

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP** held on 13 March 2018 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors Mrs E M Andrews, D R Coren, Mrs G Doe, R J Dolley, P J Heal, F W Letch and J D Squire

Apology

Councillor Mrs H Bainbridge

Also Present

Councillors C J Eginton and R L Stanley

Also Present

Officers Andrew Pritchard (Director of Operations), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Tanya Wenham (Lead Officer Public Sector Housing) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

59 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs H Bainbridge.

60 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Councillor Mrs E M Andrews declared a personal interest as she was a tenant living in a Council owned property.

61 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

62 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018 were confirmed as a true and accurate record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

63 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed the Group that the next landlord event was likely to be 19th September and that Members were advised to pencil this into their diaries. More details would be available in due course.

64 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK 2017/18 (00:02:50)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Director of Operations providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and

local service targets for 2017/18 as well as providing an update on the key business risks.

The officer outlined the contents of the report and discussion took place regarding the following:

- The building of council houses in Birchen Lane and Palmerston Park – the report stated that the date for completion would be 2018/19 and the comment was made that this seemed to be very vague and clarification was sought as to the need for more accurate timescales. The Cabinet Member for Housing explained that it was hoped that the properties in Birchen Lane would be completed by November 2018. Initial building works had had to be demolished due to a number of faults. It was hoped that the Palmerston Park development would also be completed by October / November 2018. There had been a problem of safety on the site and difficult access issues due to there only being one road in.
- The question was asked as to whether there was enough social housing within Mid Devon and how did this Council compare with others? The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that it was hoped a development at Post Hill with affordable housing would be underway soon, however, issues relating to proportion and viability still had to be resolved. In terms of how Mid Devon compared it was explained that some local authorities were not building any social housing but Mid Devon was proactively looking for new sites including redeveloping a number of garage sites.
- Building services were assessing housing need across the district.
- The target in relation to bringing empty homes back into use was doing very well.

Note: * Report previously circulated, copy attached to the minutes.

65 UPDATE ON EMPTY HOMES (00:10:45)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Public Health and Regulatory Services Group Manager providing it with an update on the progress of the Empty Homes Plan.

The Lead Officer for Private Sector Housing informed the Group that since the report had been published with the agenda, the number of properties brought back into use up until the end of February had risen from 111 to 122. This was against a target figure of 25 and as a result the target would be increased to 72 properties for the next two years.

Brief discussion took place with regard to:

- Revenue income being available to the Council generated from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) as all properties brought back into use might be able to qualify for the NHB.
- Generally landlords were very co-operative and there had not been a need to instigate any enforcement action thus far.
- Empty homes were spread throughout the district and were not just concentrated in the three largest towns.

- An updated Empty Homes Plan would be brought before this Group in due course and this would include a listing of exactly where the empty properties currently were (although it was stated that this did go out of date very quickly).

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

66 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017/18 (00:17:25)

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a draft report * by the Chairman of the Group since May 2017, a final copy of this report would be submitted to Council on 25 April 2018.

Note: * Report previously circulated and attached to the signed minutes.

67 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (00:17:48)

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

- Performance and Risk Outturn for 2017/18
- Revision of the wording relating to the Right to Buy Motion to Council

(The meeting ended at 2.38 pm)

CHAIRMAN