

12 NOVEMBER 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 12 November 2020

- * Cllr Steve Davies (Chairman)
- * Cllr Ann Sevier (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Anne Corbridge
- * Kate Crisell
- * Jack Davies
- * Andrew Gossage

Councillors:

- * Joshua Kidd
- * Ian Murray
- * Caroline Rackham
- Christine Ward

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Ann Bellows
Sue Bennison
Jill Cleary
David Hawkins

Officers Attending:

Catherine Bonnett, Tim Davis, Richard Fudge, Richard Knott, Grainne O'Rourke, Daniel Reynafarje, Ritchie Thomson and Karen Wardle

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ward.

65 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by members in connection with an agenda item.

67 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

68 RURAL HOUSING AND RIGHT TO BUY

The Panel considered the draft Local Connection Restriction Policy. This policy proposed to place restrictions, contained in S157 of the Housing Act 1985 to restrict the onward disposal of Council properties sold under the right to buy (RTB) scheme in designated rural areas, the National Park and areas of outstanding natural beauty within the New Forest District Council administrative area.

All tenants living in council dwellings have the potential to acquire the property under the right to buy provisions. However, should a tenant purchase a council property within the identified protected areas, a covenant would be placed on the future disposal of the dwelling, so that the property could only be sold to a person who had lived or worked in the designated 'protected areas' for three years or more. This requirement would also be applicable to any proposed future private letting of these properties. It was recognised there could be exceptional circumstances whereby, the Council would consider requests to waive the proposed restrictions which were set out within the policy. This included, for example, where a property had been marketed for sale or rent for 12 months or more.

Members spoke in support of the proposed draft policy and the benefits it would bring enabling those who had a local connection being able to purchase or rent the properties within the protected areas.

Members questioned whether there were safeguards in place to reduce the risk of abuse of the policy whereby people do not have a local connection. It was noted that the District Council would need to verify the local connection prior to issuing consent to the disposal of a property in the protected area and there were safeguards within Section 157 of the Housing Act.

In response to a question about transfer of the property though circumstances such as inheritance or matrimonial proceedings, it was noted that there were exemptions set out in Section 160 of the Housing Act to cover certain disposals such as the aforementioned examples.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed draft Local Connection Restriction Policy be fully supported by the Panel for approval by Cabinet.

69 HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

A presentation was provided to the Panel with an update on homelessness, which included the highlights of the work carried out against the Strategic Actions identified within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023 adopted in April 2019. The presentation is attached to the minutes as an Appendix.

The highlights included:

- The adoption of a new Social Housing Allocation Policy, which included the launch of a new computer system in January 2020;
- A Personal Housing Plan (PHP) for all applicants on the housing register. A key performance indicator had been set for 2020/21. 93% of 1,800 applicants receive a PHP annually;
- Reviewing staffing resources against the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and as a result the number of homelessness officers had

- increased. The team had also been split into specific roles for triage, prevention and move on accommodation in order to work more efficiently;
- A new support team of 8 officers to review and support the arrangements for those households with complex needs; and
 - A process to respond to reports of rough sleeping quickly, and to support individuals provided with accommodation to prevent them returning to rough sleeping.

There were currently 1,142 live applications for Council properties. 201 applicants had been rehoused since January 2020, and of these 55 full duty homeless cases had moved on from temporary accommodation, which was a key aim of the new policy.

The Council had been successful in being awarded funding from government, with short term funding of £256,592 to assist with accommodation costs arising through the COVID-19 pandemic, additional staffing support and to access move on accommodation. Capital Grant funding had been secured to convert the Tourlands Hostel in Lymington to 'move on' accommodation. In addition, funding for three years additional support from 2021 had been awarded and £50,000 for rough sleeper accommodation this winter.

Members noted that there had been 1,800 approaches for housing assistance in the last 12 calendar months. It was explained that around a third of the approaches for housing assistance were from those threatened with homelessness and that officers working with residents and landlords were successful in preventing homelessness in 70% of cases.

There had been a rise in rough sleeping and the Council currently had 16 rough sleepers with three rough sleepers who had refused accommodation. Assessments had been completed for the remaining 13 in order to plan to move them out of their current temporary accommodation. 40 households were currently in external accommodation, which included 5 families, 19 single people accommodated during the first lockdown, and 16 single people after this lockdown.

70 HOUSING STRATEGY / HRA PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation providing an update on the Council's HRA property development and acquisition of properties. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes as an Appendix.

71 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services reported that given the previous agenda items she had nothing specifically to report.

72 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

CHAIRMAN

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Homelessness Update

Richard Knott

Service Manager – Housing Options, Rents, Support and Private
Sector Housing

Minute Item 69

Strategic Actions - Highlights

Fully embed the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team following all principles • New Computer system embedded and workflow follows legal pathway • Compliant with all Gov't reporting • Duty to Refer embedded
All applicants receive a Personal Housing Plan (PHP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI for 20/21 - 93% of approx. 1,800 applicants receive a PHP annually
Develop housing pathways and discharge protocols with partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed Protocols in place with - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In patient Mental Health • Probation • Working group in place for General Hospitals
Adopt a new Social Housing Allocation Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched with a new Computer system January 2020
Create and provide self-help guides and information for vulnerable groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In draft ready for approval and publication
Increase access to homelessness services and housing assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to Covid-19 appointments held at all satellite offices • Online homelessness referral form • Online Housing Register application and new Homeseach Website • Phone interviews • New NFDC Website • 2 dedicated duty officers

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<p>Ensure clients have dedicated support in order to claim Universal Credit and other benefits online.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face meetings held with each Job Centre+ in the district to obtain appointments when required for vulnerable people. • Connected with DWP lead for the area • New Housing Support Team
<p>Provide annual training to Homelessness & Housing Advice Officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programme in place
<p>Review internal processes to progress households through our frontline homeless services to move on and independent living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Team split in to specific roles • Increased priority in the Allocation Policy • Client assessments to set key actions • Focus on move on from emergency/temporary accommodation for both new and existing clients
<p>Review staffing resources against the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Officers increased • Homeless Team split in to specific roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Homelessness Officer • 2 Officers tasked with Triage • 3 Officers tasked with prevention • 2 Officers tasked with move on • New Support Team set up • Embedded Two Saints Worker
<p>Produce resource directories of agencies providing services within the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and published

<p>Monitor the impact of Welfare reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Council Tenants on UC • New Tenancy Sustainment Officer • 14 day visit for new tenants • Request APAs and TPDs • Increase in the PRS. Rent in advance provided to allow time for claiming • Use of DHP
<p>Establish a working protocol with New Forest Supporting Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme amended and now with HCC • Early Help Hub • Social Services • Tenancy Sustainment
<p>Continue to develop the Multi-Agency Forum and its outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held and on hold
<p>Establish a Landlord Forum to improve relationships with landlords and letting agents to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord Forum on hold • 250+ properties accessed • Increase in PSLs • Co-operative work with the PSH Team • Draft landlord incentive scheme
<p>Work with Registered Providers to prevent evictions through joint working arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol established with Sovereign
<p>Promote the duty to refer and referral pathways with external agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTR embedded and received form all partners

<p>Attend and actively participate in strategic and operational groups across Hampshire to protect and enhance services in the New Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing Officers Group • Homelessness Workstream – Covid • Heathy Homes Working Group • Hospital Discharge Working Group • DFGs • Chair of Homeless Officers Group • Extra Care • Safe Sleep in TA
<p>Attend team meetings of partner agencies to promote the service and early intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leavers • Mental Health • Job Centre Plus • Drug & Alcohol Services • Probation
<p>Establish an updated protocol with Hampshire Social Services for homeless 16-17 year olds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete
<p>Establish positive working relationships with The Council's Private Sector Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFDC's PSH Team was embedded in to the Housing Service in 2020. • New Computer system Dec 2020 • Joint work in place
<p>Establish local support networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of NFDC Voluntary Network group • The Crossings Hythe drop in • Food Banks
<p>Establish links with the Credit Union to offer financial products where required.</p>	<p>Future task</p>

Work alongside domestic abuse services, refuges and the Police to assist victims of domestic abuse remain safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded in day to day operations
Review and propose support arrangements for households with complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Support Team of 8 officers
Develop in-house emergency accommodation through remodelling of existing stock and property acquisitions as an alternative to Bed & Breakfast accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Buildings delivered with 5 further buildings in progress
Develop processes to successfully move on households from temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in Allocation Policy • Support Team • Homeless Team Focus • Homesearch Support
10 Develop an incentive scheme/ package to encourage households under-occupying in Council housing stock to move to smaller properties	Future Task
Continue with the 'buy back' of ex-council housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme continues and to be modified to target 'difficult to house' applicants
Adopt an innovative approach to new affordable housing provision, including implementing shared ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Ownership launched • Rent Policy and Affordable Rents to follow
Identify and optimise council house building capacity through partnerships with Registered Providers and private developers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant no's of properties delivered

<p>Identify opportunities for the development of Council owned land and garage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viable garage sites identified • Repurposing of Council Buildings
<p>Respond to reports of rough sleeping within 24 hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process in place to respond quickly
<p>Establish a rapid rehousing pathway response to incidents of rough sleeping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment process in place to determine best housing and support route
<p>Explore the viability of launching a Housing First model of support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with Radian and Southern Health to provide accommodation upon discharge from in patient MH hospital
<p>Ensure a support approach for rough sleepers provided with accommodation to prevent them returning to the streets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Assessment identifies appropriate actions and support tailored to Individual
<p>Develop closer links with voluntary and community agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Mary and Julie Corners' at Lymington Basics bank • Supported the Crossings to receive Gov't funding
<p>Commit to accommodating people rough sleeping beyond incidents of the severe weather and those considered not in 'priority need'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In place • Government guidance now amended to include this

Housing Register

- 1142 live applications

Band	Totals	%
1	14	1.22%
2	210	18.31%
3	310	27.03%
4	608	53.01%
Total	1147	

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- 201 applicants rehoused since Jan 2020

Band	Totals	%
1	16	7.96%
2	84	41.79%
3	59	29.35%
4	42	20.90%
Total	201	

- 55 Full Duty Homeless cases moved on from TA

Homelessness

- Awarded £256,592 short term funding
 - £188,592 to cover Covid accommodation costs
 - £36,000 to fund additional support – new starter 30 Nov
 - £32,000 to fund access to move on accommodation
- ¹³• Secured capital grant funding
 - to Convert Tourlands Hostel, Lymington in to a dedicated Rough Sleeper Accommodation Setting for 6 occupants
- Secured £216,000 to fund 3 years worth of support from April 2021
- Awarded up to £50,000 to help accommodated rough sleepers this winter
- PROTECT Programme launched to accommodate RSs

Homelessness

- Significant rise in rough sleeping
 - 16 rough sleepers
 - 3 refusing accommodation currently
 - Assessments completed for remainder to plan moves
- 136 households accommodated since 1 March 2020
- 14 39 in April, 24 in May, 8 in October
- 40 currently in External Accommodation
 - 5 families
 - 19 Single people accommodated during lockdown 1
 - 14 males, 5 females
 - 16 single people since
 - 10 males, 5 females, 1 couple

Property Development and Acquisition update

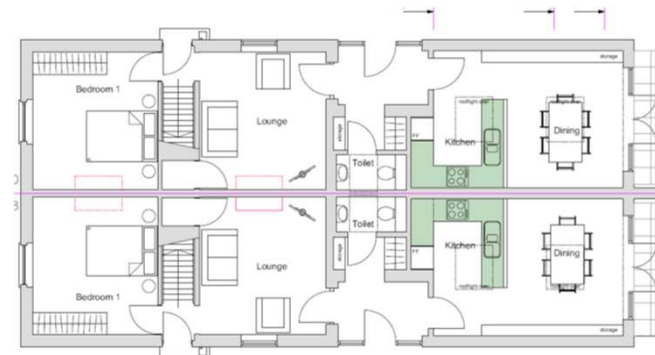
November 2020

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Long Term Voids	Client group	Existing Housing Stock					
		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Refurbishment and renovation (1)	GN			3			
Extensions and refurbishment (2)	GN			4	2		

Tourlands, Emsworth Road, Lymington



38/40 Ambleside, Lymington

		Affordable housing completions					
		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
In Contract (Full delivery expected)							
Buy-Back	GN	15	15	5			
New Build (planning-led, NFDC land, other land, off the shelf) (6)	GN	34	70	15			
Property acquisitions and works (5)	TA	6	3	16			
NFDC Conversions (3)	GN	2	2	2			
Sub total		57	90	38			

- 5 x Buy-Backs completed. 4 accepted offers. 3 offers pending

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- Blease Court, Lymington
- **Heather Road, Fawley**



		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Predicted with delivery expectations (planning in place, no planning required or high planning confidence)							
Buy-Back	GN			10	15	15	15
New Build (planning-led, NFDC land, other land, off the shelf) (8)	GN			15	12	51	
Property acquisition and works (2)	TA				13		
NFDC conversion works (4)	TA/GN			2	7		
Sub total				27	47	66	15

- Ladycross, Hythe – submitted planning application
- 37 Salisbury Road – exchanged contracts
- Moore Close, New Milton – preparing for public consultation
- Testwood Club, Totton – preparing for public consultation
- Gorse Close – secured planning consent
- Off the shelf purchases – 15 in progress (PH decision pending)

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- Tourlands, Lymington – secured planning consent

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- Secured Homes England grant for 13 homes
- Secured Ministry of Housing grant for Tourlands

		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Future programme assumptions and identified sites							
New Build (planning-led, NFDC land, other land, off the shelf) (11)	TA/GN					25	100
NFDC conversion works (4)	GN						7
	Sub total					25	107

Future Programme

- Pre-application consultation with National Park (10 homes)
- Two potential temporary accommodation openings in Totton (13)
- Working on a new promotional brochure
- Outlined new schemes for 21 to 26 Homes England programme

Affordable housing development programme as at 12th November 2020

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
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NFDC conversion works (4)	GN						7
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Total		57	90	65	47	91	122
							472

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