

Notice of meeting and agenda

Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee Policy Development and Review Sub- Committee

12.00 noon, Tuesday 18 June 2013

(or at the conclusion of the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee, whichever is later)

Council Chamber, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

This is a public meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend

Contacts

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1. Order of business

- 1.1 Including any notices of motion and any other items of business submitted as urgent for consideration at the meeting.

2. Declaration of interests

- 2.1 Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

3. Deputations

- 3.1 If any.

4. Minutes

- 4.1 Minute of the Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee of the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee of 23 April 2013 (circulated) – submitted for approval as a correct record.

5. Policy development and review business

- 5.1 Supporting People with Dementia – Drama Production and Discussion

Note: Representatives from the following organisations have been invited to attend:

- EVOG
- Canalside
- Alzheimer Scotland
- Libertus
- North Edinburgh Dementia Care
- Lifecare

Carol Campbell

Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance

Committee Members

Councillors Day (Convener), Aitken, Bridgman, Burgess, Chapman, Doran, Gardner, Griffiths, Ricky Henderson, Heslop, Howat, Orr, Rust, Shields and Work; and Councillors Burns (ex officio) and Cardownie (ex officio).

Information about the Policy Review and Development Sub-Committee of the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee

The Policy Review and Development Sub-Committee consists of 15 Councillors and usually meets every eight weeks following the meeting of the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee.

The Sub-Committee usually meets in the Dean of Guild Court Room in the City Chambers on the High Street in Edinburgh. There is a seated public gallery and the meeting is open to all members of the public.

Further information

If you have any questions about the agenda or meeting arrangements, please contact Allan McCartney or Blair Ritchie, Committee Services, City of Edinburgh Council, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ, Tel 0131 529 4246, e-mail allan.mccartney@edinburgh.gov.uk or 0131 529 4085, e - mail blair.ritchie@edinburgh.gov.uk.

A copy of the agenda and papers for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the main reception office, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

The agenda, minutes and public reports for this meeting and all the main Council Committees can be viewed online by going to www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol.

Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee

12.00 noon, Tuesday, 23 April 2013

Present

Councillors Day (Convener), Aitken, Bridgman, Burgess, Chapman, Doran, Fullerton (Substituting for Councillor Bill Henderson), Ricky Henderson, Heslop, Jackson (Substituting for Councillor Rust) and Work.

1. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee of the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee of 29 January 2013 as a correct record.

2. Welfare Reform

2.1 Managing Arrears Arising from Housing Benefit Under-Occupancy Restrictions – referral from the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 16 April 2013 had considered a report setting out the implications for tenants, the Housing Revenue Account and the housing service of the Housing-Benefit Under-occupancy reforms. The report was referred to the Health, Housing and Wellbeing Committee for discussion.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 16 April 2013 (minute item 1b); report by the Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance, submitted.)

2.3 Bedroom Tax – Referral from the Petitions Committee

The Petitions Committee on 18 April 2013 considered a petition entitled “Bedroom Tax”. This petition sought to call on the council to implement a policy to not evict tenants whose rent arrears had been caused by the “bedroom tax”.

The report was referred to the Health, Housing and Wellbeing Committee for information. The referral also included reference to the decision of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee at its meeting on 16 April 2013 as undernoted, the practical application of which the Petitions Committee considered to be unclear.

“that where the Director of Services for Communities is satisfied that tenants who are subject to the under-occupancy charge have done all they reasonably could to avoid falling in to arrears.”

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Petitions Committee on 18 April 2013 (minute item 3d); report by the Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance, submitted.)

2.3 Update and Overview

Jennifer Hunter (Income, Rents and Tenancy Manager) gave a presentation on Welfare Reform and Managing Arrears Arising from Housing Benefit Under Occupancy Restrictions. She outlined key themes including as the impact of under-occupation, housing demand, the mismatch of supply and demand, the current arrears process, the mitigation and support available for tenants affected by arrears and the feedback received from tenants on how they were planning to deal with the proposed changes.

Moira Coupar (Team Leader, Revenues and Benefits) provided details on discretionary housing payments and the tenants who were eligible to claim these payments.

A number of speakers had been invited to address the Sub-Committee and presentations were made by:

- Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership (represented by Keith Anderson and Graeme Russell).
- Shelter (represented by Gordon Macrae and Graham Brown).
- Edinburgh Tenants Federation (represented by Betty Stevenson and Clare MacGillivray).

Following the presentations, the Sub-Committee split into three small discussion groups and considered the issues raised in the various presentations.

Feedback from the discussion Groups included:

- The need to break down any perceived barriers held by tenants in relation to seeking advice and assistance over concerns with rent payments.
- Use of incentive schemes to help tenants move to smaller accommodation, although the shortage of one-bedroom flats was acknowledged.
- Raising awareness when allocating properties of the risks involved in under occupation.
- The need to look innovatively and identify a full range of measures that could be implemented to mitigate the impact of under occupancy.
- The need to be mindful of potential future welfare reforms which could re-define what the housing service would be like in the future.

Decision

- 1) To thank all the participants for their presentations and input into the discussion.
- 2) To note that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee based on the feedback received from members and stakeholders.

(Reference - [Presentation on Managing Arrears Arising from Housing Benefit Under-Occupation Restrictions, submitted](#))