

# SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Meeting of Housing Working Party

**Date: Wednesday, 16th September, 2015**

**Place: Civic 1 (Civic Centre), Committee Room 6**

**Present:** Councillor Norman MBE (Chairman)  
Councillors Ayling, Betson, D Garston, Hadley, \*Salter and Ward.  
(\*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.)

**In Attendance:** S Holland, J Williams, J Chesterton, S Houlden, A Fiske, D Ubaka and R Harris

**Start/End Time:** 17.00/18.15

\*\*\*\* **Part I**

**1 Apologies and substitutions.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Flewitt (substitute: Cllr Salter) and Callaghan (no substitute).

**2 Declarations of interest.**

The following declarations of interest were made:

(a) Councillors Betson, D Garston, Ayling, Hadley, Salter and Ward – Agenda Item 4 (Review of ALMO - South Essex Homes) and Agenda Item 5 (Queensway Update) - Non-pecuniary interest - private Landlords;

(b) Councillor Betson - Agenda Item 4 (Review of ALMO - South Essex Homes) -Disqualifying Non-pecuniary interest - Board Member South Essex Homes - attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed by the Standards Committee on 19th February 2015, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011 to participate in the debate and vote.

**3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 30th June, 2015**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

**4 Review of Arms Length Management Organisation - South Essex Homes**

The Working Party considered a report of the Corporate Director for People to Cabinet on 22nd September 2015, recommending extending the Council's management agreement with South Essex Homes for a 3 year period.

The Chairman advised that the report builds on the consensus reached by the Working Party at the last meeting to extend the management agreement with South Essex Homes.

The Working Party noted the uncertainty around the future of housing, with a Housing Bill to be published shortly.

The Chairman and officers explained the reasons why a 3 year extension was being recommended, rather than a longer or shorter period. The Chairman agreed it would be useful for Cabinet to receive a supplementary report on the point.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet report be endorsed/supported, subject to the production of a supplementary report for Cabinet setting out the rationale for extending the management agreement for a 3 year period.

## **5 Queensway Update**

The Working Party received a detailed PowerPoint presentation which provided an update on the Better Queensway project and it was agreed to supply the slides to the Members of the Working Party. The Working Party was informed that a report on the Project would be submitted to Cabinet on 22nd September 2015, incorporating comments from the Working Party and the tenants/residents meeting to be held on the evening of 16th September.

In response to questions, officers provided an explanation of the different types of tenancies and shared equity/ownership. The Working Party asked that more detail on these matters be included in the Cabinet report.

The Working Party noted that no decision could be made on the future of the four tower blocks at this stage as further work was needed on the options (e.g. to retain or rebuild).

Resolved:

That the Better Queensway Project be endorsed/supported and Cabinet be recommended to progress to the next phase.

## **6 Housing Development Update**

The Working Party received a verbal report from the Group Manager for Housing which provided an update on housing developments being undertaken and planned.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

## **7 Sheltered Housing Review Update**

The Working Party received a verbal update from the Group Manager for Housing on the current position with the Sheltered Housing Review.

In particular the Group Manager:-

- (a) Explained that external assistance was being sought to ensure a robust process, although the cost of such assistance was not known at this stage;
- (b) Advised that visits would be arranged so that the Working Party could see sheltered housing schemes, both in the borough and outside.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

## **8 Date and time of future meetings**

The next meeting will be arranged to take place at the end of October/beginning of November 2015.