

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON**

28 November 2017

7.30 - 8.39 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Bob Davis (Chair)
Councillor David Carter (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Joel Charles
Councillor Tony Edwards
Councillor Stefan Mullard
Councillor Lanie Shears

Officers

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance
Viv Hales, Sheltered Housing Manager
Andrew Murray, Head of Housing
Jo Maskell, Governance Support Officer

33. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

34. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

35. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

36. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

37. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

38. **RESPONSES OF THE CABINET TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

39. **REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING (PHASE 2) - FINAL REPORT**

Following the completion of Phase 1 of the review on sheltered housing, the Committee received the final report on Phase 2, which was comprised of a longer term service appraisal and included a five year financial plan. A summary of the review, which supported the presentation, was tabled.

The Committee considered the various proposals which aimed to provide an effective framework for balancing the Council's priorities as a landlord, whilst subject to reducing resources from the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.

It was noted that there were no details yet about a new funding proposal announced by the Government, which had been categorised as Supported Housing and was due to be implemented in April 2020. Members of the Committee were keen to learn more about this initiative and to be given an opportunity to feed into any formal consultation process.

Officers were thanked for this comprehensive report.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to the Cabinet that the proposals detailed in paragraphs 15 to 31 of the report, be adopted.

40. **REVIEW OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN HARLOW - SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee received a scoping report for a review on the implications arising from the recent introduction of Universal Credits in Harlow.

The methods for gathering evidence were discussed and likely organisations for inclusion in the process suggested, as well as a protocol for interviewing local claimants due to the sensitivities involved.

Whilst the Committee recognised the value of interviewing local claimants, in order to get a true picture from as wide a cross-section of witnesses as possible, it was aware that care needed to be taken in the approach to these interviews. It was agreed that a set of previously agreed questions should be used for this process and identical questions posed to all claimants.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the terms of reference and the scope for the review, as set out in the report, be agreed subject to the deletion of 'and therefore cannot take enact any findings or recommendations resulting from the review' from the second paragraph of 'Barriers/dangers/risk' row of the table;
- (b) agreement on a set of interview questions to be posed to claimants, be sought from members of the Committee, prior to the interviews.

41. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee received a report summarising its work plan for 2017/18 and agreed to add a review on social mobility.

Members of the Committee suggested a review of social mobility within Harlow, in order to enhance and optimise life chances for young people in the town.

RESOLVED that

(a) the work plan is noted;

(b) a review of social mobility be added to the work plan.

42. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

43. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE