

HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL held on Monday 18 June 2012 at 2 pm.

(NB: These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting)

Present

Councillors Sandra Stockdale (Chair)
Margaret Adair
Michael Andrewes
Mike Park (Standing Deputy)
Phil Smith (Vice Chair)

Also Present

Alan Cufley, Head of Community Housing & Regeneration
Nigel Baldwin, Enabling Manager, CH&R
Elaine Bastable, Housing Options Manager
Ed Woodhouse, Head of Revenues & Benefits
Joanne Wildsmith, Scrutiny Support Officer, CCDS

At the start of the meeting Councillor Stockdale, as the new Chair of the panel, asked for introductions by members and officers and the Fire Evacuation procedures were explained.

21 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence had been received from both Councillors April Windebank (who was represented by Councillor Park) and Steve Wemyss.

22 Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)

The following declarations of interests were made:

- (i) Councillor Phil Smith a personal and non-prejudicial interest in that he lived with his mother who had taken in a lodger (in relation to the Welfare Reform Report).
- (ii) Councillor Sandra Stockdale declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in that her daughter is disabled and lives in a care home, which is not in Portsmouth and not council run and is NHS funded (in relation to future review topics).
- (iii) Councillor Michael Andrewes made his usual personal and non-prejudicial declaration in that he rented in the private sector but did not claim benefits (in relation to the Welfare Reform Report).

23 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 8 May 2012 (AI 3)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

Councillor Stockdale handed over to Councillor Andrewes who had chaired this meeting for the agreeing of the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting of 8 May 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chair of the meeting as a correct record, as agreed by those members who had been present at that meeting.

24 Review Topic – ‘To consider the impact on the rented housing market of welfare reform proposals’ (AI 4)

A copy of the final report by the panel was circulated by Joanne Wildsmith, Scrutiny Support Officer, and this would be placed on the website once agreed by the panel. Councillor Andrewes who had chaired the review thanked both the officers and colleagues for their help with this review. The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that the changes to the earlier draft seen by the panel now included the Chair’s preface, there was a new recommendation 21 to ensure that the outcomes were further reviewed in the future and there was an updated appendix 2b by the Head of Revenues and Benefits to show a more up-to-date situation since his earlier presentation to the panel.

The report would then be taken to the 2 July Cabinet Meeting for consideration by Cabinet Members and would be presented by Councillor Andrewes as Chair of the Review. It was also anticipated that there would be a deputation to that meeting by the Housing Partnership in support of the report and to raise their concerns regarding the welfare reform proposals.

RESOLVED: the panel members who were part of the review agreed the final report which was signed off by the Chair of the Review for submission to Cabinet on 2 July 2012

25 Discussion of Future Review Topics for the Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel (AI 5)

Councillor Stockdale resumed the chair for this item and discussion took place with regard to the following potential topics for submission to the Scrutiny Management Panel on 26 July for consideration and referral back to the Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

The panel members were mindful that they must be able to add value via a review and consider topics that are timely to be able to influence policy.

- (i) How nuisance behaviour is tackled by housing providers (i.e. landlords) in a residential environment

The panel members noted that this had been subject of a previous review chaired by Councillor Hunt approximately 4 years ago. Alan Cufley reported that this was always a topical issue with liaison between the city council, private landlords, the University, the Police Service and Housing

Associations.

Discussion also took place regarding the noise nuisance associated with poor behaviour as it was felt that this subject could overlap with the remit of the Transport & Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel.

(ii) Review the policy of re-housing after a relationship breakdown

Elaine Bastable the Housing Options Manager explained that the Housing Allocations Policy did not give priority to those in relationship breakdowns and changes to the benefit system would further disadvantage those who have extra rooms not in use. There was also the issue of already having families on the waiting list and therefore non-resident parents allocations were usually for one bedroom accommodation with living room (not studio flats) and it would be hard to give extra accommodation in these circumstances.

(iii) Standards in care and nursing homes in Portsmouth

There had been a referral from the Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel and members asked that he would be asked to provide further information about what he is expecting from a review as it was felt that the city council had safeguarding procedures and there were independent inspections by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure they met national standards of quality and safety.

(iv) Residential accommodation for vulnerable adults

A suggestion was made regarding paying for placements outside of the city and move on accommodation in conjunction with Adult Social Care. There was not a representative from Social Care present so officers would be asked to provide further information regarding suitable reviews around this area.

(v) Affordable housing provision

A suggestion was made by Alan Cufley as Head of Community Housing and Regeneration to consider the future supply of affordable housing in the city. He confirmed there were 2498 households on the Housing waiting list and the environment associated with delivery of subsidised housing has changed markedly in recent months. Any scrutiny review would need to include the financing of new provision, the current and future planning regime and obligations as well as looking at the where the new supply would come from. It could also link in with the city council's plans for their own housing stock.

(vi) Changes to personal care packages

Social care should be asked to give consideration to this as a potential topic also.

Rather than make a decision on the priority order of these at this meeting it was decided that there should be a further meeting to look at these and any other suggestions as Councillor Michael Andrewes would be writing to all members as the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Panel to invite ideas for consideration.

26 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should take place on Thursday 5 July at 2 pm to give further consideration to potential topics for recommendation to the Scrutiny Management Panel on 26 July.

The meeting concluded at 2.50 pm.

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Councillor Sandra Stockdale
Chair

JW/CB
19 June 2012
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