

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Jennie Brent, at her meeting held on Tuesday, 13 March 2018 at 5.00 pm at the Executive Meeting Room - The Guildhall - Floor 3

Present

Councillor Jennie Brent (Cabinet Member)

Councillor Tom Wood

6. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor Stephen Morgan MP has sent in his apologies for absence due to parliamentary commitments but wished to record his support for the Holiday Hunger scheme.

7. Declaration of Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

Maria Cole, one of the Residents Consortium representatives, wished to declare that she is a volunteer at the Brook Club and the Somerstown Adventure Playground (regarding Holiday Hunger Plan).

8. Council Housing Maintenance & Improvements and Housing IT Business Software 2018/19 (AI 3)

Meredydd Hughes, Assistant Director, presented the report on behalf of the Director of Property and Housing, explaining that after the Council budget approvals this report gave details of the capital schemes as well as the yearly programme of works to be undertaken in the housing geographical areas. The Housing members had been briefed on the details of the IT capital schemes by Graham Fairbrother. In response to a question from Councillor Wood it was clarified that the Windows 10 upgrade had been a council-wide project, so was outside of this software budget.

Maria Cole, on behalf of the Residents' Consortium, asked about asbestos removals and the preparations for the roll out of Universal Credit. Steve Groves, Asset Manager, reported that asbestos in properties is safe when in good condition but it is removed as and when it is found to be in poor condition in properties. James Hill, Director of Property and Housing, reported there had been a slip in the date for Universal Credit, which could now be in November, but staff across the council were already preparing to cope with the changes. Adrian Blackwood, also from the Residents' Consortium, asked about the Residents' Initiatives Bids allocation of £50,000 and James Hill suggested that Bill Moody (Service Development Partner) give

further information on how this budget was spent to benefit residents, such as for community events.

In response to Councillor Wood's question about fire safety of properties Steve Groves reported that after the joint inspections of housing high rise blocks had been undertaken with the Hants Fire & Rescue service, some schemes had been identified as a result of the joint inspections and included in the planned programme. The outcome of the Grenfell Tower review is still awaited.

Councillor Jennie Brent, as Cabinet Member for Housing, thanked the officers for the impressive, joined-up working to produce this comprehensive programme of works.

DECISIONS - The Cabinet Member for Housing agreed:

- (1) That the area programmes and allocation of finance for the funding of the Revenue Budgets for repairs and maintenance of dwellings be noted.**
- (2) That the capital budgets listed in Appendix B and Appendix C commencing in 2018/2019 be approved and the Local Authority Housing Manager be authorised under Financial Rules, Section B14 proceed with schemes within the sums approved.**
- (3) That the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer's financial appraisal be approved for the capital programme - global provision.**

9. Holiday Hunger Plan (AI 4)

(Councillor Jennie Brent agreed to the officers' request to vary the order of business.)

Jo Bennett, Commercial Property and Leasehold Services Manager, introduced Holly Easlick and Marshada Chowdhury, the authors of the appended Housing Hunger report 'Sumer Food and Fun Project in Portsmouth', who had worked hard to deliver this project. Holly explained the aims of the pilot project to tackle higher deprivation rates in health problems experienced in parts of Portsmouth, seeking to improve family nutrition levels and giving access to breakfast clubs, with the contributions from Warburtons and support of local supermarkets acting as hubs for food collection. The breakfast clubs had also encouraged development of social skills for the participants. Marshada then went through the evaluation of the project (section 4) and the research in collaboration with Northumbria University which had looked at the benefits to emotional welfare, socialising and increased physical activity. Work was also taking place with local schools and the Tackling Poverty Co-ordinator, and the Council's own staff restaurant the View was sharing surplus food. Cookery sessions and workshops were taking place, further donations were sought and more training and apprenticeships were being planned to ensure sustainability of the scheme.

Councillor Tom Wood joined Councillor Brent in supporting the scheme and its extension due to the positive results in the communities, and Maria Cole spoke of the appreciation of the children receiving this food. Councillor Jennie Brent as Cabinet Member for Housing congratulated those staff involved in this beneficial project.

DECISIONS - The Cabinet Member for Housing:

- i. **Noted the previous project success and recognise holiday hunger as a priority agenda in addressing health inequalities in areas of deprivation.**
- ii. **Agreed an allocation of £4000 from the youth & play service budget to allow continuation and longevity of the project (volunteers, donations, and other funding will still be sourced where possible).**
- iii. **Gave approval to execute the future plans as set out in the Holiday Hunger brief report 2017 (see appendix A - section 6)**

10. Safeguarding Policy for Youth and Play Service (AI 5)

James Hill, Director of Property and Housing, introduced the report which was a refresh of an existing policy, and explained that there had been late revisions to the policy document which were circulated by Jo Bennett (with the changes being shown). Jo Bennett, the Commercial Properties and Leasehold Services Manager, went through where the changes had been made (most of which were formatting changes and changes in definitions and terminology). These included changing "referral" to "making a contact" and reflecting the Portsmouth Safeguarding Childrens Board threshold requirements.

Councillor Tom Wood felt it was valuable to continually review and refresh the document.

Councillor Jennie Brent, as Cabinet Member for Housing, acknowledged the hard work that was taking place and wished to approve the policy, as amended, for implementation in April.

DECISIONS - The Cabinet Member for Housing:

- (1) approved the policy (as amended)**
- (2) approved the implementation of the policy from 1st April 2018.**

The meeting concluded at 5.35 pm.

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Councillor Jennie Brent
Cabinet Member for Housing