

## Housing and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Housing and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission held on Thursday 28 January 2021 at 6.30 pm (Online virtual meeting).

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)  
Councillor Radha Burgess  
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE  
Councillor Jon Hartley  
Councillor Damian O'Brien  
Councillor Jane Salmon (Reserve)

### **OTHER MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Alice Macdonald, Cabinet Member for Communities and Equalities  
Councillor Leo Pollak, Cabinet Member for Housing

**OFFICER SUPPORT:** Everton Roberts, Head of Overview and Scrutiny (Acting)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hamish McCallum.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The commission noted that Councillor Damian O'Brien had replaced Councillor Humaira Ali as voting member on the commission.

The commission also noted the intention for Councillor Damian O'Brien to replace Councillor Hamish McCallum as vice-chair of the commission following consideration by overview and scrutiny committee.

### **CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS**

Those Members listed as present were confirmed as the voting members for the meeting.

## **2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

There were no additional late items. The chair informed the meeting that Supplemental agenda No. 1 contained the cabinet report on Empty Homes Action Plan and Supplemental Agenda No. 2 contained the report Update on Implementation of Resident Participation.

Comments from the Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO) in respect of the implementation of resident participation proposals was circulated at the meeting.

## **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

## **4. MINUTES**

It was reported that the minutes of the last meeting were still to be finalised and would therefore need to be deferred to the next meeting.

## **VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**

At this juncture the chair indicated that he would take items 7, 8 and 9 before items 5 and 6 to enable cabinet members who were attending other meetings, time to join the commission meeting.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRUCTURES - SOUTHWARK RESIDENT PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK**

Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities provided the commission with an update on the implementation of the resident participation framework. The commission also heard from Councillor Alice Macdonald, Cabinet Member for Communities and Equalities and Eva Gomez, Resident Involvement Manager.

The Commission asked questions of officers and the cabinet member.

The commission then heard from Cris Claridge in her capacity as chair of Southwark Group of Tenants Organisation (SGTO) on behalf of tenants. Cris outlined concerns and issues raised by tenants as set out in the written submission from SGTO circulated at the meeting. The commission then heard from Ina Negoita who provided observations on the implementation process, terms of reference and tenant and leaseholder representation and operation of forum meetings.

Following further discussion and representations, in acknowledging the good progress that had been made on implementation, but also that there were still a number of teething problems and frustrations, the chair put forward a suggestion that the commission take on board the comments set out in the SGTO's written submission, comments at the meeting and invite further submissions through SGTO and this information be used to put forward a constructive submission from the commission into the review that was due to take place in July 2021 as referenced in the officer update report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the commission put forward a submission into the review process due to take place in July 2021.

**6. EMPTY HOMES ACTION PLAN [CABINET REPORT]**

Councillor Leo Pollak, Cabinet Member for Housing provided the commission with an overview of the proposed Empty Homes Action Plan due to be considered by cabinet on 2 February 2021. The commission also heard from Cheryl Russell, Director of Resident Services.

Members of the commission asked questions of the cabinet members and officers.

In respect of the interim scrutiny commission report the chair indicated that in light of the proposed Empty Homes Action Plan report and information that is known now that he would not be proposing to put forward any of the recommendations that are in the two year old interim report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Empty Homes Action Plan report be noted.

**7. REPORT: RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT ON HOUSING REPAIRS [CABINET REPORT]**

This item was on the agenda for information only.

**RESOLVED:**

That the cabinet response to the scrutiny commission report on Housing Repairs be noted.

**8. RESPONSE TO HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT INTO DISTRICT HEATING [CABINET REPORT]**

This item was on the agenda for information only.

**RESOLVED:**

That the cabinet response to the housing scrutiny commission report into district heating be noted.

**9. WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021**

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme as at 28 January 2021 be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.44 pm

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**