

# MINUTES OF THE HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

Monday, 16 December 2019 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Bernards (Chair), Stephen Penfold (Vice-Chair), Leo Gibbons, Sue Hordijkeno, Silvana Kelleher and Olurotimi Ogunbadewa

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Paul Bell (Cabinet Member for Housing), Rachel Dunn (Housing Partnerships and Service Improvement Manager), Madeleine Jeffery (Director of Housing Services) and Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration & Environment)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tom Copley, Councillor Aisling Gallagher, and Councillor Susan Wise

The Chair announced that Councillor Alan Smith has asked to be removed from the committee's membership.

## 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2019

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

## 2. Declarations of interest

The following interests were declared:

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

## 3. Responses from Mayor and Cabinet

There were none.

## 4. Lewisham Housing Strategy

Rachel Dunn (Housing Partnerships and Service Improvement Manager) introduced the report. There was a discussion and the following key points were noted:

4.1 The Council is planning an 8-week public consultation on its draft housing strategy for 2020-26 in February/March.

4.2 Officers thanked the committee for their input at the two informal consultation sessions held between officers and committee members.

4.3 The consultation will be hosted on the Council's online consultation portal. There will also be attendance at public events, such as local assemblies, and targeted events with key housing partners, such as L&Q and Phoenix.

4.4 The Council has a number of plans to improve the standards of temporary accommodation. There is an ongoing compliance project to ensure that necessary certification is in place. The Council is part of a London-wide project, Setting the Standard, looking at centralising the inspection of B&B temporary accommodation. The Council is part of Capital Letters, which is looking at standards around procurement of temporary accommodation. The Council is also working on the implementation of borough-wide licensing for the private rented sector.

4.5 The committee suggested that the section in the draft strategy on the climate emergency could be more specific and include detail on efforts to improve the energy efficiency of homes and car-free developments on regeneration projects.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

## **5. Housing and mental health**

Rachel Dunn (Housing Partnerships and Service Improvement Manager) introduced the report. There was a discussion and the following key points were noted:

5.1 The officer report provides a progress update in relation to the recommendations of an in-depth review of housing and mental health carried out by the Housing Select Committee in the last administration.

5.2 One of the key recommendations was to produce an agreement between housing providers and other relevant professionals on how to best help residents with low-level mental ill health issues.

5.3 The Council has since produced a draft handbook to raise awareness among housing partners of the services available for low-level mental health issues so that they can better help residents to access support. The handbook should help provide more consistency by sharing and embedding good practice.

5.4 The partners involved have committed to having a named person in their organisation responsible for making sure the handbook is up to date. The Council will also be responsible for carrying out regular reviews.

5.5 The main implications of this initiative are raising awareness and staff development. Some support services may get more referrals, but this should not fall outside of normal budgets.

5.6 The Council would eventually like to expand this kind of support to those in temporary accommodation.

5.7 The committee commended the wide range of stakeholders that the Council engaged in the production of the handbook.

5.8 The committee also noted the link between mental health and anti-social behaviour and how low-level anti-social behaviour can affect mental health.

5.9 The committee suggested including signposting to support for loneliness. Officers agreed that this would be a valuable addition.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

**6. Resident engagement in housing development - summary of evidence**

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

**7. Select Committee work programme**

The Scrutiny manager introduced the report. The following points were noted:

7.1 The committee agreed to postpone the consideration of possible recommendations for its review of resident engagement in housing development until its meeting on 30th January 2020.

7.2 The committee agreed to provisionally schedule an item on out-of-borough placements for its meeting on 12th March 2020.

Resolved: the committee agreed the work programme.

**8. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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