

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness held on Wednesday, 24 July 2024 at 4.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Hugh Mason (in the Chair)
Councillors Raymond Dent
Charlotte Gerada

44. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Darren Sanders, Cabinet Member and Councillor Spencer Gardner. Councillor Hugh Mason stood in as Chair for the meeting.

45. Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Sarah Robinson House - Building Safety Case

Steve Groves, Head of Building Maintenance presented the information only report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the Sarah Robinson House, Building Assessment Certificate which included the Building Safety Case.

The report outlined the background to the Building Safety Act 2022, detailed what a Building Assessment Certificate consisted of, provided the key points of the Building Safety Case, Resident Engagement Strategy and the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting System and the next steps to be taken.

The report also outlined how Building Safety works undertaken, and the Building Safety Case helped to demonstrate conformance with aspects of The Regulator for Social Housing - Consumer Standard.

The report updated on resident engagement activities undertaken and future planned engagement, alongside how residents could access relevant Building Safety documents as detailed in section 5 and 7 of the report.

Resident Consortium Questions and Comments

There were no questions or comments from the resident's consortium

Members Questions and Comments

In response to Members' questions, officers clarified:

- Carbon Monoxide monitors are part of the regulations and have already been fitted and as part of the annual gas servicing.
- The overarching strategy is to complete all the building safety cases on all block to have a better understanding of all the actions required. The

building safety cases are being prepared in anticipation of them being called in. Once all the building safety cases have been completed, a building safety programme of works will be developed and this will be bought back to the Cabinet Member, probably at the end of the financial year.

- The Building Safety Regulator is the body that calls in the building safety cases. They are likely to initially be linked to the height of the building (Sarah Robinson House and Ladywood House) and further guidance is anticipated on the order for the rest of the blocks. They will all be called in within the next 5 years.
- The main learning from preparing the building safety case at Sarah Robinson House is that the service has been able to pull together all the information required into a format that will be used when developing the other building safety cases. Any feedback from the Building Safety Regulator will further inform the process. The service will continually review and get feedback on how to improve the building safety cases.

Councillor Hugh Mason noted the report.

47. Local Authority Housing Service - Contents Insurance Renewal

Bob Hughes, HNB Business Team Manager, presented the information only report, which had been requested by Councillor Darren Sanders. The purpose of the report was to outline the approach taken by Business Support Services in the renewal of the Tenants Home Contents Insurance which came into effect on 30th June 2024. The report also outlined the benefits of the Tenants Home Contents Insurance scheme to promote the take up of the scheme with local authority tenants.

Resident Consortium Questions and Comments

The resident consortium representatives thought the presentation that had been given to the consortium was excellent and the feedback from residents was very positive. They considered the prices very competitive and were pleased the prices would be fixed for 3 years.

They were concerned that after the 3 years the prices may jump up and asked if there was any mechanism in place to limit any increases to a certain percentage.

Officers stated that the service goes through negotiations with their broker and the best suppliers to try and achieve the best outcome for tenants and leaseholders.

Members Questions and comments

In response to members' questions, officers clarified:

- They did not have the figures to hand on what the average take up was or how Portsmouth city council compared to other local authorities (at point 71 of the report) but would find out and report back to the members.

- Should damage occur to a resident's property as a result of building damage, they would be directed to claim on their own contents insurance. Officers were not aware of how that would impact on this particular policy and the premiums.
- Point 7.2 of the report details which methods are being used and proposed to be used to increase the take up of the offer. The presentation to residents would be rolled out further. Bringing the report to the Cabinet Member decision meeting would also bring more visibility to the offer.

James Hill further clarified stating that the contents insurance is always promoted when signing up tenants to properties. He said he saw a key role for Members to support in that promotion and to take the details back to their political groups to raise awareness. He noted that Housing Associations would have similar schemes for tenants at competitive prices.

James Hill went on to say that the service sees the impact when incidents like fire and flood occur, and tenants do not have contents insurance. Often tenants regret not having contents insurance in those moments and it is important that we all ensure that tenants are aware of the scheme and the consequence of not having contents insurance.

Cllr Gerada requested an email is sent to all councillors with a link to the contents insurance to ensure that all members are aware and can promote when appropriate.

Councillor Hugh Mason noted the report.

48. Portsmouth City Council's Park Homes Policy 2024

Sam Rickeard, Housing Regulation Manager, presented the report, the purpose of which was to present the findings of the recent park homes policy consultation and to make recommendations for implementation of the policy within the park homes service (Private Sector Housing).

Resident Consortium Questions and Comments

In response to resident consortium questions, officers clarified:

- The pitch fee accounts for any and all repair work and within that there may be some planned repair work such as an upgrade of the street lighting. That was costed into the pitch fee at the start of the financial year.
- There is a mechanism whereby, if there are planned works but the council are not confident that it can be covered in the standard pitch fee they have to consult with residents.

Members Questions and comments

In response to Members' questions, officers clarified:

- In addition to the consultation, residents' forums were held, and all residents were invited. There was also a forum midway through the consultation. The consultation went out to everybody in the post as well as online so the service was confident that every resident on both of the sites would have received a pack through the post. The plan is to display the policy at both sites. There is also an engagement point where the service is updating the written statement, and this will be discussed with every mobile home site owner at both sites.

DECISION

Councillor Hugh Mason:

- 1) Approved the Portsmouth City Council's Park Homes Policy and instructed officers to consult with residents on amendments to the written statements for Cliffdale Gardens and Henderson Park to align the written statements to the new policy.**
- 2) Approved the adoption of the policy upon completion of the amendments to the written statement, subject to no material changes being necessary following the consultation on the written statement. Until the formal process for updating the written statement is complete the policy will not be formally adopted.**
- 3) Instructed officers to carry out works highlighted within this report to formalise park home plot plans so that residents are clear on their plot boundaries and the council remains compliant with their legal obligations.**

The meeting concluded at 4.36 pm.

Councillor Hugh Mason
Chair