

HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 14 September 2017 at 5.30 pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Darren Sanders (in the Chair)

Councillors Alicia Denny
Leo Madden
Steve Wemyss

11. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Gemma New and Councillor Colin Galloway.

(Arrangements had been made for Councillor Tompkins to deputise for Councillor New but he was unavoidably unable to do so on the day)

12. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

13. Minutes of the meetings held on 19 January and 21 February 2017 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 19 January and 21 February each be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14. Consideration of Potential Review Topics (AI 4)

The Chair, Councillor Darren Sanders, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He explained that the review topic " Housing Need and Empty Properties in Portsmouth and the impact of Government Policy on them" had run into difficulties. Basically, various factors had combined making the review topic no longer viable.

Officers attending the meeting advised that they did not know whether any or all of the policies outlined in the housing white paper earlier in 2017 would now be implemented. As the white paper formed the backbone of government policy during the review period officers advised that in their opinion the review could not come to any meaningful conclusions as it was not possible to know what impact government policy would now have.

Officers further advised that they could not offer any date as to when government would be able to offer any clarity about the future or otherwise of the proposed legislation. The legislation that had been expected was now not proceeding as following the snap General Election and the Grenfell Tower disaster, government priorities had changed.

As there was no impending legislation, it was not possible to make any assessment on what effect it would have so the review topic was no longer meaningful. Officers advised that there was no expectation that the legislation would be implemented in any useful timescale for this review and therefore the suggestion was to suspend the review and explain the situation to the Scrutiny Management Panel. Bruce Lomax advised that there had been nothing new from central government and no new legislation was being introduced in the foreseeable future. This also applied to the Right to Buy legislation.

Councillor Sanders sought the views of other members of the Panel and they all agreed that the current review should be suspended until such time as it became meaningful to pursue it.

Councillor Sanders also sought the views of other Panel Members concerning whether a paper on housing need could be presented to Cabinet. Following discussion, Panel members present agreed unanimously that any such paper would not have any meaning as it would not fulfil the terms of the review.

Councillor Sanders said he would explain the situation to the Scrutiny Management Panel at its meeting on 29 September.

Councillor Sanders then invited Panel Members and officers in attendance for suggested topics for review that could be submitted to Scrutiny Management Panel to agree and prioritise.

James Hill, Director of Property and Housing provided a hand-out with some information on potential scrutiny topics.

The first was presented by Bruce Lomax and was to explore the role of the private rented sector. He outlined the reasons for putting this topic forward which were to find out how the sector is adjusting to the increased purpose built student accommodation and housing need in the city. He suggested that the scope of the review might be to see whether there is any impact on the use of HMOs in the city given the increase in purpose built student accommodation ie are the HMOs reverting to family accommodation. Elaine Bastable confirmed that the university had said that there was no possibility of placing council tenants in the purpose built student accommodation if it was not fully occupied.

During discussion it became clear that members had reservations about this proposed topic and included the following points during their deliberations:-

- A similar review into HMOs had already been carried out and members were anxious not to confuse the consultation on HMOs that was going to go back to the PRED meeting
- Doubts were raised about whether a review would influence this matter enough to make any difference

- Many students were happy to live in student accommodation for the first year but once friendships had been established, it seemed that friends wanted to share accommodation, so there may not be the hoped for reduction in demand for HMOs.

Members then considered putting forward to Scrutiny Management Panel a review on Domiciliary Care. This was likely to become an increasingly serious matter in the future and members agreed that this should be put forward to Scrutiny Management Panel as a potential topic for review.

Jo Bennett, Commercial Property and Leasehold Services Manager, put forward a topic about the provision of Learning & Disability Accommodation. She said that the reason for putting forward this topic was that officers wanted to understand the potential to extend the current provision and develop an accommodation offer for adults with a wide range of social and healthcare needs. She said that the scrutiny panel could help evaluate the current provision, examine barriers that may exist and review the plan for the portfolio's future

Basically the Scrutiny Panel could look at

- Whether supported housing improve outcomes for people with a Learning Disability
- Whether the number of people with a recognised Learning Disability has increased
- Whether it is likely that demand for this type of housing will increase
- Whether it would be possible to use this model of housing to help other people with a support need.

James Hill said that there had been an example of where savings and benefits had been achieved by housing people with different needs in accommodation together - 2 people with very significant health needs were housed on one floor, with 5 others with lesser needs on a different floor of the same building. This had resulted in savings being made on the individuals' care packages whilst delivering the care they needed. Essentially this produced a "win-win" situation.

So far this model had delivered the following outcomes

- Those concerned were more likely to engage
- Some individuals had found work

In addition, this type of initiative would be within the scope for applying for cash funding.

During discussion, members agreed that this topic would be very worthwhile and unanimously agreed that it should be put forward to Scrutiny Management Panel as a topic for review.

There followed a brief discussion on hospital discharge which did not seem to be improving quickly enough. Members asked the Chair of the Housing & Social Care Panel to suggest that the Scrutiny Management Panel ask for an update report on the review that had been carried out on this topic to check whether there was anything that could be done to move things forward.

RESOLVED that the Panel

(1) suggest to the Scrutiny Management Panel the following topics for review in the order stated

- a) Review into the provision of Learning & Disability Accommodation**
- b) Review into Domiciliary Care**

(2) Suggest that the Scrutiny Management Panel review as a matter of urgency the outcomes of the recommendations made by the review into "Hospital Discharge Arrangements in Portsmouth" undertaken in 2013/14

The meeting concluded at 6.40 pm.

Councillor Darren Sanders
Chair