

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor Quentin Marshall (Chairman)
Councillor Sam Mackover (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Eve Allison
Councillor Mohammed Bakhtiar
Councillor Adrian Berrill-Cox
Councillor Judith Blakeman
Councillor David Nicholls
Councillor Monica Press

Others in Attendance

Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing,
Property and Regeneration)
Robert Black (TMO Chief Executive)
Richard Egan (Interim Director for Corporate Property)
Sacha Jevans (TMO Executive Director of Operations)
Amanda Johnson (Head of Housing Commissioning)
Nick Rendle (TMO Business Development Manager)
Simon Rose (Development Manager – Corporate Property)
Steve Mellor (Group Finance Manager)
Anne Wright (Governance Services)

A1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Matthew Palmer, Will Pascall and Mrs Elizabeth Rutherford. Apologies for lateness were received by Cllr David Nicholls.

A2 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman said that he had received email correspondence outside of the Committee arena regarding the agenda item on Grenfell Tower. He invited Mr Black to the table to set out the responsibilities of a Member of the TMO Board. He said that a Member of the Board had a duty to the Board and to support the views and conclusions they had put forward in relation to Grenfell Tower.

Cllr Blakeman responded to Mr Black's comments by saying that part of her role as a non-executive Director of the TMO Board was to challenge the Executive. Mr Black explained that the correct forum for challenging the Board would be at a Board meeting and not a Council Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Blakeman added that she had been given very little opportunity to do this in the Board meeting.

When asked why the TMO Board report was confidential, Mr Black explained that a public summary had been provided of all the issues that were discussed by the Board and the main report did not belong to the Scrutiny Committee but was a Board report.

Following discussions, Cllr Blakeman declared that she was a Member of the TMO Board and agreed to not take part in the discussions relating to the TMO Board report on Grenfell Tower. Cllr Press declared she was a TMO leaseholder and Cllr Bakhtiar declared that he was a TMO tenant.

A3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 9 MARCH 2016

The Minutes of the meeting on 9 March 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman subject some corrections submitted by Cllr Blakeman in advance of the meeting and Cllr Nicholls said that he had visited Andrew Provan House and not Andrew Fraser House as was stated in the minutes.

Matters arising:

Cllr Feilding-Mellen said that he had spoken to Cllr Will in relation to the Library Service consultation and she had confirmed that there was a consultation plan in place but it had been on hold until after the purdah period.

Cllr Press asked about the Council pulling out of the inter-borough temporary accommodation agreement and Ms A Johnson said that there were significant concerns around the operation of the agreement in that the rates adopted by some boroughs were not reflective of the market and it was then difficult to secure TA in certain areas in the capital. She said that she could provide a summary of the issue after the meeting.

Action: Ms A Johnson

A4. GRENFELL TOWER

The Chairman explained to the members of public present that the confidential TMO report had been discussed in private session but the Committee had requested that Mr Black speak to the Chair of the Review Panel about releasing the report into the public domain. He stressed that it was a decision for the Review Panel and not the Council or Scrutiny Committee.

A5. INTERIM REPORT OF THE GARAGES WORKING GROUP

Cllr Nicholls, Chairman of the Working Group, introduced the report and drew Members' attention to page 7 of the report which set out the group's interim conclusions highlighting that the current system of charging for garages is arbitrary and without logical foundation. He briefly set out the different options for taking the work of the working group forward.

The Chairman confirmed that a bid for funding could be put to the Scrutiny Steering Group if it was the recommendation of the Committee to agree further work going forward. He raised the principle of subsidising parking spaces and whether this was something that should be looked at as while the Council had a statutory duty to house its residents, it didn't have a statutory duty to provide car parking spaces except in specific cases such as disabled parking bays. Cllr Nicholls said the Working Group had discussed this and in principle there was no justification to subsidising parking.

Cllr Press highlighted the big issue of 32% voids in the borough and the trend that people preferred to park on street as they feel that is safer. The Chairman added that lower rates could possibly fill more spaces. Cllr Nicholls said that optimising use was essential.

Cllr Bakhtiar highlighted the use of online systems and suggested that the Council could optimise its parking revenue by having an online system that could make visitors parking available to reserve online for a number of days over even for one to two weeks.

Cllr Mackover suggested that there could be an estate or selection of estates that could be tested to the market by an established operator to see how marketable they were. Cllr Nicholls said that that had been discussed but not explored fully.

Mr Rendle addressed the Committee and said that there had been a general steady decline in demand for parking in the borough. He explained that it was very difficult to ascertain precise valuations for parking spaces as it differed from place to place and the best way would be to test the market with incremental changes to charges. He said that there was a difficulty in encouraging people from outside the borough to use parking in the borough as this conflicted with current planning policy. The Chairman commented that the Council was dependent on the income from people who have cars and park in the borough and this should be balanced with environmental policies.

Cllr Bakhtiar suggested that residents should be able to apply online for visitor permits and Mr Randle confirmed that a system was now in place to facilitate this and all residents have an entitlement to a apply for visitors parking on a first come first served basis. He said that there had been publicity about this in the borough.

Cllr Press highlighted the issue of pollution in the borough and the increased death rates that it was causing. She said that external commuters should not be encouraged into the borough just because it would raise income. She thought amending levels of charging would be the best way forward to increase income from parking. She also suggested that charges could relate to the type of car e.g. higher charges for a diesel vehicle than a hybrid or electric vehicle.

The Committee agreed that a bid should be put to SSG for funding to commission Mr Rendle to carry out the work specified in Part B Appendix 3.

Action: Garages Working Group

A6. LIVE ISSUES REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

Purchasing properties for TA

A Johnson updated the Committee on the progress of the acquisition of Temporary Accommodation and said the Council now owned an additional property and two contracts should exchange the following week, along with 13 properties that were currently under offer. She said they were hopeful that most of the allocation would be spent this year but reiterated the problem that many areas in London were not affordable for TA.

Potential Refund of Water Charges

Cllr Mackover asked about the potential impact the ruling of the High Court could have on the Borough. Mr Mellor explained that although Southwark had indicated it would not be challenging the decision of the High Court, however a collective challenge could be lodged by other Councils and there may be some further action taken. He explained that the liability all hinged on whether a Council was seen as a customer of Thames Water or an agent. The Committee would be kept informed of any updates.

Cllr Nicholls asked what the strategy was if the Council was required to refund tenants. Mr Mellor said that the process would need to be worked through and take into account a number of factors, for example whether a tenant was in rent arrears. If refunds were required, then the planned approach would be reported to Scrutiny Committee. However, the approach is likely to be similar to that used for the recent overpayments for heating and hot water services.

Purchasing properties for TA

Cllr Press asked about the non-property costs around purchasing TA properties and Ms A Johnson said that provision was made for such items as surveys and capital works. She confirmed that there was a sophisticated model for calculating the overall viability of a property purchase.

Action: Ms A Johnson

Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs

Cllr Blakeman asked about the change to the definition of Gypsies and Travellers which excludes those who had ceased to travel. She said this change may have implications for some of the Borough's Gypsy and Traveller communities. Ms Johnson acknowledged this and said that she would confirm the scope of the definition.

Action: Ms A Johnson

Silchester East and West

Cllr Blakeman said that residents had not been consulted on what the implications of redevelopment would be and Cllr Feilding-Mellen explained that the Council was nowhere near a decision on whether the estate will definitely be redeveloped. He said there had been preliminary studies to explore what would be viable taking into account the Council's estate development objectives. He confirmed that a findings report would be presented to Cabinet and then tabled at the July HPSC. Cllr Blakeman said that she hoped the views of residents would be taken on board in these early stages and reassured that they would be kept informed of any progress relating to proposals.

Cllr Feilding-Mellen confirmed that the Council had informed other local landowners of their possible plans for the area and said that if Cabinet decided to pursue redevelopment then they would sit down with the other landowners to discuss matters.

A7. REHOUSING PLAN 2016

Cllr Press referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report and asked about the specific provisions for housing certain cases in the borough and Ms A Johnson explained the situations where this was necessary, which included those cases where security was an issue.

Cllr Blakeman asked about the allocation of accessible housing by direct offer and referring to paragraph 5.31 said that the numbers seemed very low. Ms A Johnson agreed to provide further details.

Action: Ms A Johnson

Cllr Press referred to paragraph 5.29 and the allocation of sheltered housing by direct offer and asked about the variety of premises that would be offered in these cases. Ms A Johnson explained that there was quite a challenge in this field as a lot of sheltered housing was not fit for disability access. She confirmed a great deal of background work went into a case before a direct offer was made.

A8. KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA COLLEGE, WORNINGTON ROAD

The report was taken with Private Agenda Item B4 and those in the public gallery were asked to leave the room.

A9. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

It was noted that it was Cllr Marshall's final meeting as Chairman and Cllr Feilding-Mellen thanked the Chairman for his work over the years and wished him well in future endeavours.

Rota Visits

Cllr Press reported on her visit to Canalside House on Tuesday 15th March with Cllrs Blakeman and Palmer and accompanied by Mr Egan and Mr Rose. Her full report can be made available on request and a copy has been

placed on the Minute Book. Cllr Press requested that a report be brought to HPSC explaining why the Key Decision relating to Canalside House that was taken in February had not been brought to Scrutiny. The Chairman explained that that Key Decision had not been rated Three Diamonds and was in relation to the appointment of a project team and therefore uncontroversial.

Working groups

Cllr Berrill-Cox reported that the Financial Viability Working Group report was currently being drafted and would be presented to the HPSC in July.

Action: Financial Viability Working Group

Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted. It was requested that the updated Decant Policy come to HPSC.

Action: The Clerk

A10. OTHER URGENT ORAL OR WRITTEN ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN

There were none.

A11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following specific items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended:

B1. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2016

Public summary of the decision:

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

B5. 65-69 LOTS ROAD AND 71-73 LOTS ROAD, SW10

Public summary of the discussion:

The report was discussed and the options noted.

The meeting ended at 8.42pm

Chairman