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# NOTICE OF MEETING

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## HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 5.30 PM

THE EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THIRD FLOOR, THE GUILDHALL

Telephone enquiries to Vicki Plytas Tel: 9283 4058

Email: [vicki.plytas@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:vicki.plytas@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

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### Membership

Councillor Darren Sanders (Chair)  
Councillor Gemma New (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Alicia Denny

Councillor Colin Galloway  
Councillor Leo Madden  
Councillor Steve Wemyss

### Standing Deputies

Councillor Matthew Winnington  
Councillor Lee Hunt

Councillor Hugh Mason  
Councillor David Tompkins

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(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

## AGENDA

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**
- 2 **Declarations of Members' Interests**
- 3 **Minutes of the meetings held on 19 January and 21 February 2017 (Pages 3 - 8)**

**RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the meetings held on 19 January and 21 February 2017 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.**

#### **4 Consideration of Potential Review Topics**

James Hill, Jo Bennett, Elaine Bastable, Nick Haverly, Bruce Lomax and Steve Macer will be in attendance at the meeting

- a) to answer queries from panel members about the review into "Housing Need and Empty Properties in Portsmouth and the impact of Government Policy on them"
- b) to assist the panel in selecting potential topics for consideration by the Scrutiny Management Panel when it determines the scrutiny work programme at its meeting scheduled for 29 September 2017.

Members of the public are now permitted to use both audio visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the Council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

6 September 2017

# Agenda Item 3

## HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 19 January 2017 at 10.00 am at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

### Present

Councillor Darren Sanders (in the Chair)

Councillors Gemma New  
Jennie Brent  
Alicia Denny  
Frank Jonas  
Leo Madden

#### 1. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Councillor Denny apologised for her late arrival.

#### 2. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations.

#### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting - 15 December 2016 (AI 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were still in draft form and would be considered at the next meeting.

#### 4. Current review: Housing Need and Empty Properties in Portsmouth and the impact of Government Policy on them (AI 4)

Bruce Lomax, the Private Sector Housing Manager made the following points during the discussion;

- The council's response to the Housing and Planning Act 2016 white paper has been sent. Legislation is expected to come into force in August 2017.
- There is concern with regard to housing in multiple occupation and concerning room size.
- The Government is proposing to set a minimum room size of 6.52sqm per person for rooms used for sleeping accommodation in licensable HMOs.
- The council does have some concerns with regard to enforcement of this and how it relates to its current licences.
- The Government is proposing that properties occupied by five or more persons forming two or more households will be subject to mandatory licensing.
- It is estimated that there will be an additional 700 new licences, in addition to the 500+ larger properties licensable.

- Licence fees for these new licences will contribute towards the team and service as this is a self-funding service.

Mr Lomax then explained the process regarding HMO properties in Waverley Road.

There is a high concentration of high occupancy properties in Waverley Road and the surrounding area. The council have always had problems with the condition of properties and with some tenants. There have been a number of alcohol and/or drug abuse issues. This has created over time a 'no go' area. There have been reports of persons drinking in the park and public places and drug use. The Private Sector Housing have tried to work with one particular landlord to encourage him to change his business model. The landlord had contact with a number of agencies/charities and the prison service to provide tenants with a room. Often tenants would not turn up when on probation and their lifestyles spiralled downwards owing partly to the influence of the other tenants. The council were contacted by the Police last year and a multi-agency approach was taken. The council inspected all properties, owned by this landlord, and listed all defects and how the properties were being managed over a 4 month period. As a result the management company were deemed unfit to manage the properties and their licences were revoked. In their place the council issued interim management orders. This means that the properties come under the control of the council. This led to negotiations with the landlord and a way forward was proposed. The council insisted on a different licence holder and management of the properties. In the interim, persons who were causing the majority of the anti-social behaviour have been removed from three properties. The majority of these tenants have been housed either in alternative accommodation or are homeless through choice. The remaining few tenants will be evicted through the eviction process. Plenty of support has been offered to the tenants but some will not accept help of any sort. As a result of the council's action most of the properties owned by this landlord are of the required standard except for one property in Beach Road which has been served an improvement notice. Any action the council takes is against the management company.

Way forward.

The council could set up a focus group in Waverley Road. These groups work well and are a positive way forward for both landlords and tenants. Mediation also often helps, getting tenants together with local residents to share concerns and problems.

Lessons learned.

The council needs to act sooner. Action should have been taken a few years ago but there was concern about the well-being of the tenants when evicted.

As vice-chair of the Homelessness Working Group, Councillor Gemma New updated the panel with regard to the work of that group. She felt there was a need to reach out to homeless persons and to build up a trusting relationship with them so that they engage with services which can help them.

**5. Date of next meeting. (AI 5)**

It was agreed that the Assistant Director of Culture and City Development, the Housing Options Manager and a representative from the Society of St James' be invited to the next meeting which would be held in approximately four weeks' time.

The meeting concluded at 10.55 am.

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Councillor Darren Sanders  
Chair

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## HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday, 21 February 2017 at 11.00 am in the executive meeting room, floor 3 of the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

### Present

Councillor Darren Sanders (in the Chair)

Councillors Jennie Brent  
Leo Madden

#### 6. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Frank Jonas (on other council business), Gemma New and Alicia Denny. Standing Deputy David Tompkins was in attendance.

#### 7. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations.

#### 8. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

#### 9. Current review: Housing Need and Empty Properties in Portsmouth and the impact of Government Policy on them (AI 4)

Selina Crocombe and Toby Ayling from the Planning Policy team gave members a power-point presentation on the Role of Planning Policy in establishing Housing Need. The slides are attached to the minutes.

In summary, there is a strong demand in Portsmouth, and the surrounding areas, for both market and affordable housing. There is a need to provide a type and range of dwellings. The larger sites provide the greatest scope for all types of development.

Members requested further information regarding the number of housing developments which are currently in the pipeline. Toby agreed to follow this up.

Steve Macer, Housing Options, explained that there are currently between 1400-1500 persons on the housing waiting list. There are also a lot of people who are not on the list but need housing. Housing Options only see people who have met the criteria to join the list. The council re-house approximately 1100 people a year but many remain on the waiting list. Many senior citizens do not want to move from their properties unless they are capped or in need

of benefits. Many are emotionally attached to their properties. The Homeless Reduction Bill will have an impact for the council in terms of what it will be required to do within the resources available.

Members requested further information regarding how many council properties become vacant each year and whether a breakdown of those on the waiting list could be provided by postcode. Steve agreed to follow this up.

**10. Date of next meeting (AI 5)**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held towards the end of March and that a representative from the Portsmouth and District Private Landlords' Association would be invited to attend.

The meeting concluded at 12.35 pm.

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Councillor Darren Sanders  
Chair