



Minutes of the Housing Rental Company Committee

21 February 2018

-: Present :-

Councillor Thomas (D) (Chairman)

Councillors Darling (S), O'Dwyer, Robson, Tyerman and Ellery

(Also in attendance: Councillors Stockman and Morey)

19. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Parrott.

20. Minutes

The Minutes of the Housing Rental Company Committee held on 4 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. Urgent Items

The Committee considered the item in Minute 28, and not included on the agenda, the Chairman being of the opinion that it was urgent by reason of special circumstances i.e. the matter having arisen since the agenda was prepared and it was unreasonable to delay a decision until the next meeting.

22. Housing Strategy Action Plan

Members noted a report that provided a RAG rating for the actions set out in the Housing Strategy Action Plan. It was intended that the document would be a responsive project focused document. Performance monitoring would also be co-ordinated in a new multi-team performance framework for housing which was under development.

Members paid particular attention to the monitoring of affordable homes and requested further information be circulated on:

- The number of brown field and green field sites that have planning permission but are 'stalled';
- The potential density of housing that could be built on these sites;
- More in-depth detail on affordable housing numbers
- How many empty homes are there in Torbay and how long have they been empty;
- How many empty homes could be brought forward for occupation; and
- The length of time taken for housing association voids to be occupied.

23. Housing First Strategic Update

Members noted a report that provided an update on the following areas of work:

- Work associated with the Torbay End Street Homelessness Campaign (TESH)
- The successful bid to the Nationwide Foundation for a study into system change to Housing First in Torbay; and
- DCLG rough sleeper grant funding.

Members further noted TESH had recently undertaken a second 'Connections Week', where volunteers from the community go out on to the streets and conduct an in depth survey with people who are street homeless. Those who gave permission had their surveys handed to the outreach team. A communications plan was being prepared to cover the work of TESH and other aspects of the Council's work around rough sleeping.

24. Housing Policy and Funding Update

The Committee considered a report that provided a further update on changes to Government policy and funding that may impact upon the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy.

Resolved:

That the Director of Adult Services and Housing ensure that actions to accommodate the proposed changes are incorporated into the refreshed 18-19 Housing Strategy Action Plan.

25. Homelessness Reduction Act Overview

The Committee noted a report that set out the changes and new duties in the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), which will come into effect from 3 April 2018. The approach undertaken and allocation of the Flexible Homeless Support Grant and burden funding should enable the Council to prepare and implement the necessary service changes to meet the demands of the HRA. However this will need to be reviewed closely to assess the effectiveness of the approach.

Members were advised that the HRA transforms the help Council's are expected to provide to all homeless people. It aims to ensure provision of new support to people who aren't entitled to help under the current system. It requires Council's to try and prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place, intervening early and encouraging other public-sector bodies to actively assist in identifying and referring those at risk of priority need.

26. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Prior to consideration of the items in Minute 27 and 28 the press and public were formally excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the item involved the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

27. Housing Rental Company options for registration as a Registered (housing) Provider (RP)

Members considered an exempt report the intended outcome of which was to progress the Housing Rental Company and delivery of the Housing Strategy in the most cost effective way within legal and staffing constraints, whilst also developing the policies and business case to register as a Registered Provider.

Resolved:

That:

- i) the Assistant Director of Adult Services and Housing continue to explore the opportunities of registering as a Registered Provider as a mechanism to directly access grant and make a recommendation as to whether to proceed with Investment Management Status and/or Registered Provider Registration to the Housing Rental Company Committee in April 2018; and
- ii) the financial modelling be developed into a Business Plan for consideration by the Housing Rental Company.

28. Housing Rental Company Business Plan

Members were advised that the business plan was being developed and a briefing for Members of the Housing Rental Company Committee would be arranged.

Chairman/woman