

CABINET COMMITTEE: HOUSING

Tuesday, 21 March 2023

Attendance:

Councillors
Ferguson (Chairperson)

Gordon-Smith

Power

Non-voting invited councillors

Councillors Batho and Horrill

Non-voting invited TACT representatives

Mr D Chafe and Mr D Light

Apologies for absence

Councillors Cutler and Kurn (non-voting invited councillors)

Deputy members:

Councillor Laming (non-voting invited councillor)

Other members in attendance:

Councillor McLean

Others in attendance:

Mrs L Mellish (TACT)

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received as noted above.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Horrill declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in response of CAB3393(H) as her husband was a board member of the Trinity Centre.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Michele Price (The Beacon) spoke regarding report CAB3393(H) and her reports are summarised under the relevant minute below.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 February 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

5. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Ferguson announced that the council had received a new government grant of over £2.7m to assist with proposals to help house refugees within the district at risk of homelessness. It was proposed that an additional 17 new homes be created by buying back former HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) and reinstating them as family homes.

Councillor Ferguson also reported that, alongside the council's Cost of Living grants scheme and partnership with Warmer Homes, it was possible to offer a wider group of residents in partnership with the ECO4 scheme support to introduce energy efficiency measures in their homes. This would provide further help to those impacted by the on-going high cost of living.

6. **NEW HOMES PROGRAMME UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Head of New Homes Delivery gave a presentation which is available on the council's [website](#) and responded to questions and comments raised by members on the following:

- (a) The process for checking new properties to minimise any problems before they were let.
- (b) Confirmed that the council was still in discussions with Homes England regarding the potential for accessing additional funding.
- (c) Confirmed that discussions were ongoing with CALA homes and the County Council regarding the provision of an extra care home at Kings Barton. The requirement for particularly careful consideration of the orientation of the scheme with the rest of the development site was highlighted.
- (d) The possible use of surplus phosphate credits.
- (e) The anticipated timescale for completion of the Winnall scheme, noting that there was the possibility that difficulties experienced on site due to inclement weather conditions might delay completion of the scheme until early 2024.

7. **PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS GRANT SPENDING PLAN 2023/24**
(CAB3393(H))

Councillor Ferguson introduced the report and emphasised the good work undertaken around homelessness prevention which had been acknowledged by an external consultant. The report proposed a spending plan as detailed in paragraph 12.18, in addition to the award of core grants to both Trinity Winchester and The Beacon.

Michele Price (Chief Executive, The Beacon) spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Ms Price thanked the council for the ongoing support for The Beacon, including the additional funding proposed in the report. She also welcomed the findings of the consultant of the benefits of the council working in partnership with The Beacon. She outlined the work currently undertaken by The Beacon and the possible plans for future improvements to services offered.

Councillor Ferguson thanked Ms Price for her support and recognised the close working partnership with the council.

The Corporate Head of Housing and the Housing Options Manager responded to members' questions on the following:

- (a) Explained that The Beacon and Trinity Winchester were specifically mentioned as they were the council's core partners, but the council also funded and worked in partnership with a number of other partners.
- (b) The future role of the outreach worker.
- (c) Confirmed that the outcomes of both core partners services would be monitored, including with regard to ensuring the funding was allocated appropriately. The change to the Homelessness Team being responsible for allocating these grants was welcomed.
- (d) Confirmed that discussions were ongoing with Southern Health regarding the provision of mental health support.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the award of homelessness prevention grants to statutory, voluntary and community organisations for 2023-2024 be approved as set out at paragraph 12.13 of report CAB3393(H).
2. That the Homeless Prevention Grant Spending Plan 2023-24 be approved as set out in paragraph 12.13 of the report to support all detailed homeless prevention activities.
3. That £216,466 of the Homeless Prevention Grant reserve which has resulted from underspends in previous financial years, as outlined in cabinet report CAB3340, be approved to be allocated to support the services effected by Hampshire County Council's (HCC) social inclusion cuts and to fund the Strategic Core Grants to Trinity Winchester and The Beacon.
4. That the same grant allocation of the Homeless Prevention Grant spend for 2024/25 be approved, and authority be delegated to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing to make minor changes to year 2 of the spending plan.

8. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY**

(CAB3375(H))

Councillor Ferguson introduced the report and drew members' attention to proposed amendments to the recommendations, including the addition of a new recommendation 4. The amendments were circulated to all those present at the meeting and agreed as set out under the resolution below.

The Corporate Head of Housing responded to members' questions on the following:

- (a) Whether it was possible to ensure registered provider houses receiving disabled adaptations were retained for future use for this purpose.
- (b) The potential uses for the hospital discharge support grant.
- (c) The proposals for ensuring the system for the checking of private sector housing was robust and the importance of ensuring good communication to the public of the availability of this service.
- (d) The systems in place to ensure regular inspections of park homes.
- (e) The rationale behind the proposals to introduce a fee structure as set out in paragraph 11.14.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy for 2023-2028 as set out in Appendix A of report CAB3375(H) be approved.
2. That the proposed fee structure for Housing Act and Mobile Home Act notices detailed in paragraph 11.14 of the report be approved.
3. That the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) policy for 2023-2025 as set out in Appendix B be approved (subject to recommendation 4 below) and in particular note the new changes:
 - Introduction of new discretionary grants in the form of Welfare, Heating, Relocation and Top Up grant
 - Approve that the discretionary grant level is capped at a maximum of £100k
 - Approve that any Local Land Charge placed on a property for discretionary grants will have no expiry date and the charge will be an interest free loan.
 - To approve the revised formula for the client's contribution towards the DFG above the discretionary and mandatory amounts as outlined in paragraph 14.9 and Appendix C of this report.
 - That the better care fund reserve is utilised to fund an additional Disabled Facilities Case Officer to accelerate the support provided via Disabled Facilities Grants.
4. That authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer and Strategic Director with responsibility for Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Members with responsibility for Finance and Housing, to approve

the principles of and process for the issuing the charges under the DFG policy as an interest free loan.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.40 am

Chairperson