Lewisham's southern wards, the council carried out a review of the quality and spatial distribution of HMOs in the borough. The council previously carried out a review of HMOs in 2016.
- 4.2 The review assessed data from a number of sources and found that while there has not been a significant increase in HMOs in the borough overall, there has been a significant increase and clustering of HMOs within the borough's southern wards: Bellingham, Downham, Whitefoot and Grove Park.
- 4.3 As a result of the review a proposal to make a non-immediate Article 4 Direction for Lewisham's southern wards, to withdraw permitted development rights allowing change of use from dwelling house to small HMO, is to be put before Mayor and Cabinet in January 2019.

- 4.4 Following the coming into force of an Article 4 Direction, applicants would need to apply for planning permission. The planning department would have more control and be able to assess whether the location of a proposed HMO is suitable. The planning department has robust policies on HMOs.
- 4.5 In response to questions from the committee, it was noted that there would need to be further evidence for similar restrictions to be extended to other wards.
- 4.6 The committee queried whether planning permission is required to convert a property from a small HMO to a larger HMO. Council officers responded after the meeting to state that this would require planning permission.

Resolved: the committee welcomed the review and expressed support for the proposed Article 4 Direction, noting the significant increase in converted properties in the borough's southern wards in recent years.

5. Homelessness Reduction Act progress update

Lee Georgiou (Housing Needs and Refugee Services Manager) and Simone van Elk (Programme manager, Homelessness Trailblazer) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- 5.1 The committee was given a presentation on homelessness pressures in Lewisham and the changes brought in by the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- 5.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act has expanded the duties of the council in regard to the prevention and relief of homelessness. This includes providing a free, comprehensive advice and information service to everyone who approaches the council.
- 5.3 The Homelessness Reduction Act is about making sure that the council has a better understanding of what people's needs are. A thorough assessment has been introduced at the beginning of the process in which officers are spending two hours with people in order to understand their circumstances, vulnerabilities and support needs. Each person's plan will be different.
- 5.4 The council recognises that the earlier it is able to work with people, even if they are not owed a specific housing duty yet, the better outcomes it can achieve. The council has been working on this approach with staff for several years.

Resolved: the committee noted the update and agreed to make the officer presentation on homelessness and the Homelessness Reduction Act available online.

6. Fire safety in tall buildings

Rachel Dunn (Housing Policy and Partnerships Manager) and Eric Richardson (Head of Health & Safety, Lewisham Homes) introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- 6.1 The report included with the agenda papers provides an update on fire safety across Lewisham-owned stock, housing association stock and private sector stock. The committee has received similar reports since 2017.

- 6.2 The council has successfully applied for Government funding of £9m to pay for the removal and replacement of defective cladding on the three council-owned tower blocks that failed cladding tests: Hatfield Close 1-48, Hatfield Close 49-96, and Gerrard House 1-51. ACM cladding was fully removed from all three blocks by the end of 2017.
- 6.3 The council has not yet had any formal notification from the Government in regards to EPS (Expanded Polystyrene) cladding.
- 6.4 The committee expressed concern about the large number of front entrance fire doors in Lewisham Homes properties which have been found to not meet the necessary fire resistance requirements and asked whether there will be cost implications for the council to replace these.
- 6.5 Lewisham Homes is currently pursuing the relevant contractors for installing defective equipment. Where poor workmanship has been identified as the issue, these doors are being rectified at the contractor's cost. Given the scale of the issue, there may also be some funding from central government.
- 6.6 Lewisham Homes has produced a draft Fire Safety Standard, which sets out how they will manage fire safety in the future. It is currently out for consultation and Lewisham Homes would welcome comments from the committee.

Resolved: The committee noted the update and agreed to review and pass on any comments they had on Lewisham Homes' draft Fire Safety Standard.

7. Housing delivery models review update

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

- 7.1 In the last administration the committee carried out a review of alternative models of housing delivery and made four recommendations.
- 7.2 The council is continuing to support community-led development through the two schemes previously agreed. In the future this is likely to be focused on enabling community groups to find their own sites or to work with private developers.
- 7.3 One of the community-led housing groups in the borough, RUSS, now has planning consent for a school of community-led housing to be built on the Church Grove site.
- 7.4 The committee queried, in relation to recommendation 3 of the committee's review, whether information on community-led housing will be made available from the council's website.
- 7.5 The council will continue to develop the information on its website about community-led housing as part of the review of its website.

- 7.6 The council is also continuing to deliver the joint venture development at Besson Street and will monitor the project's success, but the current focus is on building as much council housing as possible.
- 7.7 The council will bring forward in March a plan of all the sites it will develop to deliver 1,000 new council homes.

Resolved: the committee noted the report and to receive further detail about the information on community-led housing available on the council's website.

8. New Homes Programme

Jeff Endean (Housing Strategy and Programmes Manager) introduced the report.

- 8.1 In March the council will set out its programme to deliver 1,000 new council homes, stating exactly where the 1,000 homes will come from.
- 8.2 The council's proposed development at Edward Street, to provide 34 new homes for use as temporary accommodation for homeless households, has been granted planning permission.
- 8.3 The Edward Street development will generate income and contribute the council's savings targets.
- 8.4 The council has successfully bid for £37.7million from the Greater London Authority to fund the development of new council homes.
- 8.5 At Mayor & Cabinet in December it was agreed that there will be a resident ballot next year on the Achilles street project, potentially the biggest single project in the 1,000 new council home programme. If agreed it would provide around 450 new homes.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

9. Select Committee work programme

John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) introduced the work programme.

- 9.1 The committee expressed an interest in continuing to monitor measures to increase resident engagement on estate redevelopment. The committee previously received a report on resident engagement on estate redevelopment in September, setting out proposals for a Residents' Charter an estate regeneration ballots.
- 9.2 It was suggested that this topic is something the committee may consider looking into in again in the next municipal year once the first residents' ballot has taken place.

Resolved: the committee agreed the work programme.

10. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

There were no referrals.

The meeting ended at 21.10pm

Chair:

Date:
