

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 21st April 2022 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Morrow (Chair), Wren (Vice-Chair), Allen, Black, Blackwell, Botten, Bourne, Caulcott, Cooper, Crane, Davies, Duck, Farr, Flower, Gaffney, Gillman, Groves, Hammond, Jones, Langton, Lee, Lockwood, Mansfield, Mills, Moore, North, Prew, Pursehouse, Ridge, Sayer, Shiner, Stamp, Steeds, Swann and N.White

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillors Dennis, Elias and Gray

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Bloore, Connolly, O'Driscoll and C.White

311. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 10TH FEBRUARY 2022

These minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

312. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked those who had:

- donated raffle prizes for his charity concert at the United Reformed Church, Oxted on 19th March; and
- supported Councillor Pursehouse in his sponsored (15.2 mile) walk on 2nd April from one end of the District to the other.

The Chair announced that the final civic event of his year in office would be the charity quiz with a food bank theme on this coming Saturday, 23rd April at the Westway Centre, Caterham. This was already oversubscribed but he looked forward to seeing those who had been able to purchase tickets.

313. QUESTION SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

A question had been submitted by Councillor O'Driscoll and was read out, in his absence, by Councillor Groves. The question and response are set out at Appendix A.

314. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED – that the reports of the following meetings be received, and the recommendations therein be adopted:

Planning Committee – 3rd March 2022

Planning Policy Committee - 10th March 2022

Community Services Committee - 17th March 2022

Audit & Scrutiny Committee – 22nd March 2022

Housing Committee – 24th March 2022

Strategy & Resources Committee – 7th April 2022

315. URGENT BUSINESS - UKRAINE CRISIS

The Chair agreed for this item to be considered as a matter of urgency to enable Members to discuss the additional responsibilities which had been placed upon the Council regarding the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Members paid tribute to the professionalism and dedication of staff in rising to the challenge of implementing the scheme locally. In particular, they praised the effective partnership working already underway to ensure the Tandridge community was united in doing all it could to assist those seeking refuge from the conflict. Members asked the Chief Executive to convey their sincere thanks to all staff involved in supporting the Council's response to the crisis.

316. CHAIR'S CLOSING COMMENTS

The Chair reflected that this was his last Full Council meeting as an elected Member after 28 years' service, although he would be presiding over the appointment of the new Chair at the beginning of the annual meeting on 26th May. He wished other Councillors well for the future, especially those who would not be returning after the 5th May District elections.

Rising 8.34 pm

COUNCIL – 21ST APRIL 2022 – STANDING ORDER 30 QUESTION**Question submitted by Councillor O’Driscoll
and read out, in his absence, by Councillor Groves**

Last month, I took the Executive Head of Communities to visit a resident in Newlands Court, which is a council-maintained block in Westway, where the resident and I raised several issues about the condition of the housing.

Since this meeting last month, it's been brought to my attention by residents that a number of properties across Tandridge maintained by housing associations are in poor condition. Anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, lack of heating and mould have been reported to me in housing association properties in Westway, Whyteleafe and Bletchingley.

Will this Council take steps to ensure housing associations maintain the properties they control to the high standard residents expect and deserve?

Response for Councillor Pursehouse

The Council have a range of enforcement tools to deal with complaints from tenants living in Housing Association properties, in the same way we do with those renting in the private sector, and to some extent, occupiers across all other tenures. As in all instances where a complaint has been received, it is a pre-requisite for tenants to be able to present written evidence to the Private Sector Housing Officer of the Shared Environmental Health Service, prior to an investigation being raised.

However, in-line with Government guidance, Housing Association tenants must have gone through their respective provider’s complaint procedure before approaching the Council for assistance, first providing written evidence they have done so. The Private Sector Housing Officer will then investigate the case and deal with it accordingly, utilising appropriate enforcement powers where necessary.

It is estimated that of all the complaints received by the Shared Environmental Health Service relating to disrepair in residential properties, approximately 15% are from tenants living in a Housing Association property; with less than half of those having gone through their Housing Association complaints process without satisfactory resolution.