

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday, 10 February 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Markham (Chair); Councillor (Deputy Chair); Councillors Bottwood, Eldred, Hallam, Hibbert and King.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hadland.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th January 2016 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

3. INTENTION TO HOLD PART OF THE MEETING IN PRIVATE

There were no items to be heard in private.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bottwood declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 - Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and Fees and Charges Policy as a Private Sector Landlord.

Councillor Hallam declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 - Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and Fees and Charges Policy as a Private Sector Landlord.

6. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

None.

7. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND FEES AND CHARGES POLICY

Councillor Beardsworth addressed Cabinet and stated that she welcomed the report. She reported that previously the authority were penalising good landlords and helping the rogue landlords, but that the new policies would reverse that practice. She noted that HIMOs had become a necessity but hoped that the policies would protect residents.

Councillor Ashraf welcomed the report but questioned if any measures were being put into place to identify instances of human trafficking.

Councillor Birch also welcomed the report and asked if there was any way that the administration could ensure that the new charges would not be passed on to the tenants.

Councillor McCutcheon stated that he too supported the recommendations and questioned whether there was pre-investment from LGSS to enforce unlicensed HIMOs. He congratulated the administration and welcomed the establishment of a Social Lettings Agency.

Councillor Hibbert as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and commented that the two policies would help to improve private sector housing and assisting in the licensing

of HIMOs. He explained that the Enforcement Policy was designed to provide an overview of the broad principles and process with which the Council would seek to comply when taking action to ensure that all private sector housing in the borough was healthy, well managed and safe.

In response to comments and concerns raised he explained that with regards to people trafficking, officers had received training on identifying risks. He stated that it would be difficult to ensure that charges were not passed on to tenants but it was something that would be closely examined. He thanked Officers for their hard work.

The Leader commented that the administration had worked hard and in consultation with a number of private sector housing providers, including DASH, the University of Northampton and the National Landlords Association and noted that the Social Lettings Agency would allow the Council to have more control and time to take enforcement action.

RESOLVED:

That the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (attached to the report as Appendix A) and the Private Sector Housing Fees & Charges Policy (attached to the report as Appendix B) be approved with effect from 15 February 2016.

8. FINANCE REPORT FOR PERIOD 9

Councillor Stone addressed Cabinet and raised a number of questions that she asked the Cabinet Member to answer.

Councillor Hallam, as the relevant Cabinet Member submitted a report and elaborated thereon. In response to the questions raised by Councillor Stone, Councillor Hallam explained that with regards to the Heritage Gateway there was a saving on delivery resulting in funds being approved under delegation for the Weston Favell Improvements. It was also noted that highlighting one specific area that was an overspend was not helpful and explained it was more accurate to look at the overall underspends and overspends, some of which had come about as a result of entering into a contract with LGSS. He thanked officers for their work.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report and appendix 1 of the report be reviewed.
2. That the changes to the 2015-16 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.20pm