

# Public Document Pack

Housing Scrutiny Committee

HSC/1

Tuesday, 23 January 2024

## HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 January 2024

5.30 - 8.36 pm

**Present:** Councillors Pounds (Chair), Robertson (Vice-Chair), Griffin, Holloway, Lee, Porrer, Swift, Thittala Varkey and Tong

Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness: Bird

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives:  
Mandy Powell-Hardy and Diana Minns

Officers present in person:

Head of Finance and Business Manager: Julia Hovells

Director, City Services Group: James Elms

Director, Communities Group: Sam Scharf

Assistant Director, Housing and Homelessness: Samantha Shimmon

Assistant Director, Development, Place Group: Ben Binns

Strategic Delivery Manager: Sean Cleary

Property Compliance and Risk Manager: Renier Barnard

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

**Officers present online:**

Interim Assistant Director, Assets and Property: Suzanne Hemingway

Housing Maintenance Improvement (Operations): Victoria Simpson

### FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

#### 24/1/HSC Apologies

Apologies were received from Tenant Representatives Christabella Amiteye and Diane Best.

#### 24/2/HSC Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Porrer	24/8/HSC	Personal: A friend was a Davy Road resident and would be affected by the recommendation.
Councillor Porrer	24/9/HSC	Personal: Was a member of

		Planning Committee. Noted that the report related to the HRA budget implications and would only discuss issues in relation to this.
Councillor Tong	24/7/HSC	Personal: A friend / colleague worked for It Takes a City.
Diana Minns	24/7/HSC	Personal: Was involved in It Takes a City.
Councillor Robertson	24/7/HSC	Personal: Was a trustee of Cambridge Cyrenians and would abstain from voting on this agenda item.

### **24/3/HSC Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **24/4/HSC Public Questions**

#### Question 1 – Save Ekin Road Community Group

We are the Save Ekin Road community group, and we are writing to you regarding Cambridge City Council's proposals for redevelopment of Ekin Road. We are a group of 60 council tenants and leasehold and freehold residents, living in the flats, semi-detached houses, and bungalows on Ekin Road.

As done in the past, we wish to express our thoughts and concerns to you regarding the investigation work and potential development of our estate.

Since the commencement of the Council's consultation process in June 2022, Save Ekin Road has advocated for the preservation of all dwellings on the Ekin Road estate, and for the Council to pursue an "upgrade and repair" plan. This was done out of a concern that many residents may lose their homes unnecessarily and against their wishes.

In recent months, a significant amount of additional information has come to light about the conditions of some of the dwellings on the estate, and about the differing wishes, needs, and desires of the residents in different types of dwellings, in particular the differences between those in flats or in houses. This

information comes to us from a variety of sources, including the recent Marengo survey of the estate, conversations with ward councillors who have deep knowledge of the entire estate, and our own interactions with other residents in-person and on various social media platforms.

We, as a resident group, have always, and will always, advocate for what is best for all residents of the estate. No part of our campaign ever has, or ever will, be about NIMBY-ism, and we advocate for the core needs and rights of everyone. Thus, in light of this new information, Save Ekin Road now wishes to revise its stated position, to better reflect the wishes, needs, and desires of all those on Ekin Road. The position of our group is now as follows, broken up into three key requests to the Council:

1. The Cambridge City Council must, as a matter of urgency, **immediately rehouse those residents on Ekin Road who are council tenants and living in substandard, near-uninhabitable dwellings**. There are many severe cases of mould, damp and condensation on the estate, and those families need to be rehoused immediately, by direct-let. No family should be living in such conditions, and they cannot wait for the investigation works by the Council to conclude. They need to be rehoused now.
2. That the Cambridge City Council must, in whatever final plan it produces for the estate, **demolish all 72 flats on the estate and rebuild new dwellings in their place**. The conditions of many of those flats are dire. And it is clear that it is the wishes and desires of a vast majority of residents living in those flats that they want them taken down. The Council should not look to refurbish those flats, as they are beyond repair and those living in them want them demolished.
3. That the Cambridge City Council must, in whatever final plan it produces for the estate, **retain all 32 semi-detached houses on the estate**. Those houses are in good condition, and there is no need to demolish any of them. And it is clear that it is the wishes and desires of a vast majority of residents living in those houses that their houses are very dear to them, and they absolutely do not want to leave them. The Council should not look to demolish any of those houses, as to do so would be an unnecessary construction waste, and cause unnecessary social harm.

From the information we now have, the requests to demolish the flats, and retain the houses, match the needs and wishes of those in the flats and houses. And these requests are mutually compatible; we believe it to be possible to demolish all the flats while at the same time retain all the houses.

We call on the Cambridge City Council to heed these requests and carry out the necessary pre-project urgent rehousing, as well as produce a project plan that respects the differing, but mutually compatible, desires of various residents on the street. It is perfectly clear *what* must be done, and it is now in the hands of the Council to see that it *is* done. We have listened, and we have changed our approach accordingly. We hope that the Council can do likewise.

As a concerned resident group, Save Ekin road remains committed to seeing that, whatever the outcome for the estate, it is one that serves the needs of all residents. And we remain committed to working with the Council, collaboratively, to provide whatever insight and understanding might be needed to assist in the efficient running of these important project investigations.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness responded:

- i. Noted Save Ekin Road's support for the redevelopment of the flats and officers would forward the points made to the consultants completing the report (JLL).
- ii. The final JLL report would consider three options:
  1. refurbishment,
  2. partial redevelopment and
  3. full redevelopment.
- iii. It was important that the report was completed so that the council could take an overall view of the estate.
- iv. As the council had not made a decision regarding redevelopment or refurbishment it could not undertake the immediate re-housing of tenants via direct lets. Dialogue was ongoing with tenants and residents explaining what options they may have should redevelopment or refurbishment be approved.
- v. If residents had specific concerns or issues related to damp and mould exposure they should contact [Condensation@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Condensation@cambridge.gov.uk).
- vi. Looked forward to meeting as many residents as possible, including those that are part of Save Ekin Road at the next Liaison Group meeting in March.

The Executive Councillor for Communities responded:

- i. Had attended the last public meeting at Ekin Road.
- ii. Was pleased to listen to the positive discussion around new homes but grew concerned about the matter of community cohesion.
- iii. Noted comments from residents who felt their voices supporting new homes had not been heard.
- iv. Noted advice from the Community Grants Team to ward councillors

about exploring community activities for Ekin Road residents going forward.

- v. Noted that an Ekin Community Facebook and WhatsApp Group had been formed.

#### Supplementary Question

- i. Remained concerned about the conditions of some of the properties / flats at Ekin Road. There was a time issue regarding the proposals for the area taking into consideration the damp, mould and condensation issues in the flats. Refurbishment / redevelopment of the flats would not happen quick enough. The East Barnwell development was not due for completion until 2028, so could not see how this development could be utilised for re-housing.
- ii. Asked the Council to re-house those people living in affected flats at Ekin Road.
- iii. The Save Ekin Road Community Group had been in existence for over 18months, and they had learned a lot about the street and their priorities during that time. Hoped their change in position of supporting redevelopment of the flats, re-housing of residents in the affected flats and the retention of the houses would be welcomed.
- iv. In terms of community cohesion, every effort was being made to ensure that residents on the street were interacting well.

#### Question 2 - Agenda item 8 - Addition of Davy Road estate to 10-Year Housing Programme'

Firstly, although the tenants all received letters from Samantha Shimmon, none of the leaseholders in Brackyn Road had received letters about this by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January. This is unacceptable for several reasons. When talking to my leaseholder neighbours about it I found they hadn't heard about it and I was actually breaking this shocking news to them. The letter mentioned leaseholders and tenants so all the tenants I've spoken to assumed as I did that everyone living in the flats had received letters.

We would like an apology to the leaseholders and your assurance that everyone will be kept informed together about general information and no one will be left behind. It is not our job to communicate effectively with the leaseholders on your behalf so we'd like to know as soon as possible whom we can talk to about this if the recommendation is approved tonight? We'd like your assurance that if the member of staff changes, we'll be updated as soon as possible. Several of the residents have long-term health problems which are exacerbated by stress and at least 2 are seriously ill with life-threatening

diseases. The stress of this news is hard enough for healthy people to deal with.

Moving on, we recognise that the council must maximise its land and resources so it can build more homes for those who need them and service the ones it already has. We know our flats are old and several have some maintenance issues. However, we also feel sad that our community in Brackyn Road which we've worked hard to grow will be broken up. We'd like to know how long it might be before any plans are decided for the redevelopment and how much notice we'd get before having to move out? We understand you're probably not able to give us exact times however what's the ballpark timeline based on previous redevelopments in the city?

We're concerned about the trees and wildlife in the area. There are bats in the gardens and lots of trees which provide local wildlife with homes as well as being important to us. Will these be disturbed by the redevelopment? Will there be more cars and fewer parking spaces? We know these and other more detailed questions can probably only really be answered farther along the process however is there someone we can send them to now?

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness responded:

- i. A letter was sent to tenants and leaseholders on Tuesday 9 January. It was brought to officer's attention on Monday 15 January that 5 leaseholders at Brackyn Road had not been sent a letter. Letters to these leaseholders were sent by first-class post on Tuesday 16 January.
- ii. Calls were made to the leaseholders on 19 January to discuss the contents of the letter and to apologise for the error. Emails were also sent to ensure information had been received.
- iii. A dedicated email account had been set up [Davy.Road@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Davy.Road@cambridge.gov.uk) for residents to contact the council with any concerns. Residents could also call to speak with officers.
- iv. The Council planned to consult with residents in summer 2023. Based on the outcome of the consultation, the Council would then decide whether to bring a report to Housing Scrutiny Committee in September 2024.
- v. If a recommendation to redevelop was approved at committee, residents would be advised about timescales, which would include the process for decanting from the estate and the support available for residents.
- vi. On average, the process for residents to move from their existing home to a property of their choosing took about one year. Support would be provided throughout this process.

Supplementary Question

- i. Asked if the redevelopment plans would result in a net gain in social housing units or whether the number of houses would remain the same.

The Assistant Director Development (Place Group) responded:

- i. It was too early to provide specific details at this early stage of the process. It was hoped that the number of affordable homes on the site was increased if redevelopment was approved at any future Housing Scrutiny Committee.

### Question 3

1. Is the council aware of the recent statements by Professor Kamila Hawthorne, Chair of the Royal College of GP's <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/News/Damp-mould-exposure?>
2. Does the city council agree with her assessment of the health risks of exposure to damp and mould?
3. How many flats does the city council own on the Ekin Road estate?
4. How many of these flats are occupied and how many are vacant?
5. Can the council provide a timeline with a fixed end date for the rehousing of all the remaining council tenants from the damp and mouldy flats on Ekin Road to alternate accommodation?

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness responded:

- i. The Council was aware of Professor Hawthorne's statements and took issues relating to public health very seriously. The well-being of residents was a top priority and recognised the potential health implications linked to environmental factors such as damp and mould.
- ii. Acknowledged the importance of addressing environmental conditions that may pose risks to health and was committed to ensuring safe and healthy living environments for all residents.
- iii. The Operations Team was actively engaged in monitoring and addressing concerns relating to damp and mould within the city.
- iv. Was committed to working collaboratively with tenants and stakeholders to identify and rectify issues that may contribute to these conditions.
- v. Concerns around damp and mould should be reported to [Condensation@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Condensation@cambridge.gov.uk).

Supplementary question:

- i. Referred to an East Area Committee which took place on 7 July 2016 and noted that the Council had been awarded £70 million pounds to

- provide council housing as part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- ii. Asked why new housing was not provided and instead existing housing was being knocked down and replaced.
  - iii. Asked for a timeline for re-housing council tenants from flats on Ekin Road.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness responded:

- i. The Council owned 72 flats within the 6 blocks at the Ekin Road estate; 10 were leasehold and the remainder were in the Council rental stock.
- ii. 5 flats were currently unoccupied and were undergoing void work.
- iii. In response to the question about a timeline - a proposal would be submitted to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2024. A decant programme would depend on the outcome of the current investigations.

The Assistant Director Development (Place Group) responded:

- i. With reference to the £70 million funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority - advised that a report was taken to each Housing Scrutiny Committee updating the Committee on the progress of council houses which had been built. This funding was for the 500 council houses building programme. Details regarding each site (numbers / completions etc) was included within the report.

## **24/5/HSC Compliance Report**

This item was chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair Tenant Leaseholder Representative).

### **Matter for Decision**

The report provided an update on the compliance related activities delivered within the City Services Compliance Team, including a summary on gas, electrical, fire, lifts, legionella and asbestos.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness**

- i. Noted the progress of the compliance related work detailed within the Officer's report.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.



### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the City Services Director reference was also made to an updated report which had been published online and circulated to members in advance of the meeting and contained the most up to date information regarding compliance.

The City Services Director said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Agreed that a monthly report would be provided to the Committee regarding compliance information, and this could then be reduced once the council was in a more stable position.
- ii. A more formal Housing Leadership Board had been established which would meet monthly to review compliance standards.
- iii. With reference to the reports of damp, condensation, and mould (DCM), noted that the up-to-date figure of DCM cases was 408. Referred to the procedure officers followed for reports of DCM. Advised that information regarding the status of these cases would need to be provided outside of the meeting.
- iv. Plans for engagement with residents regarding DCM included the provision of information on the council's YouTube channel and other social media channels, leaflet drops and briefing other council Departments who engaged with the public so that they had the information to refer residents to the DCM Team when questions / issues arose.
- v. The city had been mapped to identify properties believed to be at risk of DCM and these were prioritised, checked, and investigated.

The Committee resolved by 8 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **24/6/HSC HRA Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2024/25**

Recommendations (part 1) a-k and y were chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair / Tenant Leaseholder Representative) and recommendations L-x were chaired by Councillor Robertson (Vice-Chair Councillor).

**Matter for Decision**

As part of the 2024/25 budget process, the range of assumptions upon which the HRA Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy were based were reviewed in light of the latest information available, culminating in the preparation of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

The HRA Budget-Setting Report provided an overview of the review of the key assumptions. It sets out the key parameters for the detailed recommendations and final budget proposals and is the basis for the finalisation of the 2024/25 budgets.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness**

- i. Approved that council dwellings rents for all social rented and social shared ownership properties be increased in line with government guidelines, with an increase of 7.7%, being inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2023 of 6.7%, plus 1%. Rent increases will take effect from 1 April 2024. This equates to an average rent increase of £8.69 per week.
- ii. Approved that affordable rents, inclusive of service charge, are also increased by 7.7% in line with the increase for social rents. This equates to an average rent increase of £13.05 per week.
- iii. Approved that rents for affordable shared ownership properties are increased by RPI as at January 2024, plus 0.5%, as allowed for in the lease requirements for these properties.
- iv. Approved that garage and parking space charges for 2024/25, are increased by inflation at 7.7%, in line with dwelling rents, recognising the proposal to increase garage rents at a higher rate for 2024/25 as rents were increased by lower than inflation in 2023/24. Approved any changes in charges for parking permits, with any resulting charges summarised in Section 6 of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- v. Approved the proposed service charges for Housing Revenue Account services and facilities, as shown in Appendix D of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vi. Approved the proposed leasehold administration charges for 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix D of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vii. Approved that service charges continue to be recovered at full estimated cost, as detailed in Appendix D of the HRA Budget Setting Report,

recognising that local authorities should endeavour to limit increases to inflation as measured by CPI at September 2023 (6.7%) plus 1%, wherever possible.

- viii. Approved with any amendments, the Revised Budget identified in Section 7 and Appendix E (1) of the HRA Budget Setting Report, which reflects a net reduction in the use of HRA reserves for 2023/24 of £571,010
- ix. Approved with any amendments, any Non-Cash Limit items identified in Section 7 of the HRA Budget Setting Report or shown in Appendix E (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- x. Approved with any amendments, any Savings, Increased Income, Unavoidable Revenue Bids, Reduced Income Proposals and Bids, as shown in Appendix E (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- xi. Approved the resulting Housing Revenue Account revenue budget as summarised in the Housing Revenue Account Summary Forecast 2023/24 to 2028/29 shown in Appendix G of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- xii. Delegated to the Director of Communities the setting of Affordable Rents affected by historic errors, where these have to be reduced and recalculated individually.

The Executive Councillor recommended Council:

- i. Approve the revised need to borrow over the 30-year life of the business plan, with the first instance of this anticipated to be in 2023/24, to sustain the proposed level of investment, which includes ear-marking funding for delivery of the 10 Year New Homes Programme.
- ii. Recognise that the constitution delegates Treasury Management to the Chief Finance Officer (Part 3, para 5.11), with Part 4F, C16 stating; 'All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- iii. Recognise that the decision to borrow significantly to build new homes impacts the authority's ability to set-aside resource to redeem the HRA Self-Financing debt at the point at which the loan portfolio matures, with the need to re-finance debt in the latter stages of the business plan.

- iv. Approval of capital bids, as detailed in Appendix E (3) and Appendix F of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- v. Approval of the latest Decent Homes and Other HRA Stock Investment Programme, to include re-phasing of elements of the programme between capital and revenue, as detailed in Appendix F of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vi. Approval of the latest budget sums, profiling and associated financing for all new build schemes, as detailed in Appendix F, and summarised in Appendix H, of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vii. Approval of allocation of £15,285,000 of funds from the budget ear-marked for the delivery of new homes into a scheme specific budget for Newbury Farm, in line with the scheme specific report presented as part of the committee cycle.
- viii. Approval of the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix H of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- ix. Approval of inclusion of Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure and associated grant income from 2024/25 onwards, based upon 2023/24 net grant awarded, with approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to approve an in year increase or decrease in the budget for disabled facilities grants in any year, in direct relation to any increase or decrease in the capital grant funding for this purpose, as received from the County Council through the Better Care Fund.
- x. Approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to determine the most appropriate use of any additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding, for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.
- xi. Approval of delegation to the Director of Communities to review and amend the level of fees charged by the Shared Home Improvement Agency for disabled facilities grants and repair assistance grants, in line with any recommendations made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.
- xii. Approval of delegation to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to draw down resource from the ear-marked revenue reserve or capital reserve for potential debt redemption or re-investment, for the purpose of open market land or property acquisition or new build housing development, should the need

arise, in order to meet deadlines for the use of retained right to buy receipts or to facilitate future site redevelopment.

- xiii. Approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to make any necessary technical amendments to detailed budgets in respect of recharges between the General Fund and the HRA, with any change in impact for the HRA to be reported and incorporated as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy in September or November 2024.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Finance and Business Manager. The Committee's attention was drawn to an additional recommendation y) 'To delegate to the Director of Communities the setting of Affordable Rents affected by historic errors, where these have to be reduced and recalculated individually' which had been published online and circulated to the Committee in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Porrer introduced the Liberal Democrat Amendment to the 2024/24 Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting Report.

Councillor Tong introduced the Green Group's commentary on the Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting Report.

The Head of Finance and Business Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The council can use all of the 'Right to Buy' receipts but this funding can only meet 40% of any new dwelling. The Council then had to fund the difference. The Council was doing well at re-investing the Right to Buy receipts and the on-going development programme anticipated using this funding by the end of next year.
- ii. Right to buy sales were around 120-130 properties per year historically but levels had reduced to around 30-40 properties per year in recent years. There was an increase in sales when Central Government increased the discount value that tenants could receive and there was also an increase in 2016 (under the Welfare Reform Act) when some

- tenants exercised a right to buy as they may have been required to pay market levels of rent if they earned high incomes.
- iii. Void properties would be used as temporary accommodation where it was appropriate to do so. The council was seeking to reduce the time properties were void to try and get properties back into circulation as soon as it was possible to do so.
  - vi. It was hoped with new software and better resident engagement that residents would feel empowered and able to report repairs and maintenance requests.
  - vii. For residents affected by the rent issue, advised that due to the procedure that needed to be followed the correct rent would be charged from April 2024. A report detailing progress on this matter would be brought back to the June Committee as the March Committee was too early for the information to be provided.
  - viii. The transformation budget would be used initially to fund compliance and the rent issue.
  - ix. Sites which were owned by the Council and considered for redevelopment could provide 100% affordable housing as there was no 'land purchase cost' which needed to be taken in account as part of any viability assessment for development. Where land was bought and redeveloped, market housing may need to be provided to make the development (including affordable housing) viable. Planning Policy stipulated the 40% affordable housing requirement. Any restrictions from grant funding also needed to be taken into consideration. Some Housing Revenue Account (HRA) sites may also need to consider delivery of market housing to ensure viability.
  - x. The capacity of the Resident Engagement Service would be reviewed following changes in regulation of social housing which meant that Local Authorities would now be regulated by the Social Housing Regulator.
  - xi. With reference to a question regarding the funding referred to in recommendation 1.4b of the Liberal Democrat Budget amendment commented that at the time the budget amendment was drafted it wasn't known how much grant funding Homes England would provide. However an update had been provided to Committee advising them that the council had just been notified that they were successful in securing £3 million grant funding from Homes England.

The Liberal Democrat Group amendments were voted on and recorded separately (see the second circulation agenda paragraph 1.3).

1.3 a) A proposal to include a revenue bid of £54,990 per annum to employ a dedicated Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) Surveyor on a 2-year fixed

term contract. The post would work proactively with data on existing repair requests from tenants and from void inspections to future proof the housing stock across the city against cases of damp, mould and condensation. They would deploy mitigation measures to ensure that if one house experiences a problem, the knowledge is rolled out to all similar stock types before future problems arise and ensure that operatives are empowered to treat the root cause and not just the effects of DMC. This post would include a flexible contract, covering later weekdays or Saturday mornings to allow tenants more options to book work out of working hours.

The amendment was lost by 4 votes in favour to 6 against with 1 abstention.

1.3 b) A proposal to include a revenue bid of £48,270 to employ a Housing Maintenance Improvement Officer on a 2-year fixed term contract to support the Service Improvement Manager and DMC Surveyor, reviewing and improving processes, increasing operational efficiency and monitoring and dealing with complaints. This post would include a flexible contract, with some working later weekdays or Saturday mornings to allow tenants more options to make contact out of working hours.

The amendment was lost by 3 votes in favour to 8 against.

1.3 c) A proposal to include a revenue bid of £41,300 per annum to employ an additional Asset Management Officer for a period of 10 years, dedicated to working with tenants to ensure that access is granted to allow decent homes work to take place and the current backlog caught up. The post would address the access issues leading to so many refusals, with tenant engagement and feedback a priority, plus pulling together data to produce regular reports of why access is refused. This post would include a flexible contract, with some working later weekdays or Saturday mornings to allow tenants more options to make contact out of working hours.

The amendment was lost by 3 votes in favour to 8 against.

1.3 d) A proposal to allocate £50,000 in 2024/25 to fund overtime and any other initiatives considered appropriate by officers to ensure that the resources currently reallocated to resolve the urgent compliance issues within the council's housing stock are replaced, and not taken from the transformation budget in future. This will ensure that existing tenants awaiting responsive repairs and planned maintenance work are not disadvantaged further.

The amendment was lost by 3 votes in favour to 8 against.

As the recommendations set out in the Liberal Democrat budget amendment paragraph 1.3 were lost the capital funding set out in paragraph 1.4 to fund the initiatives set out in paragraph 1.3 were not voted upon.

The Committee resolved:

- i. Unanimously to endorse the recommendations a-g and y.
- ii. By 8 votes in favour to 0 against and 3 abstentions to endorse recommendations h – k.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

The following vote was chaired by Councillor Robertson following agenda item 24/9/HSC.

The Committee resolved:

- i. By 5 votes in favour and 0 against with 3 abstentions to endorse recommendations L – n.
- ii. By 5 votes in favour and 0 against with 3 abstentions to endorse recommendations o – s.
- iii. Unanimously to endorse recommendations t – x.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **24/7/HSC Homelessness Prevention Grants to Agencies 2024-25**

This item was chaired by Councillor Pounds.

#### **Matter for Decision**

The report detailed the annual bid round for grants made to organisations providing homelessness prevention services. It provides an overview of the process, the grant eligibility criteria and the budget. Appendix 1 detailed the applications received with recommendations for 2024-25 awards.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness**



- i. Approved the award of homelessness prevention grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Housing Services Manager (Housing Advice).

The Housing Services Manager (Housing Advice) and the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. On the grant application form, applicants needed to state how much funding they were applying for and also any funding they were receiving from other sources.
- ii. Noted the comment that the modular homes appeared to be expensive to manage and commented that funding two project workers was a more effective way to support this client group compared with the cost to support rough sleepers.
- iii. Confirmed that all applications except for two had been awarded the minimum amount of funding requested and this did not prevent all the projects proceeding.

The Committee resolved by 7 votes to 0 with 1 abstention to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**24/8/HSC Update on New Build Council Housing Delivery**

Councillor Pounds left the meeting before the consideration of this item and Councillor Robertson chaired the meeting from this agenda item.

**Matter for Decision**

The report provided a regular quarterly update on progress for the City Council's new housing delivery and development programme.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness**

- i. Noted the continued progress on the delivery of the approved housing programme.
- ii. Approved the inclusion of 2-28 Davy Road, 1-8a Brackyn Road, and Davy Road Garages 1-32 into the 10yr programme, as an estate under redevelopment consideration. Members will be consulted prior to the commencement of survey work and prior to the commencement of consultation with residents.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director Development (Place).

The Assistant Director Development (Place) said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Confirmed that the information which would be published on the council's website regarding the housing development programme would be an abridged form of this officer report and it would not replace the reports being brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee.
- ii. Acknowledged the distress caused to Davey Road residents and apologised for this. An engagement and communication plan was being prioritised and meetings would take place with residents to provide them with information about next steps in the process.
- iii. The proposal to include Davey Road and Brackyn Road within the housing redevelopment plan was because of the condition of the properties. Advised that the urgent works regarding fire / damp work would be undertaken. If the recommendation to include these properties within the redevelopment programme, then an indicative timeline on next steps and an engagement plan would be provided to residents.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **24/9/HSC Purchase of new affordable housing - Newbury Farm, Wort's Causeway**

This item was chaired by Councillor Robertson.

#### **Matter for Decision**

The Newbury Farm site was being developed by the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) on the south-east fringes of Cambridge. The report sought approval for a capital budget to purchase 60 affordable homes from CIP as Council homes.

#### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness**

- i. Approved the purchase of 60 new Council homes at Newbury Farm, Worts' Causeway and delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Development (Place Group) to approve contract terms with CIP in respect of this transaction.
- ii. Delegate Authority to the Assistant Director of Development (Place Group) to agree rental tenures in line with Council Policy and planning consents for the Newbury Farm Affordable Housing.
- iii. Approve a total budget of £15,285,000 to enable the development of 60 homes at Newbury Farm, Worts' Causeway.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

#### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

#### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director Development (Place).

The Assistant Director Development (Place) said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Advised that the outline planning application would have secured a financial contribution for education.
- ii. Advised that homes were planned to be built to 'future home' standards rather than 'Passiv haus' standard. It was hoped that Homes England funding would be awarded for this development. Water consumption was expected to be restricted to 99 litres per person per day.
- iii. Would check whether the play equipment provided on site would be accessible play equipment.

The Committee resolved by 7 votes to 0 with 1 abstention to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**24/10/HSC To Note Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness**

**10a Homelessness Decision Reviews**

The decision was noted.

The meeting ended at 8.36 pm

**CHAIR**