

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 19 October 2016 at 4.30 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Lynda Harford

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bunty Waters

Opposition spokesmen: Anna Bradnam
Hazel Smith

Also in attendance: Robert Turner

Officers:

Stephen Hills	Director of Housing
Heather Wood	Housing Advice and Options Manager
Julie Fletcher	Head of Housing Strategy
Peter Moston	Resident Involvement Team Leader
Victoria Wallace	Democratic Services Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

3. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2016-2018

The Resident Involvement Team Leader presented the report which sought approval of the Resident Involvement Strategy 2016-2018.

The Portfolio Holder and members were informed that:

- The tenant disability forum had been amalgamated with the Tenant Participation Group as the same people had been attending both meetings. The Chair of the Tenant Participation Group informed members that this had strengthened the group.
- The Tenant Participation Group was found to be a knowledgeable and effective group, consisting of 15 elected and trained members which met monthly. The group was self supporting, with members setting their own meeting agendas and organising and taking the minutes of the meetings.
- Over the last 12 to 18 months, cost savings had been achieved through the amalgamation of some groups. Working with the Tenant Participation Group, three sheltered housing forums for the East, North and West of the district had combined to form a central forum run by residents.
- An annual report to tenants would contain a breakdown of the resident involvement work and the cost savings associated with this.
- The tenant scrutiny panel support service had recently been re-tendered. As a result of this, scrutiny review costs had approximately halved.

The Housing Portfolio Holder commended the comprehensive Resident Involvement Strategy and congratulated officers for this work. The Portfolio Holder also acknowledged

the significant amount of work undertaken by the Tenant Participation Group, which resulted in cost savings associated with officer time.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the Resident Involvement Strategy 2016-2018.

4. **AFFORDABLE HOMES DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2017/18**

The Head of Housing Strategy presented the revised Affordable Homes Service Plan for 2017/18.

The proposed service plan themes were discussed:

- Members were pleased to see that the council was addressing loneliness with the proposed 'Through the Door' project, and highlighted the relevance of this to both older and younger people.
- Regarding the Self Build project, the Head of Housing Strategy clarified that this also included custom build projects which were more likely to take place on larger scale developments. Members were informed that the Self Build Vanguard project had identified council owned plots to take through the planning application process, in order to be sold with planning permission. Members were also informed that the council had a self-build register.
- The Head of Housing Advice and Options informed members that the Chartered Institute of Housing was undertaking work on behalf of the council regarding mapping the level and type of need for purpose built shared accommodation. This information should be forthcoming by Christmas 2016, at which point provision to meet need would be mapped. Research from abroad regarding housing older and younger people together was being looked at as part of the wider remit for older people's accommodation.
- The Single Homelessness Service had been set up with Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire District Councils, in order to help single people access the rental sector. Take up of the service had been limited.
- Members were informed that the Head of Housing and Property Services was exploring the options to extend the scope of the cleaning service for communal rooms, to offer a wider service to more vulnerable residents in the district.
- The 'Through the Door' project was being piloted in Sawston following an the local GP surgery's approach to the council to highlight the high level of loneliness in the area. The County Council was collaborating on this project.
- The needs of Gypsies and Travellers were queried. The Housing Portfolio Holder clarified that this portfolio was responsible for the management of existing sites. The Head of Housing Strategy informed members of the Gypsy and Travellers' Needs Assessment (GTNA), which had been undertaken by an independent organisation. This had identified a future need in South Cambridgeshire of 20 pitches, with 29 pitches available, which meant there was no identified need for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches. A need for 12 pitches for travelling show people was identified and work was taking place with the Planning Portfolio Holder to address this.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **ENDORSED** the Affordable Homes service plan actions identified in the report.

5. **TENANT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

The Chair of the Tenant Participation Group (TPG) updated the Portfolio Holder on the work that the TPG had been doing since the last Portfolio Holder's meeting. The TPG was busy with a scrutiny project and had been getting on well with the new scrutiny service. TPG members had designed a questionnaire for the current scrutiny project, which they

would be asking tenants to complete at a number of coffee mornings organised by the TPG.

The Housing Portfolio Holder thanked the TPG Chairman for the update, which was noted.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 16 November 2016, at 4.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 5.25 p.m.
