

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor Sam Mackover (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Eve Allison
Councillor Mohammed Bakhtiar
Councillor Adrian Berrill-Cox
Councillor Judith Blakeman
Councillor Matthew Palmer
Councillor Will Pascall
Councillor Monica Press
Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Rutherford

Others in Attendance

Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing,
Property and Regeneration)
Christine Cummings (Housing Nomination Team Leader)
Laura Johnson (Director of Housing)
Ghezella Maclean (Mutual Exchange Project Officer)
Steve Mellor (Group Finance Manager)
Jerome Treherne (Governance Services)

A1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Quentin Marshall who was abroad and from David Nicholls for lateness. Mr Clark had submitted his apologies.

A2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Blakeman declared she was a Member of the TMO Board. Councillor Press declared she was a TMO leaseholder. Councillor Pascall declared he was a governor of Marlborough Primary School.

A3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 12 MARCH 2015

Cllr Press asked that the first sentence of paragraph 2 of A8 should reflect that a number of emails had been received from tenants. Cllr Blakeman noted the last paragraph of A9 should have referred to Treadgold not Treadwell House. In the part B minutes, under the second paragraph of section B3, Cllr Blakeman asked that the following sentence be added: 'She had asked for an edited version (of more information on the Carter Jonas report and letter) to be sent to her'. The Committee noted she had subsequently been sent this.

Subject to these changes, the Minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

Matters Arising

Total Facilities Management: Cllr Palmer drew attention to Amey's dealings with sub contractors and agreed to email the Cabinet Member on this matter.
Action: Cllr Palmer

A4. REPORT BY THE DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, PROPERTY AND REGENERATION

Councillor Feilding-Mellen invited questions from the Committee.

Ms Johnson advised Cllr Blakeman that delays to Grenfell Tower arose from planning issues linked to the installation of new windows and this slippage had been factored into the timetable. The Cabinet Member confirmed to Cllr Blakeman that the approach to purchasing properties for temporary accommodation was under review and the key decision report would be submitted to July's cabinet meeting. The Cabinet Member said that he anticipated most temporary accommodation to be purchased would be out-of-borough.

In regard to the regeneration of parts of Treverton and Balfour of Burleigh Estates, the Cabinet Member confirmed to Cllr Blakeman a newsletter was being drafted to be sent to ward councillors and, following that to residents.

In relation to the sale of Clearings and the new Marlborough Primary School, it was noted that further to previous reports to the Committee and Cabinet on delays caused by planning and marketing issues, the Cabinet Member confirmed the interim school would be ready for opening this autumn.

The Cabinet Member, in response to Cllr Palmer's request for information on the 49 Bassett Road tender, asked that Mr Clark check the confidentiality issues first, before deciding to release information.

Action: Mr Clark

A5. LIVE ISSUES REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

Ms Johnson introduced the report and invited questions from the Committee.

In response to Councillor Bakhtiar, Ms Johnson advised that TMO tenant doors were checked for fire safety compliance as part of an annual programme and replaced if non compliant. She agreed to provide an update to the Committee on the exact number of non compliant TMO tenant doors.
Action: Ms Johnson

Cllr Pascall thanked the TMO and officers for the follow through and the continuing work on fire door compliance.

In response to Cllr Press, Ms Johnson reported that officers were looking to spend all the Housing Regeneration Fund (HRF) for the year just completed and for the current financial year and then close the programme. She highlighted the time and effort needed to ensure Registered Providers submitted bids and that works were then carried out. She questioned the reliance by Registered Providers and the TMO on Council funding for these works instead of funding this from their own budgets. Ms Johnson advised that the TMO could seek funding from HRA resources for schemes so long as they fitted the HRF's definitions.

Mr Mellor advised that with some funds carried over from 2013-14, the 2014-15 HRF budget funded from the HRA was £299k.

Cllr Berrill-Cox was advised that regarding the Sir Thomas More Estate improvements, one courtyard had been completed, the second one would be next year and the TMO had consulted residents over the scheme.

Cllr Allison asked for confirmation that Norland Road would be covered by the HRF CCTV units. Cllr Palmer wanted to know from which office footage from the new CCTV units would be monitored. **Action:** Mr Dave Page

Cllr Blakeman requested the report on Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment be sent to ward councillors. **Action:** Ms Johnson

In response to Cllr Press, Ms Johnson said extensive research had been done into suitable models of wholly owned council companies, including legal advice and arrangements in other local authorities. A report on the new company was to be submitted to Cabinet in July. The Cabinet Member said that the Council as the sole shareholder was the most likely model.

Cllr Press suggested that Members be invited to join officers for the workshop on the LB of Ealing, Broadway Living project.

Action: Ms Johnson

A6. ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW 2015

Ms Cummings confirmed that currently 2,800 were on the housing waiting list compared to 8,000 under the old allocation system. The Committee noted 500 people from the list were placed in social housing last year, 75% in-borough. Ms Johnson emphasised that it was made clear to applicants that they were given one offer only although they could appeal against this offer. She confirmed that the Council had a duty to offer a suitable place in permanent social housing to those in temporary out-of-borough housing if their application had been accepted before 2012.

As part of the review Cllr Press suggested housing advice agencies could provide useful insights on issues that arose when making direct offers including local support needs for those suffering from poor mental health. Ms Johnson advised that if housing providers did not accept pets, their owners had responsibility for the future care needed for them.

Ms Johnson was to circulate further information on the two exceptions on local residency links listed in paragraph 4.2. **Action:** Ms L Johnson

Cllr Allison asked for the best way to report suspected benefit or housing fraud which came to light during ward surgeries. The Vice-Chairman suggested Mr Hyatt, Head of the Fraud & Corporate Investigations could advise. **Action:** Mr Hyatt

A7. OUT OF AREA PLACEMENTS POST NZOLAMESO V WESTMINSTER

Ms Johnson summarised the recent Supreme Court judgement which she said highlighted requirements for thorough assessment by local authorities for suitable alternative housing for families placed outside London. This assessment was required to include public transport links to local facilities and availability of places at local schools. Ms Johnson noted that this borough's existing policy was compliant with the judgement and the policy was to be publicised further by its formal adoption via a key decision.

In response to Cllr Press, Ms Johnson confirmed that at each stage of placement assessments officers were in direct contact with applicants.

Cllr Allison was concerned that families could be placed too far away from their communities and, in response Ms Johnson said only 5% were currently placed outside London.

The Cabinet Member, in response to Cllr Press commented that only a small number of properties were likely to be purchased for temporary accommodation and these would have to be suitable for a sufficient number of households and offer the best value for money.

A8. RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS

An addendum paper had been tabled that provided more detail on the size and price of right to buy properties that had been sold.

In response to the Vice-Chairman, Ms Johnson advised that means testing was not required to identify those eligible for the right to buy discount but applicants had to prove three years continuous residency in the property, as well as a 12 month continuing tenancy (and be able to acquire a mortgage).

It was noted that the first bullet point under paragraph 2.3 should refer to 'affordable' not social housing. Cllr Blakeman was assured that no double counting lay behind the figures for the Silchester Estate.

Mr Mellor clarified that the expenditure plans listed in the table at 3.5 were for additional units of social or affordable housing. Mr Mellor was asked to provide a breakdown of the numbers of additional units that were anticipated from these expenditure plans.

Action: Mr Mellor

A9. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Working Groups

Cllr Berrill-Cox reported on the first meeting of the Financial Viability of Large Scale Developments Working Group at which the main stages in a plan of work had been agreed. He hoped an interim report would be ready by November. Minutes from the first meeting were awaited.

Action: Ms Wright

Cllr Pascall said his report on housing stock conditions should be ready for July's meeting.

A10. FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted and the Cabinet Member reassured Cllr Palmer that the Chairman had the final say over diamond ratings. Cllr Blakeman requested that the Cabinet Key Decision on 'Allowing Utility Services under Nursery Land'(KD04524/15/K/AB) be rated as 3 diamond.

Action: Cllr Marshall

OTHER URGENT ORAL OR WRITTEN ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following specific items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended:

B1. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2015

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12 March were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Vice-Chairman.

The meeting ended at 7.35pm

Vice-Chairman