

HOUSING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor T A Cullen Chair

Councillors: S A Bagshaw
S Carr (substitute)
J L Fletcher (substitute)
C Goold
T Hallam
E Kerry
H G Khaled MBE
J W McGrath
P Roberts-Thomson (substitute)
J M Owen
H E Skinner
E Williamson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L A Ball BEM, B C Carr and J P T Parker.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

31. HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE

The Committee was updated on the acquisition of former right to buy properties. Three new sites had been earmarked for new build development on Council owned land with other HRA owned sites to be developed in the Borough. A more detailed update on these sites would be provided at the January meeting of the Housing Committee.

The following motion was moved by Councillor E Kerry and seconded by Councillor L Fletcher:

‘That the opposition be consulted along with the Chair of Housing.’

The motion, on being out to the meeting, was lost.

RESOLVED unanimously that:

- 1) **A consultation exercise be undertaken in January 2020 for the sites without planning permission identified in appendix 2, to seek local resident's views,**
- 2) **A delegation be made to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the chair of housing, to agree the mix of the new housing for these 2 sites,**
- 3) **A delegation be made to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the chair of housing, for the Council to submit planning applications for the development of new rented housing on these 2 sites.**
- 4) **A delegation be made to the Deputy Chief Executive, following consultation with the chair of housing, for all key approvals relating to the assessment of tender returns for the main construction consultants, including qualitative criteria, and the subsequent award of these contracts.**

32. HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY 2019 - 2022

The Committee received an update on the new Strategy and how it would tackle neighbourhood issues, including the establishment of 'Priority Neighbourhoods'. Engagement with residents was a strategy focus. It was confirmed that Councillors would be invited to Council organised events.

As more data is obtained, action plans would be developed with annual updates to the Housing Committee. Councillors discussed the report and requested the Strategy be reviewed frequently. As decisions are often needed immediately, Officers would lead on this and update the Committee when necessary.

RESOLVED that the Housing Neighbourhood Strategy 2019-20 be approved.

33. REVIEW OF ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Housing Committee approved the new Allocations Policy in 2018 and the Policy came into effect in November 2018. It outlines the method in which housing applicants on the waiting list are assessed, who is eligible, how they are prioritised and how properties are allocated. The Committee had approved for the policy to be reviewed on an annual basis and therefore this is the first annual review.

The report was discussed. Councillors highlighted that many Independent Living units were vacant. It was confirmed that the issue was being considered and would be brought to this Committee shortly. The wording in the report was considered to be unclear. As a result, it was agreed that it would be amended.

RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the Council's Allocations Policy be approved with additional wording:

'Properties that are designated as Independent Living will only be allocated to applicants over the age of 60 or applicants with a degree of disability or those meeting the suitable criteria'.

34. INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES UPDATE

The Committee noted the report.

35. LIFELINE SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee was updated on the Lifeline Service. The aim is to increase, maintain and improve the independence of customers to remain living within their own home.

The Lifeline Service has 920 customers, of these 94% (864) are private residents and 6% (56) are council tenants in general needs accommodation. A review identified that there are opportunities to grow the Lifeline service by marketing it to new customers and expanding the range of services on offer. It was proposed that the service be available to those with mental health issues. It was agreed to put this on the Work Programme as soon as the necessary information is obtained.

36. HOUSING ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

In June 2019 the Housing Committee had approved a new Housing Engagement Strategy. It reflected the increased focus on informal methods of engagement. There had recently been several community events held. Resident Involvement Groups were being reviewed. Good progress was being made but it was conceded that resident satisfaction is difficult to measure.

37. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – REVIEW OF BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS - HOUSING

The Committee noted the report on the progress against outcome targets identified in the Housing Business Plan.

38. WORK PROGRAMME

It was proposed that Independent Living be added. It was requested that items be added to the Work Programme if they were relevant to the Committee. It was confirmed that the schedule of meetings would be discussed at the Council meeting in December. The Work Programme could then be planned.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme be approved.