MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HOUSING AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, WANDSWORTH, SW18 2PU ON
TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE, 2017 AT 7.30 P.M.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs. J. Cooper (Chairman) ; Mrs. Clay (Deputy Chairman) ; Councillors Cuff, Hart, Jones, Lescott, Macdonald and White.

In attendance: Councillor Salier (Cabinet Member for Housing) and Councillor Hogg (Leader of the Opposition). Councillor Govindia (the Leader of the Council) and Councillors Belton, Carpenter and Humphries were also present.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Thom.

The Committee proceeded to consider the business set out on the agenda for their meeting (a copy of which is interleaved, together with a copy of each of the supporting papers).

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No disclosable pecuniary interests or other relevant personal interests were declared.

Councillor Clay, disclosed a connection with item 7 (Paper No. 17-175) insofar as she rents properties to Wandsworth residents.

Councillor Cuff, disclosed a connection with item 10 (Paper No. 17-178) insofar as he is a Director of Pocket Living LLP.

Councillor Jones disclosed a connection with item 7 (Paper No. 17-175) insofar as she has leased a property to the Council for use as temporary accommodation for the homeless.

ORDER OF AGENDA

At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Committee agreed to deal with the following items:

- item 13 – Supplemental Agenda Item: Fire at Grenfell Tower and the implications for the management of high rise blocks in Wandsworth Council's housing (Paper No. 17-239)

after item 2, before returning to the numerical order of the agenda.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2017 AND 20TH FEBRUARY 2017

Signed as correct.

FIRE AT GRENFELL TOWER AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF HIGH RISE BLOCKS IN WANDSWORTH COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK (PAPER NO. 17-239)

On item 13, (Paper No. 17-239) the Chairman stated that as provided for under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, she was of the opinion that this report should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, by reason of the special circumstances which were that the recent fire at Grenfell Tower in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea took place on the 14th June 2017 subsequent to the despatch of the agenda and that the report should be considered at this meeting as it details the implications for the Council managed stock in Wandsworth with an overview of the existing fire safety regime. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Paper be received.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs. Cooper, opened the meeting by stating that the meeting was over shadowed by the tragic fire in north Kensington. Councillor Mrs. Cooper added that we must recognise the deep concerns of our residents, especially those who live in high rise properties. The Chairman thanked the Housing Department for the efforts they had already made in re-assuring our residents at this early stage in the fire investigations. Councillor Mrs. Cooper paid tribute to the strong partnership between this Council and the local Fire Service, and to the immense bravery shown by London's fire fighters in tackling the blaze at Grenfell Tower, many of whom would have been drafted in from our local stations. Without their selfless actions this terrible event could have been worse.

In light of this tragedy and as a mark of respect the Committee observed a minutes silence for all those directly affected by this terrible event.

Councillor Mrs. Cooper added that our residents' safety and security is always our first priority as we invest in our existing housing stock and build new homes. The investigation into the Grenfell Tower will be closely followed and our officers have already begun re-assessing our own blocks to ensure that they are safe. As technical information becomes available from the investigations at Grenfell Tower our officers will review our works immediately in light of the findings. The Chairman was pleased to confirm that the Director of Housing and Regeneration and the Chief Executive have contacted counterparts in Kensington & Chelsea. The Chairman added that we have offered 10 units of secure (permanent) accommodation on Monday, 19th June 2017 to assist (which are being held by the response team to use if needed) and staff resources where required. We also offered temporary accommodation to a displaced Grenfell resident the previous week.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Salier, echoed Councillor Mrs. Cooper's shock and sorrow. The Cabinet Member thanked officers for the immediate and focused response that they had taken to re-assure our residents in the aftermath

of the incident. Councillor Salier also thanked Mr. Darren Munro MIFireE, the Wandsworth Fire Borough Commander, South West Area Operations and Response and the Fire Brigade for their efforts.

The Cabinet Member then invited the Borough Commander to address the Committee. The Borough Commander re-iterated the advice given to all residents, which is to:

- Be aware of the escape plan.
- To have fitted a smoke alarm – the Fire Brigade fit these free of charge.
- Not to store items in communal areas or immediately outside their property as this could impede emergency access.

The Borough Commander stated that the reason for so many fatalities at Grenfell Tower was because of the unprecedented way the fire had reacted – spreading externally very quickly; and because the communal areas had filled up quickly with smoke. He was at pains to stress that the spread of the fire was unique in the UK and that the general advice continued to be to stay within a home if there was a fire elsewhere in a tower block given the compartmentalisation and safety from the fire this provided. He confirmed that sprinklers do save lives and that the London Fire Brigade recommends fitting sprinklers.

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-239, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Clay and seconded by the Opposition Speaker of the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor MacDonald, an amendment to recommendation 3(a) as set out below (amendments shown emboldened):

(a) the Director of Housing and Regeneration brings a report back to the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee once the investigation at Grenfell Tower has progressed sufficiently to provide some clarity on the cause and unprecedented spread of the fire, including any required or potential improvements, **which could include but is not limited to sprinklers,** for fire safety in Wandsworth Council housing blocks;

There being unanimous support for Councillor Mrs. Clay's motion, the Chairman declared the motion to be carried.

The Opposition Speaker of the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor MacDonald, echoed her condolences and paid tribute to the emergency services. Councillor MacDonald questioned whether the notices in communal areas could be 'pictorial' so that those who were unable to read or understand English could understand the 'Fire Action' notice. Councillor MacDonald also asked if the emergency lighting in Grenfell Tower was working at the time of the incident. The Borough Commander advised that the lights were on and a decision had been taken to keep them on despite the fire which would normally necessitate the power being cut off to a building. The Borough Commander was of the view that the use of pictorial signs, although a good idea in principle, to replace the 'Fire Action' notice in its current form would not be able to convey all the information currently provided. The Borough Commander added that Wandsworth's fire risk assessments were undertaken annually, that he had an excellent working relationship with the Assistant Director (Housing Management), Mr Stewart, and his team and that no concerns had been raised by residents and none in connection

with emergency lighting in communal areas. He stated that concerns could be raised with him directly and these would be passed on to his fire safety and prevention team.

The Opposition Speaker of the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor MacDonald, remained concerned and questioned whether the 'Fire Action' notice and safety advice was available in other languages; and whether the letter of re-assurance could be read and understood by all those it had been delivered to. The Director of Housing and Regeneration advised that with the detailed fire safety advice issued to all new tenants information is included in the pack on how to request a translation. The Director added that the wording had been agreed by the Borough Commander.

Councillors Belton, Carpenter and Humphries, not being members of the Committee, spoke as Ward Councillors (who had high rise blocks within their Ward) with the agreement of the Committee. Councillor Belton stated that two major issues needed to be addressed, these being the level of public concern and to demonstrate clear public accountability of Wandsworth Councillors. Councillor Belton felt that in light of Committee meetings being four times a year and the next Housing & Regeneration OSC meeting not being until September 2017, a special meeting should be convened towards the end of July 2017. In relation to addressing public/resident concerns Councillor Belton suggested that the Director of Housing and Regeneration and his team of officers should attend a meeting at Castlemaine with a view to further re-assuring residents. The Director responded by saying that he has no objection to such a meeting taking place but felt that the timing of the meeting needed to be carefully considered in order to ensure that meaningful information and actions were being relayed. In fact if more questions remained unanswered then it may have the opposite effect and create more panic and concern amongst residents. The Director added that in relation to convening a committee meeting in July, if further facts emerged by that time then a meeting could be convened to advise Members. The Borough Commander was also prepared to attend a meeting at Castlemaine. During discussion it was clear that if Castlemaine was visited then so should Sudbury House.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Govindia, acknowledged that on-going Member involvement was not unreasonable. Councillor Govindia added that the report recommended the Director of Environment and Community Services to prepare a report for the Finance and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee setting out the Council's emergency planning arrangements and preparedness for an event of similar scale in Wandsworth. Such a report would enable further debate. Councillor Govindia agreed that the Housing and Regeneration OSC and the Finance and Corporate Resources OSC should keep a 'watching' brief on this issue. Councillor Govindia was of the view that in re-assuring residents a measured view should be taken because if we cannot re-assure our residents we may unsettle them further. The re-assurance should be done incrementally commencing with these three blocks first, i.e. Castlemaine, Weybridge Point and Sudbury House. It was also noted that such reports could pick up on planning and building control requirements in respect to newer built properties and blocks.

Councillor Humphries spoke in relation to Sudbury House. Councillor Humphries stated that he had been in contact with Sudbury House RA who have confirmed that

there had not been a great deal of feedback or over-concern from residents. In light of this Councillor Humphries was of the view that the residents of Sudbury House did not wish to have a meeting at this stage. Councillor Humphries added that some of the residents had been living at Sudbury House for 30-40 years and had witnessed the fire at Sudbury House which had been contained within one unit. The prompt re-assurance afforded by the Housing Department had been very positive in alleviating their concerns.

The Labour Group was of the view that a meeting should take place to re-assure residents, whilst Members of the Majority Group were of the opinion that timing was crucial. Meetings to further re-assure residents so soon after the initial letter had been sent and without any factual information may serve to panic residents living in Castlemaine and Weybridge Point, two blocks which had overcladding, if there was not further substantive action that the Council needed or would be taking.

The Director of Housing and Regeneration confirmed that the Council is in the process of providing a sample of the Aluminium Composite Material cladding from relevant blocks to allow the necessary reassurance testing.

The Vice-Chairman of the Borough Residents' Forum, Mrs. M. Price, stated that meetings should not be held with residents until further factual information was available as otherwise it could lead to panic and scare mongering by those who believe themselves to be 'experts' on the matter.

Mrs Price added that sprinklers were prone to vandalism so if fitted they must be routinely checked and tested to ensure they will work in an emergency. Mrs. Price also thanked the Borough Commander and Battersea Fire Brigade.

In response to questions raised by the Labour Group on sprinklers, the cost to retro-fit and their robustness, the Director of Housing and Regeneration advised that Croydon Council was retro – fitting sprinklers to 25 high-rise blocks of ten storeys and above following the Grenfell Tower fire at a cost estimated to be £10 million. The Director confirmed that retro-fitting sprinklers may not be difficult but may provide particular challenges in terms of routing pipes etc. and maintaining separation/compartmentalisation between parts of blocks. The sprinklers would be contained within individual units and subject to temperature control. The Director emphasised that if compartmentalisation had worked and the fire in Grenfell Tower had been contained to one unit there would be no need to consider retro-fitting sprinklers.

Councillor Carpenter raised the issue of replacing the internal gas risers within council blocks as part of a programme as opposed to waiting for a leak and then undertaking emergency repairs. The Director confirmed that he would provide Councillor Carpenter with a programme of replacement.

A Member of the Labour Group sought re-assurance that there were 'fire-breaks' between the cladding and the building of blocks over-cladded in Wandsworth. The Director assured the Committee that the three tower blocks that had had cladding systems fitted in the past - Sudbury House, Castlemaine and Weybridge Point - the materials used would have been compliant with the appropriate standards in place at the time and the works would have received Building Control consent which would have included checks on fire breaking. In addition, the cladding works were closely

supervised by Clerk of Works directly employed by the Council. The cladding systems have been in place in excess of ten years and in two of the blocks (Castlemaine and Sudbury House) serious domestic fires have tested the integrity of the cladding and from the pictures available demonstrated that the fires (which involved the windows to flats being blown out) did not spread. The Borough Commander confirmed that in his view compartmentalisation and reduced fire spread measures had worked.

In relation to questions around vandalism to fire extinguishers the Borough Commander advised that these would be open to vandalism. His advice was to shut the door to contain the fire and call the Fire Brigade.

In repose to questions on the Coroner's Enquiry, the Director of Housing and Regeneration confirmed that Wandsworth was heavily involved with other London Councils, including Southwark. He added that a number of recommendations up to this point had focused on compartmentalisation. The Director added that all Council/co-op managed blocks were subject to an independent Fire Risk Assessment in 2016, that these were regularly updated and a regime of checks and inspections is in place to ensure that the risk of fire in our managed stock is minimised. This will include regular checks of all communal areas for fire hazards, flammable materials etc. Further checks on fire doors, communal lighting also take place.

Further discussion centred around new build high rise blocks and the planning requirements in relation to fire protection, requirements in respect to sprinklers etc. It was confirmed that any new build development was required to meet current building standards which included where required fitting of sprinkler systems. That such works would be subject to inspection by building control services. In respect to fire safety this was the responsibility of the Housing Association to assure. Officers confirmed that the CLG had written that week to all social landlords reminding them of their responsibilities. Officers also as additional reassurance had spoken directly to the GLA who were assisting the CLG to confirm that they were contacting housing associations directly to confirm contacts and where required they were providing returns to the CLG about their stock profile. Council officers also confirmed that the Council had written to all large stock holding and developing housing associations in the Borough asking them to confirm their response to the fire and that these returns would be reviewed and collated with action taken as required. Officers agreed to provide the names of the top ten Housing Associations that build/develop in the Borough. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Govindia, indicated that a report on such planning and building control matters may be presented to Community Services OSC in the next cycle.

The Director of Housing and Regeneration emphasised that the Council's responsibility was towards residents who lived in blocks that the Council was a free-holder of. Similarly, Housing Associations that operate within Wandsworth as both free-holder and landlord have a responsibility towards the residents living in their blocks and as such must comply with fire risk assessments and undertake inspections are in place to ensure that the risk of fire is minimised. The Labour Group was concerned that if there was a fire in a block that the Council did not own the Council would still be criticised. The Labour Group suggested putting information onto the Council's website to encourage Housing Associations to comply with their obligations. Additional to the action already being taken, the Residential Services

Manager agreed to write to all landlords within the Borough with a view to encouraging them to install smoke alarms.

In response to further questions, officers confirmed that Wandsworth had offered 10 units of (permanent) accommodation to Westminster who are co-ordinating the re-housing efforts. The 10 units comprise of 5 x 2-beds, 3 x 3-beds and 2 x 4-beds.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Govindia, gave his commitment that a 'watching brief' would be kept by all relevant committees as lessons are learnt and action required taken. This was welcomed by the Committee and with the Committee's agreement recorded as a recommendation for the Executive. It was then

RESOLVED to support the recommendations in paragraph 3 of the report subject to the amendments shown emboldened below:

(a) the Director of Housing and Regeneration brings a report back to the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee once the investigation at Grenfell Tower has progressed sufficiently to provide some clarity on the cause and unprecedented spread of the fire, including any required or potential improvements, **which could include but is not limited to sprinklers**, for fire safety in Wandsworth Council housing blocks; ~~and~~

(b) the Director of Environment and Community Services be asked to prepare a report for the Finance and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee setting out the Council's emergency planning arrangements and preparedness for an event of similar scale in Wandsworth, **and**

(c) to note that this Committee welcomes the Leader of the Council's commitment that a 'watching brief' will be kept by all relevant committees.

BUILDING FOR WANDSWORTH PEOPLE (PAPER NO. 17-171)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-171, the Labour Group stated that the proposal to develop options to accelerate the Wandsworth Council build programme, was not ambitious enough in terms of taking forward new build development on council owned land. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Govindia, advised and clarified that the Wandsworth Council build Programme is currently forecasting delivery of 260 low cost homes over the next three to four years. The challenge being given to officers was to accelerate delivery and to reach beyond the 260 homes and develop significantly more. The Government has signalled that increasing and accelerating development, on public land including on Council land, is a priority. As such he wished the Council to take up this challenge by using its resources to help meet the Government's housing ambition and targets, provide a template as to how other councils can utilise the numerous sites with development potential they have and in turn provide one approach which would help the London Mayor in his ambitious target to deliver 90,000 affordable housing starts by 2022. As such sufficient development sites would need to be identified to make a difference and a programme developed which is financially viable.

The Director of Housing and Regeneration confirmed that the challenge set for the Council and department was one of the most significant he had faced and been given. It was also confirmed that the programme involved looking at both housing and general fund assets for development potential.

The Labour Group remained concerned that the Paper was not ambitious enough and that the current delivery of 260 homes that were in the pipeline over three years did not go far enough to address the shortage of affordable housing in the Borough. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 3 (by 5 votes to 3) of Paper No. 17-171.

REVIEW OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO) LICENSING FEES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOUSING AND PLANNING ACT 2016 (PAPER NO. 17-172)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-172, the Labour Group commended the Paper. They questioned why Private Rented Sector housing was not subject to the same 'decent standard' as were HMO's. Officers advised that the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) had introduced a new risk assessment system. It focused on identifying and tackling the hazards that are most likely to be present in housing to make homes healthier and safer to live in. The decent standard no longer applies, however, officers report performance against the number of properties made decent depending upon the hazards identified.

In response to further questions officers advised that the cost of two additional Environmental Health Practitioner posts would be met from additional income from the increased volume of licences. In relation to the Rogue Landlord database, officers advised that the database was scheduled to come into force on 1 October 2017 and that officers were awaiting the Regulations on this. Officers confirmed that the fees in relation to licences need to be cost neutral. It has been estimated that this would be the case and that the fixed penalty notice would be income for the Council. Officers further advised that a person to whom a final financial penalty is given may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal against the decision to impose the penalty or the amount of the penalty. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 3 of Paper No. 17-172.

HOUSING POLICIES AND SCHEMES (PAPER NO. 17-173)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-173, a Member of the Labour Group questioned why a number of the contracts had been delayed, what sanctions were imposed for delay and whether lessons were learnt. The Director of Housing and Regeneration advised that the Council was operating a £20 million capital programme and maintaining a high housing stock. The Director confirmed that there were a variety of reasons for the delay ranging from the level of the contractor's expertise to the removal of unexpected asbestos. The Director added that lessons

were learnt and that sanctions were imposed on contractors in cases where they persistently failed to meet the contract specification.

In relation to Boyce Court, a Member of the Labour Group advised that an individual had received no assistance from the Housing department whilst the lifts were being repaired. The Director of Housing and Regeneration advised that the normal practice was for the Housing Department to arrange/offer assistance to residents, for e.g. doing the shopping. The Director agreed to look into the case highlighted by the Member.

The Committee received further information in relation to:

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme
A Member of the Labour Group referred to the Committee's meeting of 15th November 2016 where in noting the lack of offers of accommodation from private landlords in response to the Council advertising for the Programme, the then Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Ellis, had encouraged members to propose alternative ideas that might lead to a better response and undertook to consider these. As such it was suggested by a Member of the Labour Group that as only one family had been re-housed in Wandsworth, incentives should be paid to landlords, particularly those housing refugees. In response officers advised that this was difficult as a refugee family would initially be relying on housing benefits which would decrease during their tenancy, normally for five years. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Salier, agreed to give the proposal consideration.

Topline Performance Indicators – 2016/17 End of Year Results
% of follow-up actions after noise complaint completed within 5 days: Officers confirmed that this measure was not about dealing with the noise complaint but about the officer speaking to the tenant. Officers emphasized that KPIs should be seen as "can openers" which if indicating poorer performance would allow members and officers to unpick any issues arising. This was the case with this type of indicator. Officers also confirmed that behind such indicators were other assessments and analysis of activity to understand where and how services needed to improve. Such more in depth analysis was often covered in the Annual Quality Performance Report.

No. of private sector dwellings made decent: The Labour Group considered this not to be an ambitious target. Officers advised that the performance of the team has increased through more properties being reported and recorded against the environmental health database. A revised figure of 350 properties should be used to measure performance as long as the number of service requests continues.

No. family households with dependent children in B&B accommodation for more than six weeks: Officers confirmed that very few families with dependent children remain in B&B for longer than six weeks.

Av. length time (in weeks) stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (all people): Officers confirmed that the figure for quarters 1, 2 and 3 remained below the final outturn from 15/16, although this indicator remains behind target. This is due to an increasing number of cases being accommodated in B&B at the Council's discretion pending review/appeal.

Number of homeless cases prevented: Officers confirmed that landlords were under no obligation to advise the Housing Department of any impending eviction and that tenants often do not inform the Housing Department of their eviction until matters have progressed too far in a significant number of cases.

Tenant satisfaction with overall housing service & Leaseholder satisfaction with overall housing service: At the request of a Member of the Labour Group officers agreed to provide a link to the Tenants' and Leaseholder satisfaction surveys and a link to 'the review and update of Wandsworth Council's Housing Service Standards'. Officers also agreed to feed back the reasons for the dissatisfaction to the Committee in regard to leaseholder satisfaction where further work was required to more fully understand the views on the services provided by the Council.

End of Year Progress against agreed Key Issues 2016/17
KI Ref 171: Officers confirmed that it has been agreed to purchase access to the database, Riskbase, on which the FRA's were undertaken and stored, to give increased functionality in undertaking and monitoring repairs and management issues as required.

Proposed New Topline Indicators and Targets for 2017/18 relevant to this Committee
Average Group's request to include length of stay in B&B accommodation (all people): It was agreed (by 5 votes to 3) to delete this topline proposal for 2017/18.

Proposed Key Issues for 2017/18 relevant to this Committee
KI Ref 172: In response to a Member of the Labour Group's suggestion to have as the target the no. of rough sleepers, officers advised that this would not be a useful indicator as it would be an annual snap shot. The commentary should, therefore, be included in the regular report that members receive on homelessness activity.

It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 2 (by 5 votes to 3) of Paper No. 17-173.

JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENT FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE WINSTANLEY-YORK ROAD REGENERATION PROJECT SW11 (LATCHMERE) (PAPER NO. 17-174)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-174, the Committee welcomed the proposal. The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Hogg, thanked officers for all their hard work and stated that overall this was a very good scheme to improve the area. Councillor Hogg added that the loss of the public path at Gangley Court for at least five years would mean that residents must be re-assured of the benefits for doing this. In addition, that the infrastructure of existing blocks must be taken into consideration where homeless residents are being housed, for example Pennethorne.

In response to further questions, officers advised that some of the additional 330 affordable housing units would be on sites in the Battersea area and funded via a

mixture of funding including grant, Section 106 commuted sums, and HRA capital receipts including RTB 1-2-1 receipts. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 2 of Paper No. 17-174.

ANNUAL HOUSING RESOURCES AND COMMITMENTS FOR 2017/18 (PAPER NO. 17-175)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-175, the Labour Group raised concerns over the increase in homelessness and overcrowding, and the vast amounts being spent on temporary accommodation, the latter having an impact on families settling down into an area, e.g. disruption in schooling when re-housed. The Labour Group was of the view that a radical strategy was needed to rectify this. Officers advised that they were trying to address this through building new homes and also through the purchasing of properties. A Member of the Majority Group stated that Paper No. 17-171 – Building for Wandsworh People – provides the Council with an opportunity to tackle homelessness in a more meaningful way. He added that this Committee would be receiving a Paper in autumn on the findings from the site identification and feasibility exercise aimed at accelerating Council led development on sites in its ownership. The Director of Housing and Regeneration added that the homelessness pressure was not exclusive to Wandsworth, but that it was an issue throughout London.

The Labour Goup referred to Croydon Council's management of its homelessness queue and the fact it was taking a number of Wandsworth homeless residents. The Labour Group stressed that lessons needed to be learnt from Croydon Council and that Wandsworth was in breach of its duties and code of conduct. In response officers advised that as a % Croydon's use of temporary accommodation decreased last year whereas 24 of the 32 London Boroughs including Wandsworth, saw an increase. However, Croydon started from a very high number. At the request of the Labour Group officers agreed to provide information on the number of families in temporary accommodation and in B&B within Croydon Council. Officers added that as per the Homeless Reduction Act the Council needs to look at what products are available to reduce homelessness. The Labour Group added that the Private Rented Sector is often blamed for the increase in homelessness and suggested giving incentives to private landlords. Officers advised that this would be considered in conjunction with the guidance which is yet to be written. The Labour Group questioned why evictions from the PRS were higher than from social landlords and felt that that they could not support the Paper as it was not ambitious enough in tackling homelessness or reducing the use of B&B. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 3(a) – (q) (by 5 votes to 3) of Paper No. 17-175.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE (PAPER NO. 17-176)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-176, in noting that as the average increase in earnings over the period April 2016 to April 2017 was 1.9 per cent the recommendation was to increase the Council's affordable discounted guide rents by

1.9 per cent, the Labour Group requested that consideration be given to the increase in rents being capped at 1%. Officers advised that one reason for the proposed 1.9 % increase takes into consideration the ability of registered providers to optimise rent income to support affordable housing delivery in the Borough. Without sufficient rental return it would be less viable for registered providers to continue to develop or purchase low cost rent housing in the Borough. It was also confirmed that financially, it is also more challenging to provide low cost rented housing in localities which tend to have higher density development given that this means that more of the housing charge must cover what are often higher service charges related to such developments and as a consequence there is less rental income available for investment in the social housing being provided.

The Labour Group remained concerned and added that a 1% increase would be in line with public sector pay increases and as such would assist those working in the public sector on a low income. The % of affordable properties being provided could also be increased. A Member of the Majority Party disagreed and stated that it would not be possible to change the threshold or the % of affordable housing as this was part of the economies of scheme. Officers also confirmed that with a combination of higher values, it was more difficult to attract housing associations to buy sites and develop in the Borough. This was despite the Council also offering significant grant levels to encourage housing associations to develop. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 3 (by 5 votes to 3) of Paper No. 17-176.

NIGHTINGALE SQUARE MODULAR DEVELOPMENT, SW12 (NIGHTINGALE) (PAPER NO. 17-177)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-177, the Labour Group felt that the size of the modular housing was too small and that being accommodated in such a limited space for 9-18 months was not a solution. Officers advised that the modular development would provide temporary accommodation for a period of 9-18 months instead of using B&B accommodation. In that respect it was confirmed that the additional units would reduce our use of B&B by the same number of units provided in the modular development. Officers added that such accommodation was being used by Merton and Ealing as an alternative to other forms of temporary accommodation. The units were small, but attractive inside and bigger than B&B units.

In response to further questions officers advised that Design Services have also identified a further area Site G that could be made into an additional amenity area and that other site mixes could be explored. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 3 (by 5 votes and 3 abstentions) of Paper No. 17-177.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING ACT 2015 (PAPER NO. 17-178)

During their consideration of Paper No. 17-178, the Committee acknowledged that the Council's actual and current forecast for land supply for the period April to October 2018 of 5,806 homes to support resident led development was established using the requirements set by the CLG. It was further confirmed that in Officers' view many fewer sites would come forward for resident development but without the detailed guidance (that was still awaited from the CLG) it was difficult to actually set out for the Committee what the requirements would be. A Member of the Labour Group was in favour of self-build, recognised the need to set priority criteria and the Opposition Speaker of the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor MacDonald, was impressed by the proposals set out in the report. It was then

RESOLVED – That the Executive be informed that the Committee supports the recommendations in paragraph 3 of Paper No. 17-178.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

On item 12, it was

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst item 12 is being considered, because it is likely that exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act would be disclosed to them if they were present; and it is considered that, in all the circumstances of case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

JOINT VENTURE ARRANGEMENT FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE WINSTANLEY-YORK ROAD REGENERATION PROJECT SW11 (LATCHMERE) (CONT'D) (PAPER NO. 17-174A)

Following discussion item 12 was then received as information.

The meeting ended at 11.04 p.m.