

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

31 May 2018 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Hughes (Chairman), Mrs Porter (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Ayres, Bicknell, Mrs Harrison-Horn, Mrs Madeley, Purchase, Mrs Rapnik and Miss Rhodes.

Councillor Bence was also in attendance as Cabinet Member for Residential Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Blampied, Edwards and Stanley.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group held on 4 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. START TIMES

The Working Group

RESOLVED

That the start times of meetings for the remainder of 2018/19 be 6.00 p.m.

5. HOUSING & CUSTOMERS SERVICES WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

In the absence of the Group Head of Policy, the Services Director presented this report which put forward an amended Terms of Reference for the Working Group following a full review of the Council's Constitution, which sought to clarify and simplify the Council's formal processes.

In addition, and following an issue that had been raised at the last meeting of the Environment & Leisure Working Party, it was suggested that future Working Group agendas have a heading included to read:-

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

“Report Back from Cabinet/Full Council

The Working Group may wish to consider the outcome of the Cabinet/Full Council meeting held on (date to be inserted) when the recommendations from this Working Group were presented”

The purpose of this heading on the agenda would be to enable members of the Working Group to raise any queries on recommendations that had been forwarded to Cabinet/Full Council to ascertain how they had been dealt with. In addition, the issue of transparency would be covered as notice would be given of possible deliberations and discussion that might be entered into at the meeting. The Committee Manager could even list the matters that had recommendations from the previous meeting, therefore making it clear what subject could be raised.

Following a brief discussion whereby clarification was sought and given, the Working Group

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the revised Terms of Reference be agreed; and

RESOLVED

That the following heading be included on future agendas:-

“Report Back from Cabinet/Full Council

The Working Group may wish to consider the outcome of the Cabinet/Full Council meeting held on (date to be inserted) when the recommendations from this Working Group were presented”

6. **HOUSING ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Group Head of Residential Services circulated at the meeting a set of papers which provided an outline on the performance of the Housing Department for the year 2017/18 and which she then spoke to and expanded on the detail of the figures provided.

Members participated in a question and answer session with the Group Head of Residential Services whereby it was particularly highlighted that:-

- The Housing Fraud Officer was commended for her work in tackling housing fraud and achieving a recovery value of £2m for the Council.
- 8 competitive bids had been submitted on S106 sites for the Council to provide affordable housing for those on the Housing Waiting List.
- The Homeless Reduction Act had now come into effect and this would add to the previous legislation.
- Having taken account of the lessons learned from other local authorities, work was underway to mitigate the impact of the

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

coming into effect of Universal Credit on 1 July 2018 by way of education, debt counselling and debt management, etc. A new software programme system was being implemented to help with early intervention. Members were also advised that Universal Credit would only be applied to new tenants and that existing tenants would still be eligible for Housing Benefit until 2021, when they would then be transferred over to the Universal Credit regime.

The Group Head of Residential Services was thanked for her interesting and informative update.

7. WORK PROGRAMME – 2018/19

Following consideration, the Working Group

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the Housing & Customer Services Working Group Work Programme for 2018/19 be approved.

(The meeting concluded at 7.00 pm)