

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 7 June 2018 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor B Hilton (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Bibby	R Hargreaves
S Brunskill	R Newmark
P Dobson	M Robinson
P Elms	R Sherras
M Fenton	J White
L Graves	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of Regeneration and Housing, Head of Environmental Health Services, Strategic Housing Officer and Senior Accountant.

Also in attendance: Councillors S Hore, A Knox and I Sayers and David Mayner and Joanne Danaher from Onward Homes.

36 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Elms, K Hind and R Thompson.

37 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

39 PRESENTATION BY ONWARD HOMES

The Chair introduced David Mayner and Joanne Danaher from Onward Homes, the successor housing association to Ribble Valley Homes. They explained that five housing associations had merged to become the largest housing association purely based in the North West, with 35,000 homes owned and managed in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. They had 1,319 properties in the Ribble Valley – approximately 3% of their stock. They approached management by reference to neighbourhoods so as to be accessible with local delivery and flexibility – there were three neighbourhoods in the Ribble Valley.

Through their local schemes, they explained that they seek support for their customers where needed. Their five year ambition is to provide homes and services which made progression and independence possible. In addition, they were working with partners, such as developers, to deliver new homes, 30 of these having been achieved in the previous 12 months including some shared ownership properties. They also offered specialist service management for older people.

In response to questions, they explained that they had no difficulty in buying back former Council owned properties where suitable. There were no current plans to close any of their offices. Their plans were robust to enable local needs to be addressed with particular projects. In response to a question regarding memory homes for people with dementia, they explained they had a focus on moving into that space for older people.

RESOLVED: That David and Joanne be thanked for their informative presentation.

40 APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

Committee considered the appointment of working groups that belong to this Committee and their arrangements/membership.

- Strategic Housing Working Group – 3 Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat and the Chair of Planning and Development Committee.
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership – 4 Conservatives, 1 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the appointment of the Strategic Housing Working Group and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

41 CAPITAL OUTTURN 2017/2018 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/2019

The Director of Resources submitted a report asking Committee to review the final outturn of the Capital Programme for 2017/2018 and seeking approval of the slippage of some capital scheme budgets from the 2017/2018 financial year to the 2018/2019 financial year. The revised capital programme for the Health and Housing Committee consisted of four schemes. Overall 46.5% of the revised estimate budget had been spent in 2017/2018. Reasons were given for the underspends on the three Housing Grants Schemes and Committee were advised that budget slippage taken forward to 2018/2019 would be ring-fenced for the schemes highlighted.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the slippage of the budgets into the 2018/2019 financial year for:

- Disabled facilities grants - £271,530
- Landlord/tenant grants - £49,020
- Affordable warmth - capital grants - £20,880

ELIGIBILITY TO REGISTER ON THE SELF BUILD REGISTER

The Chief Executive submitted a report, recommending amendments to the Self Build and Custom House Build Register. The Council was required to maintain a register of individuals seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the borough for their own self build and custom house build projects. 26 households had registered to date and 12 had been refused as they were ineligible.

The Self Build and Custom House Building Act 2015 enables local authorities to introduce eligibility tests for registration, and to charge a fee to cover administrative costs.

It was intended to introduce a local connection requirement for eligibility, adopting similar criteria to those applied in Section 106 Agreements. The proposed local definition was:

- a. currently living in the borough for more than 10 years
- b. currently living in the borough and have done so continually for between 5-10 years.
- c. currently living in the borough and have done so continually for a minimum of 12 months.
- d. currently permanently employed in the borough for a minimum of 12 months and are employed for a minimum of 18 hours per week paid or unpaid.
- e) Persons who at least one of the adult applicants have next of kin who have lived in the borough continually for a minimum of five years. Next of kin for the purposes of this clause shall be defined as mother, father, brother, sister or adult children;
- f) Persons who are former residents of the borough who have moved from the borough because of a lack of affordable housing in the borough.

Members of the Armed Forces and ex service personnel will be deemed as having met this requirement.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. accept the report and agree the proposal to introduce a local connection requirement and also to introduce an administrative fee of £60 to register on the Self-Build and Custom House Building Register.
2. agree to hold a 4 week consultation period commencing the 11 June and subject to there being no adverse issues raised, confirm that the new requirements will be operated from 1 August 2018.

HOUSING AND PLANNING ACT 2016 – INTRODUCTION OF CHANGES TO MANDATORY LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HOUSING)

The Chief Executive submitted a report advising Committee of the proposed extension of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing, coming into force on 1 October 2018. The definition of HMOs was being expanded, and powers and obligations were extended, including power to issue civil financial penalties

as an alternative to prosecution; power to apply for a rent repayment order for certain offences and to seek recovery of rent paid by Universal Credit or Housing Benefit; and the possibility of application for a banning order in relation to landlords, estate agents or letting agents, with a national database being issued for banning orders. The licensing process was explained, together with the fee regime.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. adopt the new enforcement powers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 that are available to deal with private sector housing and promote the change in mandatory HMO licensing;
2. delegate authority to the Head of Environmental Health Services under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Scheme of Delegation be amended accordingly.

44 TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR RELATING TO DOGS – UPDATING FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Chief Executive submitted a report, recommending that Committee increase fixed penalty notice fines in relation to dogs under the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) to £100. Other local authorities in Lancashire currently had a fixed penalty of £100, whereas the penalty in Ribble Valley was £80. If a case was prosecuted, the maximum fine available to the court was £1000. Members were advised of the circumstances in which exemptions could apply to the requirements to pick up dog waste or to comply with a dog exclusion order – these exemptions arose as a need for support from a dog due to disability.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree for the fixed penalty notice available for each PSPO to be set at £100 in line with neighbouring authorities.

45 HEALTH AND SAFETY INTERVENTION PLAN 2018/2019

The Chief Executive submitted a report seeking Committee's approval of Ribble Valley Borough Council's Health and Safety Intervention Plan for 2018/2019. The plan set out standards for proactive work, taking into account priorities issued by the Health and Safety Executive. The focus was on high risk operations and increased information for small businesses to be made available in an accessible and relevant form.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Ribble Valley Borough Council Health and Safety Intervention Plan 2018/19 for implementation in the current financial year.

46 FOOD HYGIENE INTERVENTION PLAN 2018/2019

The Chief Executive submitted a report introducing and seeking Committee's approval of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Food Hygiene Intervention Plan for 2018/2019. The legislative background was explained, and a summary of the service in 2017/2018 was provided. Members noted the statistics and the satisfactory performance in the year.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. approve the Ribble Valley Borough Council Food Hygiene Intervention Plan 2018/19 for implementation in the current financial year;
2. note the satisfactory performance for the year 2017-18; and
3. reconfirm the continuing priority of food premises inspections for Environmental Health service provision.

47 LITTER STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND 2017 – FIXED PENALTY

The Chief Executive submitted a report advising Members of the national actions of the Litter Strategy for England 2017, seeking agreement for continuation of local actions and requesting Committee increase the fixed penalty for littering from £80 to £150.

The strategy highlighted proposed legislation to enable all local authorities to take action against the registered keeper of vehicles from which litter was known to originate – this power had previously only applied in London.

From April 2018, the maximum on the spot fine local authorities could issue by way of fixed penalty notice increased from £80 to £150, which provided an opportunity for Committee to consider an increase in the fixed penalty which reflected the cost to the Council.

RESOLVED: That Committee agree a maximum fine of £150, with no discount, as this took into account the Government's requirement for the fixed penalty notice to be proportionate and reflect the local situation, with immediate effect.

48 JOINERS ARMS UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the usage of and improvements carried out to the property at 90 Whalley Road, Clitheroe, which provides temporary accommodation for those families and individuals who are eligible due to housing problems. The Council had taken over management of the premises 12 months previously. 36 households had passed through the premises in that time with an average stay of 18 weeks, and significant improvements had been carried out, including improvements for fire protection, kitchen odour extraction, and heating in some flats. Committee were also advised of the licence conditions accepted by occupants.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

49 REVIEW OF DOG INITIATIVES OVER THE LAST 2 YEARS

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on initiatives to promote responsible dog ownership and tackle dog fouling since 2016. Events have been held in Parishes, supported by the Dogs Trust. The Dog Warden Policy had been introduced in January 2017, setting out priorities and the approach that would be taken by the dog wardens. Public Space Protection Orders had been introduced in 2017, replacing the previous Dog Control Orders.

The number of dog fouling incidents had reduced from over 200 in 2016/2017 to 180 in 2017/2018 and 17 to date in 2018/2019. The Head of Environmental Health Services urged Members to work with their Parishes to promote the various initiatives.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

50 FOOD SAFETY – ALLERGENS IN FOODS

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the work being undertaken by the food safety team in implementation of the Food Information Regulations 2014. Members were advised of the serious and occasionally fatal reactions to certain types of food by individuals who have a food allergy. Businesses were required to provide information with regard to ingredients, and this had been incorporated into scheduled food safety inspections by the environmental health department. This had resulted in an increase in officer time on each inspection, and in slightly more investigations following complaints with regard to the control of allergens.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

51 NEW ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Members' information, updating Committee on draft regulations, which may be introduced from 1 October 2018. The intention was to introduce a single "Animal Establishment Licence" to cover activities including dog breeding, dog/cat boarding and day care, selling pets, hiring horses for riding and keeping or training animals for exhibition. This was intended to be a single licence, supported by conditions set out in the regulations, as opposed to the variety of licences currently backed up by conditions set locally or by adoption of the model conditions of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. Members were advised of certain detailed provisions of the regulations and the intended processes for application for licences, enforcement and appeals.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

52 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the membership of Outside Bodies that come under the remit of the Health and Housing Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

53 NOTES OF RIBBLE VALLEY HEALTH AND WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP

The notes of the Ribble Valley Health and Wellbeing Partnership meeting held on 16 May 2018 were circulated for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

54 NOTES OF TARMAC LIAISON COMMITTEE

The notes of the Tarmac Liaison Committee meetings held on 22 August 2016 and 25 July 2017 were circulated for Committee's information.

55 MINUTES OF HANSON CEMENT LIAISON COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meetings of the Hanson Cement Liaison Committee held on 22 September 2016, 7 December 2016, 23 March 2017, 9 October 2017 and 22 March 2018 were circulated for Committee's information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

56 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies.

57 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be an Exempt Information under Categories 1 and 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

58 FUNDING FOR HOMEWISE

The Chief Executive submitted a report requesting approval to award a grant to Homewise home improvement service to support them in delivery of their service. Homewise had been the home improvement agency for the Ribble Valley since 2014, commissioned by Lancashire County Council and funded through the Better Care Fund. Ribble Valley Borough Council have annually provided additional funding to support delivery of the service. Members were advised of the terms of the grant funding agreement.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the grant award of £5,540 to Homewise to support delivery of the service.

59 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FROM HOMES ENGLAND

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Members of an approach by a registered provider to seek to deliver affordable housing units through 100% affordable exception sites, utilising funding from Homes England (formerly the Homes and Communities Agency). All 70 affordable units delivered in the last year in the Ribble Valley had been through Section 106 Agreements, but in the previous year a scheme had been delivered of 100% affordable units by a registered provider receiving support from the Homes and Communities Agency.

There were now further promotions for 100% affordable schemes with funding by Homes England, and providers had approached the Council with regard to the possibility of seeking funding for certain types of schemes. Members were advised that approval of this initiative was not conclusive in respect of the scheme – it would still have to be suitable from the planning perspective.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. acknowledge the proposal for registered providers to deliver 100% affordable housing schemes;
2. support this proposal only where there is evidence of local housing need; and
3. request the registered provider only consider schemes in Parishes where there is still a remaining allocation, those being Wilpshire and Mellor;

60

UNAUTHORISED MEMORIALS IN CEMETERIES

The Chief Executive submitted a report reviewing the position in relation to unofficial memorials and mementos on graves, which were currently prohibited under the Council's cemetery rules and regulations.

Members were advised of the terms of the regulations, particularly with regard to unauthorised items on graves and the restrictions with regard to the woodland burial area. These regulations were not currently being enforced.

The unauthorised items could give rise to safety issues and operational risk for the staff maintaining the cemetery, and for visitors.

Members were advised of the increase in mementos of this type, which was acknowledged to be a reflection of changing attitudes, but which did contravene the regulations and guidelines which were adhered to by the deed holders of most graves. The issue was widespread and Members were advised that other local authorities were taking action with regard to this type of memento.

Members appreciated that this was a sensitive subject and took the view that a gradual approach would be appropriate with carefully worded correspondence and notification.

However, it was considered that there could be merit in obtaining further information on the approaches taken by churches in this respect, prior to any approach to the deed holders. This might provide guidance on how this delicate subject had been addressed and enforced at local grave yards, with a view to a consistent approach being adopted. Consideration could also be given to an approach to local funeral directors for information to be passed on to their clients.

RESOLVED: That the Head of Environmental Health Services consult with local churches and bring a further report to this Committee.

61

UPDATE ON 18 SIDDOWS AVENUE, CLITHEROE

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information on the progress in relation to the consideration of an empty dwelling management order, and possible negotiation to purchase, the empty property at 18 Siddows Avenue, Clitheroe. Members were advised of reported arrangements for sale of this and other properties owned elsewhere in the country, by the owner. However, information was still awaited from the owner and their agent on the completion of

the transaction, and the identity of any new owner. Members were advised that the Residential Property Tribunal would not make an order where a sale was proceeding. Following completion of the sale, there would be an approach to the new owner to establish their intentions.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

62 GENERAL REPORT – GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee's information of approval of 24 Disabled Facilities grants and 8 Affordable Warmth grants. No new Landlord/Tenant grants have been approved since the last report to committee.

182 applications had been made for Household Property Flood Resilience grants of which 180 had been approved. 176 had been fully completed, and 4 were still to complete. The work on these 4 applications had been completed but snagging issues were still being addressed. 2 owners had decided not to proceed with a scheme.

32 business applications had been approved and fully completed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).