

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning**
held on Tuesday, 1st August, 2017 at Room G1 - Ground Floor, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor A Arnold, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Officers

Karen Whitehead, Housing Standards & Adaptations Manager
Julie Zientek, Democratic Services Officer

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

13 HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning considered a report on a draft Service Specific Housing Enforcement Policy.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a range of measures to tackle poor landlords, including civil penalties of up to £30,000 as an alternative to prosecution for certain specified offences, and the extension of rent repayments orders to cover additional offences. Both changes came into effect on 6 April 2017.

Statutory guidance issued on 6 April 2017 detailed the requirement for local housing authorities to develop and document their own policy on when to apply these sanctions and should decide each case independently.

Civil penalties could be used as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences under the Housing Act 2004. Unlike civil penalty notices in other areas of the Council's regulatory powers, civil penalties for housing offences could not be applied as on the spot fines. They could be used as the culmination of a process where a landlord had failed to carry out corrective actions that the Council required from them and the appeal and notice periods had expired.

The amended service specific Enforcement Policy in relation to Housing detailed how the Council would establish whether the circumstances of the housing offence(s) warranted a civil penalty or prosecution.

RESOLVED

That the Portfolio Holder

- 1 approves the Service Specific Housing Enforcement Policy that is appended to the Cheshire East Enforcement Policy.
- 2 authorises the Executive Director of Place to put all necessary steps in place to implement the Policy.

14 ECO FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning considered a report on an Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent setting out how residents could qualify for discretionary help with keeping warm at home.

The Energy Company Obligation was a government energy efficiency scheme to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. It was introduced in April 2013 and had undergone a number of amendments, the most recent being implemented in April 2017.

The scheme provided for a range of energy efficiency measures to be funded by the largest energy suppliers, including insulation and replacement boilers. The primary focus of the scheme was to improve the ability of low income and vulnerable households to heat their home, but also extended to reducing carbon emissions for other households through lower cost measures.

ECO Flexible Eligibility was an opportunity for local authorities to set local criteria to be able to refer households to suppliers for support, in recognition of the fact that not all households that needed support with improving their homes necessarily received income related benefits. The purpose of ECO Flexible Eligibility was to identify private households that may benefit from energy saving measures and were fuel poor households and low income households.

The final decision on whether a household received an ECO measure would be made by the energy supplier or their agents/contractors. By publishing a Statement of Intent the Council was increasing opportunities for residents to benefit from energy saving measures provided by energy suppliers and their agents/contractors.

RESOLVED

That the Portfolio Holder

- 1 approves the ECO Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent.
- 2 authorises the Executive Director, Place to put all necessary steps in place to implement the Statement of Intent.

The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 2.35 pm

Councillor A Arnold (presiding)