

Cabinet

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Friday, 20 December 2019
Present	Councillors John Collier, David Godfrey, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee (Vice-Chair), David Monk (Chairman), Stuart Peall and David Wimble
Apologies for Absence	None.
Officers Present:	Adrian Hammond (Housing Strategy Manager), Andy Jarrett (Chief Strategic Development Officer), John Bunnett (Corporate Director - Place and Commercial Services), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Tim Madden (Corporate Director - Customer, Support and Specialist Services), Susan Priest (Head of Paid Service), Andrew Rush (Corporate Contracts Manager), Julia Wallace (Masterplanning Project Manager) and Jemma West (Committee Service Specialist)

NOTE: The decisions at Minute No 53 and 55 are not subject to call-in arrangements, due to the urgency of these items, as per paragraph 7 of Part 7.3 of the Council's constitution.

52. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee declared an Other Significant Interest (OSI) in respect of minute number 55 (Otterpool Park) and indicated that she would not take part in the vote or debate, and would leave the chamber during consideration of the report.

53. **East Kent Housing**

Concerns had been raised about the performance of East Kent Housing. This has culminated in a censure from the Regulator of Social Housing which is an arm's length body sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

An independent report had been commissioned by the Councils who "own" East Kent Housing through an Owners' Agreement. The Councils are: Canterbury City Council and the District Councils of Dover; Folkestone and Hythe; and Thanet. The report known as the Pennington Report identified a number of serious concerns. It was

recommended that all matters identified form the basis of a Voluntary Undertaking required by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Proposed by Councillor Godfrey,
Seconded by Councillor Peall; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/19/54 be received and noted.
2. That the contents of the Pennington Report be noted, and endorses the production of an Action Plan to implement all the recommendations in the report be endorsed.
3. That the content of the Notice from the Regulator for Social Housing dated September 2019 be noted.
4. That the Action Plan derived from the Pennington Report be used as the template to bring about improvements in the operation and performance of East Kent Housing such that the Regulator for Social Housing is in a position to remove the Notices served on the 4 East Kent Councils.
5. That the completion of the Action Plan and the response to the Regulator be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
6. That it be noted that the Board Membership of East Kent Housing has been changed such that the 4 East Kent Chief Officers now exclusively form the Board membership namely: Colin Carmichael, Chief Executive, Canterbury City Council; Nadeem Aziz, Chief Executive, Dover District Council; Dr Susan Priest, Head of Paid Service, Folkestone and Hythe District Council; and Madeline Homer, Chief Executive, Thanet District Council.

(Voting figures: 6 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Following serious compliance failures identified across the housing stock managed by East Kent Housing in East Kent, Pennington Choices were commissioned to investigate the circumstances leading to the failures, the main underlying causes, the effectiveness of the recovery action plans put in place and to make recommendations to ensure that the identified compliance failures do not happen again. The report made clear recommendations which the Council (and the other East Kent Council partners) must action in order to put an effective recovery plan in place to ensure that all of the Council's homes are compliant and safe.

54. **Exclusion of the Public**

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Wimble; and

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded for the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 –

'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). "Financial or business affairs" includes contemplated as well as current activities.'

(Voting figures: 5 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee did not take part in the vote, and moved to the public area of the chamber during the consideration of this item, remaining there for the rest of the meeting.

55. **Otterpool Park**

This report recommended the acquisition of further interests at Otterpool Park.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Godfrey; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report C/19/53 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the interests and assets identified in the report be acquired on the terms reported orally to the meeting.**

(Voting figures: 5 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Cabinet needed to decide whether to acquire interests and assets in order to move the Otterpool Park project forward and the report gave reasons why the acquisition should proceed.