

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness held on Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 12.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Darren Sanders (in the Chair)

Councillor George Madgwick

Residents' Consortium representatives

- Maria Cole
- Sue Gordon
- Trevor Lovett

27. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cal Corkery (Labour Spokesperson) and Daniel Wemyss (Conservative Spokesperson).

28. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

29. Update on Safe at Home Service

Sally Scattergood, Assistant Director (Housing), introduced the report.

In response to questions from Maria Cole, officers were not exactly sure of the range of the pendant but with the new system it can move further from the base unit. With the Chiptech Go devices it extends even further so people could go out of their home and still be in signal. The service aimed to cover costs and not to make a profit.

In response to questions from Councillor Sanders about integrating Safe at Home into packages of care, officers have had initial discussions with Adult Social Care and have agreed to come up with more detail and give them a presentation, hopefully in January. There would be a clearer picture by the end of February or early March. With regard to promoting the service, especially with the voluntary and community sector, officers had met last week to re-group the marketing strategy, which would include demonstrating equipment at voluntary organisations and others such as churches. They would compile a list of smaller groups over the New Year and also look at social media and refresh existing methods.

Councillor Sanders noted a befriending service had just been lost in the Baffins area so encouraging people to feel less vulnerable was good,

especially in the winter. He strongly encouraged greater integration with Adult Social Care. He also noted the opportunity to work with other social housing providers to see if they could promote the service. He thanked officers for their support and requested an update.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

30. Donations to Foodbanks, Food Larders, and Food Pantries from council owned vacated properties

Steve Groves, Head of Building Maintenance, introduced the report.

In response to questions from Councillor Madgwick as to whether the list of foodbanks in the report included any funded by Penny Mordaunt MP, officers said they would update the list and ensure providers were aware. Councillor Madgwick explained that he had been telephoned by a radio station that morning and wanted to clarify that MPs and councillors could not use council properties for political means. Officers had said the initiative was a Hive project. Councillor Madgwick felt a counter-statement should be issued to clarify that Penny Mordaunt MP was a figurehead, not the driving force.

Councillor Sanders said that in January he and Councillor Stagg had talked to Penny Mordaunt MP about establishing a food pantry in Baffins. He understood that Penny Mordaunt MP had found about £5,000 for food pantries in some wards where local community groups would run them, bearing in mind the rules about where they can be situated. For example, one operates from St Cuthbert's Church. However, he could not be responsible for what other politicians said. He had agreed to two buildings being used as pantries: Paulsgrove Community Centre and the Somerstown Hub. The Liberal Democrats were keen to establish food larders and pantries as people were going through an incredibly tough time, many of whom were "negative budget", which meant they had no money.

Councillor Sanders said giving spare food from empty properties to food banks added social value and he would like all housing associations and social housing providers to do so; he would like private landlords to do likewise but does not have control over them. He asked Meredydd Hughes, Assistant Director, Buildings, to write to social housing providers to consider adopting the same policy. James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood & Building Services, clarified that the report included Portsmouth City Council's housing stock located in Havant Borough Council (HBC) and officers would continue to include in the list food larders, pantries etc located in the HBC area. In response to Councillor Sanders' comment that it would be good if HBC colleagues could persuade social housing providers to adopt the practice, officers said the matter would be on the agenda at the next regular meeting.

Councillor Sanders said he was incredibly grateful for the initiative and urged officers to continue with it and persuade other providers.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 12.27 pm.

Councillor Darren Sanders
Chair