



## Lewes District Council

### To all Members of the Housing Working Party

A meeting of the **Housing Working Party** will be held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, High Street, Lewes** on **Wednesday, 18 April 2018** at **14:00** which you are requested to attend.

***Please note the venue for this meeting at  
Lewes House, High Street, Lewes, BN7 2LX***

This meeting may be filmed, recorded or broadcast by any person or organisation. Anyone wishing to film or record must notify the Chair prior to the start of the meeting. Members of the public attending the meeting are deemed to have consented to be filmed or recorded, as liability for this is not within the Council's control.

09/04/2018

Catherine Knight  
Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services

### Agenda

- 1 Minutes (page 3)**  
To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017 (attached herewith for information)
- 2 Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Substitute Councillors/Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Terms of Reference (page 7)**  
To consider the Report of the Head of Homes First (attached herewith)
- 4 New Developments**  
To receive a presentation by the Head of Homes First
- 5 Properties in the Development Pipeline**  
To receive a presentation by the HEDP Development Project Manager
- 6 The Homeless Reduction Act**  
To receive a presentation by the Housing Needs and Standards Lead

**7 Any other business**

**8 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Housing Working Party will be called as necessary

For further information about items appearing on this Agenda, please contact  
Zoe Downton at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, East Sussex  
BN7 1AB Telephone 01273 471600

**Distribution:** Councillors R Maskell (Chair), M Chartier, S Davy, J Denis, R O'Keeffe,  
S Saunders and R Turner



## Housing Working Party

**Minutes** of a Meeting of the **Housing Working Party** held in the **Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday, 6 February 2017** at 2.00pm

**Present:**

Councillors R Maskell (Chair), M Chartier, S Davy, B Giles, T Rowell, S Saunders and R Turner

**Officers Attending:**

A Chequers, Head of Customer Service  
Z Downton, Committee Officer  
J Perkins, Housing Needs Manager

**Also Present:**

Councillor S Murray, Lewes District Council  
J Langley, Tenants' Representative  
D Twitchen, Tenants' Representative

### Minutes

**1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2 Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Joanna Carter, Lewes District Council, who had been invited to attend the meeting.

**3 The Council's duties to asylum seekers and refugees**

The Committee received Report No 33/17 which provided an explanation of the Council's duties to asylum seekers, refugees and unaccompanied minors and which sought to clarify the responsibilities of the Home Office and Local Authorities when assisting asylum seekers and refugees.

The Housing Needs Manager drew the Working Party's attention to the following definitions, as set out within the Report:

- As detailed under paragraphs 3 to 5 of the Report, asylum seekers were defined as being over 18 years old or families with children that came to the UK seeking asylum and fleeing their country of origin outside of the

### Action

European Union. Contrary to some myths, Local Authorities were not responsible for housing asylum seekers with any type of housing, including social housing, or providing support. Support was provided by organisations commissioned by the Home Office.

- Paragraph 6 outlined that unaccompanied children were asylum seekers if under the age of 18 years old. Lewes District Council did not have a responsibility to accommodate or support unaccompanied children as this was the responsibility of East Sussex County Council (ESCC). As at January 2017, there were 24 children who had been accommodated in the care of ESCC and would remain in care until they were 18 years old.
- Refugees had completed the asylum process and had been granted definite or indefinite leave to remain in the UK, as explained under paragraphs 7 and 8. Once granted refugee status they had the same rights as British citizens and were free to move around the country and were not required to inform the Home Office or any other organisation of their whereabouts. Refugees had no automatic right to access social housing but their housing and support needs would be assessed in the same way as any other British citizen. The Housing Needs Manager clarified that refugees did not need a local connection to settle in an area in order to get housing assistance but would have to prove their eligibility, the same as any British citizen, to gain that assistance.
- Paragraphs 9 and 10 reported that all Local Authorities had been asked by the Government to accommodate a certain number of Syrian refugees through the Resettlement Programme. The Council had pledged to accommodate and resettle 40 individuals by 2020. Local Authorities were expected to locate suitable accommodation and were allocated a family that would match the accommodation.

Further to a request by Ms Twitchen, Tenants' Representative, the Committee Officer would send to her a copy of the presentation slides used by the Housing Needs Manager, a copy of which is contained in the Minute Book.

Cttee  
Officer

The Chair thanked the Housing Needs Manager for her Report and clear explanations.

Resolved:

- 3.1** That Report No 33/17 be noted.

#### **4 The Syrian Resettlement Programme**

The Committee received Report No 34/17 which provided councillors with an update on the Government's Syrian Resettlement Programme.

In September 2015, the UK Government had made a commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian people who were currently displaced and living in refugee camps in countries neighbouring Syria.

Local Authorities in the UK were asked to make commitments that would help meet that target. The District and Borough Councils in East Sussex had

committed to resettle up to 260 individuals by 2020 as part of the Programme. Lewes District Council had committed to accommodating 40 out of the 260 individuals.

The Working Group queried how the exact number of individuals had been determined for the Council. In response, the Head of Customer Services explained that he understood the figure, set by East Sussex County Council, had been based on a percentage of the total population of the Lewes District. He would get back to members of the Working Party with the actual calculations.

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Discussion moved to the funding behind the Resettlement Programme. Paragraph 5 of the Report outlined that central Government would provide tapered funding over a 5 year period to Local Authorities that had signed up to the Programme, with an initial large payment of £8.5k per individual in the first year of resettlement. The Housing Needs Manager added that the first amount could be claimed by a Local Authority once a refugee had landed in the country, and funding could be claimed up to 3 times per year thereafter. She explained that the principle of the Programme was that the level of support would decrease over time and those people would not necessarily require 5 complete years of support.

The Working Party also noted that the Council had contributed £4,350 towards funding 'Syrian Coordinators' posts. It had been identified that the Programme would require dedicated resources and those 12-month posts would assist all Local Authorities with the complex arrangements of resettlement.

The Housing Needs Manager updated the Working Party on the progress the Council had made in resettling families. She informed councillors that, as at January 2017, the Council had resettled three families (23 individuals) in Seaford and Newhaven. She also highlighted the initial challenges, the main hurdle being the language barrier and the high level of translation costs in the first month of resettlement.

The Housing Needs Manager commended the exceptional and well organised volunteer network in Lewes District that had come forward in support of the Resettlement Programme.

In response to a councillor's question, the Housing Needs Manager clarified that Syrian refugees were granted 5 years leave to remain in the UK. After 5 years they would need to reapply for their refugee status and right to remain in the country.

Resolved:

- 4.1 That Report No 34/17 be noted.

## 5 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

- 5.1 That it be noted that the next meeting of the Working Party be called as necessary.

All to  
note

The meeting ended at 2:45pm.

R Maskell  
Chair

**Agenda Item No:** 3  
**Report Title:** Terms of Reference  
**Report To:** Housing Working Party      **Date:** 18 April 2018  
**Lead Councillor:** Councillor Maskell  
**Ward(s) Affected:** All  
**Report By:** Head of Homes First  
**Contact Officer(s):** Andy Chequers

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**Purpose of Report:**

To propose a revised remit for the Housing Working Party

**Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 To consider the remit set out below
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**Reasons for Recommendations**

- 1 To enable the Cabinet to consider strategic proposals for the provision of affordable housing.

**Information**

- 2 A report was presented to Cabinet on 08 February 2008 to establish a Housing Working Party. (Attached at Appendix A)

- 2.1 The original remit of the working party was primarily focused on the provision of new affordable housing.

Whilst this is still a major priority, the remit has informally expanded over the last ten years to include wider housing issues. This is as a result to both the higher profile of the housing agenda recently and new wide ranging legislation that has required and will require a change in the way we work and our continued, changing and varied priorities.

**Proposed New Remit**

- 3 The remit set out in italics below is proposed for consideration:

*That the Housing Working Party (HWP) be relaunched.*

*That the Working Party includes the Lead Councillor for Housing as Chair and six other councillors \* selected by the Cabinet and a representative from Tenants Of Lewes District (TOLD). \*This would be according to proportional party representation.*

*Any other Councillors may attend and can speak with permission of the chair but will not have voting rights.*

*The HWP would continue to be a task and finish group to discuss various matters of housing across the Homes First operations of Neighbourhood Management, Repairs and improvements, Housing Needs and Standards and to include new development and the provision of new affordable housing.*

*The remit of the Working Party to be:*

- 1. To consider the present and future needs of the District for affordable housing.*
- 2. To consider new legislation, best practice and emerging themes to ensure that Homes First is equipped to deliver the services required.*
- 3. To reach conclusions on the steps that the Council can take to improve the Housing Service.*
- 4. To make specific recommendations on the action to be taken, the timescale for that action and the resources that will be required.*

#### **Financial Appraisal**

- 4** The costs of the Working Party can be met from existing budgets

#### **Background Papers**

- 5** Report to LDC Cabinet 12 February 2008 ( attached as appendix A)

**Agenda Item No:** **Report No:**  
**Report Title:** **Housing Working Party**  
**Report To:** **Cabinet** **Date:** **12 February 2008**  
**Lead Councillor:** **Councillors Gardiner and Saunders**  
**Ward(s) Affected:** **All**  
**Report By:** **Chief Executive**  
**Contact Officer(s):** **John Crawford**

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**Purpose of Report:**

To propose a remit for the Housing Working Party

**Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 To consider the remit set out below

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**Reasons for Recommendations**

- 1 To enable the Cabinet to consider strategic proposals for the provision of affordable housing.

**Information**

- 2 This report follows up minute 167 of Cabinet on 9 January 2008 (copy attached as Appendix A) where officers were requested to prepare a report relating to the suggested remit of a Housing Working Party to carry out a defined set of work on a "task and finish " basis. The remit set out in italics below is proposed for Cabinet's consideration:

*That a Working Party be established to report back to the Cabinet before July 31 2008*

*That the Working Party include the Lead Councillor for Housing and the Lead Councillor for Planning and five other councillors selected by the Cabinet.*

*The remit of the Working Party to be:*

- 1. To consider the present and future needs of the District for affordable housing.*
- 2. To explore relevant research material and best practice in the provision of affordable housing amongst district councils and housing associations in England.*

3. *In particular, to take account of the following matters:*
  - a. *What is included/specified in the Supplementary Planning Guidance that is relevant to the provision of affordable housing.*
  - b. *The criteria for determining developer contributions and commuted sums.*
  - c. *The evidence base to support policy development and site specific negotiations until new policies can be adopted.*
  - d. *Arrangements to achieve the best possible development team approach for the negotiation of affordable housing with developers.*
4. *To reach conclusions on the steps that the Council can take to improve the provision of affordable housing in the District.*
5. *To make specific recommendations on the action to be taken, the timescale for that action and the resources that will be required.*

**Financial Appraisal**

- 3 The costs of the Working Party can be met from existing budgets

**Environmental Implications**

- 4 I have completed the Environmental Implications questionnaire and this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report.

**Risk Management Implications**

- 5 There are no new risk management implications

**Background Papers**

- 6 Minute 167 of LDC Cabinet, 9 January 2008 ( attached as appendix A)