

Housing Working Party

Minutes of meeting held in The Warren Room, Lewes House, High Street, Lewes, BN7 2LX on 17 October 2018 at 1.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Ron Maskell (Chair)

Councillors Sharon Davy, Richard Turner, Simon Barnes and Alex Lambert

Officers in attendance:

Andy Chequers (Head of Homes First), Bill McCafferty (Functional Lead for Thriving Communities), Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer) and Jazmin Victory (Committee Officer)

Also in attendance:

Debbie Twitchen, Tenants' Representative, Tenants of Lewes District (Chair)

6 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

7 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute councillors/declarations of interest

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mike Chartier, Johnny Denis, Ruth O'Keeffe and Steve Saunders. Councillor Barnes declared he was acting as substitute for Councillor O'Keeffe and Councillor Lambert declared she was acting as substitute for Councillor Saunders.

An apology for absence had also been received from John Langley, Tenants' Representative, Tenants of Lewes District (Vice-Chair).

8 Properties in the development pipeline

The HEDP Development Project Manager gave his apologies to the Committee, as he was unable to attend the meeting.

Resolved:

That the HEDP Development Project Manager provide a written update to the Committee in respect of projects in the housing development pipeline across Lewes District, prior to its next meeting.

9 Universal Credit

The Committee received a presentation by the Functional Lead for Thriving Communities which provided an update on the roll-out of the full Universal Credit service across Lewes District.

The Chair of Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) requested that the Functional Lead for Thriving Communities provide a brief written summary of the presentation to be later published in a newsletter distributed to the tenants of Lewes District. The Functional Lead for Thriving Communities agreed that he would provide a brief written summary for the newsletter.

The Chair of TOLD queried what happened when a person of working age who applied for and was approved for Universal Credit reached pension age. The Functional Lead for Thriving Communities replied that once a person reached pension age, the person would be removed from the Universal Credit scheme.

The Committee queried whether the Council had highlighted residents within Lewes District who may have difficulty applying for Universal Credit. The Head of Homes First replied that the Council were aware of some residents who may have difficulty applying for Universal Credit, and that members of his team were equipped with Wi-Fi enabled tablets which they could use to go into the community and assist applicants with the process.

The Chair of TOLD highlighted that members of the organisation had received training in respect of Universal Credit, which had helped TOLD assist residents who had issues filling out forms when applying for Universal Credit. She further highlighted that TOLD had confidence that Lewes District Council had done everything it could in respect of assisting tenants with filling out forms for Universal Credit.

Resolved:

That the contents of the presentation be noted.

10 Housing Standards

The Committee received a presentation by the Head of Homes first in respect of housing needs and standards across Lewes District.

The Committee thanked the Head of Homes First and the Senior Specialist Advisor for Housing Needs and Standards for all their hard work.

Resolved:

That the contents of the presentation be noted.

11 Date of next meeting

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the Housing Working Party be held in January 2019, on a date later to be agreed in consultation with the Chair, officers and members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 2.20 pm.

Councillor Ron Maskell (Chair)