

## **MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES of a MEETING of the DECENT AND AFFORDABLE HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 6 October 2015 at 2.15 pm**

#### **Present**

##### **Councillors**

P J Heal (Chairman)  
Mrs E M Andrews, Mrs H Bainbridge, Mrs G Doe, R J Dolley,  
R Evans, J D Squire and L D Taylor

#### **Apology**

##### **Councillor**

W J Daw

#### **Also Present**

##### **Councillor**

R L Stanley

#### **Present**

##### **Officers**

Nick Sanderson (Head of Housing and Property Services),  
Roderick Hewson (Principal Accountant) and Sarah Lees  
(Member Services Officer)

## **32 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Cllr W J Daw.

## **33 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

## **34 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## **35 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had the following announcements to make:

- a) The Devon Home Choice Working Group had met recently and had scoped what needed to be done. They would meet one more time in early November and will bring a report with their recommendations to the next meeting of the Group.
- b) He reminded the Group that there was a Universal Credit Member Briefing on 8 October and an Affordable Housing Briefing on 13 October both of which would be of interest to Members of this Group.

## **36 DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2015 - 2020**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Housing Services Manager reviewing the existing housing strategy. The Head of Housing and Property Services outlined the contents of the report stating that the strategy needed to link in with the Corporate Plan as housing was a major part of the Council's function. Providing affordable

housing, looking after the housing stock, preventing homelessness, looking after an aging population and reducing the impact of welfare reform all needed to form a part of both documents. It was hoped that both would be in a position to be fully adopted by March 2016.

Discussion took place regarding who the Council would be consulting with. It was explained that consultation would take place with all registered providers as well as the private sector and bodies supporting homeless people such as CHAT (Churches Housing Action Team).

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that it agrees to the draft Housing Strategy being sent out for consultation.

(Proposed by Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge and seconded by Cllr Mrs E M Andrews)

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes.

### 37 **ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015**

The Group had before it a report \* from the Head of Housing and Property Services advising Members of the approach being taken for the management of asbestos in Council properties. He outlined the contents of the report stating that the Council had taken the opportunity to revise the Management Plan and Asbestos Policy following changes in guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive and a recommendation from them following an incident last year. The documents had needed some 'tightening up' in a few areas but were now robust workable documents going forwards.

It was confirmed that all recommendations made by the Health and Safety Executive had been actioned within the Council's housing stock.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Cabinet that:

- a) The revised Corporate Asbestos Policy be approved; and
- b) The revised Asbestos Management Plan be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr R Evans and seconded by Cllr R J Dolley)

Note: \* Report previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes.

### 38 **COMMUNITY HOUSING SUPPORT (BRIEFING PAPER)**

The Group had before it a briefing paper \* from the Housing Services Manager informing it about the work of the Community Support & Initiatives Team. The Head of Housing and Property Services explained that when the contract with Devon County Council had ceased the Council had wanted to continue to support tenants wherever they could within available resources. For example, help was offered for tenants coming out of hospital. There were currently two members of staff devoted to tenant support and one to the lifeline system. The lifeline system for tenants in sheltered housing was no longer a free service and as a result of this change approximately 100 people had opted out.

Discussion took place regarding whether the lifeline service could be offered elsewhere, however, it was explained that other authorities had their own arrangements in place. With an increase in the aging population it was explained that additional staff may be needed to provide support but this would only happen if resources allowed it and it was feasible.

Note: \* Briefing paper previously circulated; copy attached to the signed Minutes.

### 39 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

In addition to the items already listed in the work programme, the following items were requested to be on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Devon Home Choice Working Group report
- Severe weather protocol for rough sleepers

(The meeting ended at 2.55 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**