

COUNCIL
THURSDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2013
MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION

CABINET
WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2013

**27. Swindon Borough Council Housing Tenancy Strategy
(Minute for Confirmation)**

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery) and the Head of Housing submitted a joint report concerning a proposed Housing Tenancy Strategy that would set out the principles on which social housing in Swindon should be allocated in future, and that would be used to inform the development of a new Housing Allocations Policy for the Borough.

Councillor Richard Hurley, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery), referred to the necessity for the Council to adopt a Housing Tenancy Strategy at this time. He advised on the discussions that had taken place with tenants' representatives on the principles included within the proposed strategy, and on how the strategy would be used to guide the preparation of a new Housing Allocations Policy for the Council. He explained that the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities more freedom with regard to types of tenancies and how this would enable the Council to get the best use of its Housing stock and ensure that it served those most in Housing need. He emphasised that the proposed changes to tenancies would not apply to existing tenants or those seeking supported housing.

Councillor Jim Grant, Leader of the Opposition, asked why the Council was seeking to adopt a Tenancy Strategy at this time when it had yet to adopt a Housing Strategy. Why also was there no mention of affordable rents in the Strategy and what were the benefits of fixed term tenancies?

Councillor Hurley explained that that the first two issues involved wider aspects of Housing and would be the subject of forthcoming reports to the Cabinet. He believed that the principles established in the proposed Tenancy Strategy would inform those subsequent reports. The most significant advantage of fixed term tenancies was that they enabled the Council to better target its limited social housing stock to those most in housing need. Currently there was no limitation on who could apply to go onto the Council's Housing Waiting List. This strategy aimed to help those who most needed social housing.

Councillor Grant referred to the Council's record of building social housing. He asked how the Council would determine who could afford to buy their own home. Councillor Hurley referred to the contents of the Strategy document itself and that the wider issues of housing provision would be addressed in the forthcoming Housing Strategy.

Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability, referred to the Council's long standing policy of seeking 30% of affordable housing in developments. He also commented on the reduction in house building that had occurred as a result of the recession.

Councillor Brian Mattock, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, highlighted the consultation that had already taken place and that to be carried out on a new Housing Allocations Policy. This provided the opportunity for the Council to be aware of the views of its tenants.

Resolved – (1) That the Council adopt the Swindon Housing Tenancy Strategy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the joint report.

(2) That, subject to Council approval, the Head of Housing be authorised to prepare a Housing Allocations Policy based on it.

(3) That it be noted that the existing Housing Allocations Policy will remain in place until such time as the new Housing Allocations Policy is agreed.

(4) That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery), be authorised to undertake a consultation to inform the proposed Housing Allocations Policy and the proposed revised policy be presented to the Cabinet and Council in October and November 2013.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2013

47. Local Government Ombudsman Review 2013

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a joint report setting out the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review for Swindon for 2012/13.

The Chair welcomed the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review, and highlighted the key achievements and areas for review referred to in paragraph 3.3 and 3.6 of the joint report. He highlighted that there had again been a reduction in the total number of complaints investigated and that there had been no cases of maladministration found by the Ombudsman involving the Council in 2012/13.

Resolved – **That the Council be recommended to –**

- **Note and welcome the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review for 2012/13.**
- **Request that Group Directors and Directors take steps to ensure that officers within their Directorate provide an urgent, appropriate and comprehensive response to any Ombudsman investigation and that**

steps are taken to ensure that all officers are aware of the timescale required for responding to the Local Government Ombudsman.

- **Note the changes with regard to Housing Landlord Complaints.**

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.

LICENSING COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 1 AUGUST 2013

17. The Establishments of Street Markets in Swindon Town Centre

The Committee received (a) a report of the Head of Public Protection and StreetSmart setting out a proposed policy for Street Markets operating in Swindon Town Centre following confirmation by Council of Minute 12(2) of this Committee at its meeting held on 18th July 2013, and (b) a proposed fee structure tabled at the meeting.

Resolved – (1) That the report and its contents be noted.

(2) That the Street Trading Policy as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Public Protection and StreetSmart be approved subject to Bullet point 1 of paragraph 4.1 of the policy being amended to read: “Street markets within one area will be limited to one per calendar month (this is in addition to any planned Farmers Markets and any Christmas Market which shall be exempt from this policy”.

(3) That the proposed fee structure tabled at the meeting be approved.

(4) That the Head of Public Protection and StreetSmart be authorised, in consultation with the Chair, to vary the Street Market Policy or Swindon Town Centre Street Market Fee Structure, as set out in the report, should this prove necessary for the effective establishment of a Street Market in Swindon Town Centre.

(5) That Council be recommended to approve that the Head of Public Protection and StreetSmart be given delegated authority to vary the Swindon Town Centre Street Market Fee Structure, in consultation with the Chair of the Licensing Committee, should this prove necessary for the effective operation of a Street Market in Swindon Town Centre.