

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Town Council held at the Town Hall, Rye, on Monday 5 June 2017

PRESENT Councillors Sam Barnes, Mike Boyd (**Deputy Mayor**), John Breeds, Cheryl Creaser, Justin Erswell, Rebekah Gilbert, Pat Hughes, Jo Kirkham, Andi Rivett, Shaun Rogers, Andy Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE Richard Farhall - Town Clerk; 1 member of the public

The meeting commenced at 7.26pm.

28 APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence – and the reasons as lodged with the Clerk – were accepted from Cllrs Jonathan Breeds (**Mayor**), Bernardine Fiddimore, Ian Potter and Ray Prewer.

29 CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no disclosures of interest nor dispensation requests.

30 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED To adopt, as an accurate record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2017.

31 DISCOUNTED ACCOMMODATION

The Clerk advised that a lettings agent had suggested/indicated that:

- a) The Council should seek legal advice on:
 - (i) Whether, in relation to the tenancy criteria, RTC is at risk of contravening equalities legislation;
 - (ii) The type and duration of the tenancy agreements during the tenants’ ‘up to 5 years’ occupancy.
- b) The proposed ‘Deposit Reserve/Grant’ (putting to one side 10% of the rent paid towards a deposit on a subsequent property) is unnecessary and potentially problematic
- c) If appointed, she would not have time to form part of the proposed panel to assess tenancy applications against the criteria (but would be available to offer advice as and when needed).

The Clerk added that the Council’s solicitors had stated that they are in a position to advise on **a(ii) and (b)**– but would need to obtain an opinion from a junior barrister in respect of **a(i)**.

Comments included: should the criteria be re-worded in order to make them appear less (potentially) discriminatory and more flexible?; it is not unusual for types of accommodation to be targeted at particular groups (with specific needs); the house purchased by RTC does not have disabled access; the rear extension was built for a disabled person.

It was agreed generally that RTC should have regard to the concerns of the lettings agent.

RESOLVED To instruct Heringtons to advise RTC on a(ii) and (b) – and to seek an opinion from a junior barrister in respect of a(i). **Clerk**

32 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2), to exclude the public and press from the item following on the grounds that it involves consideration of the Council’s possible legal interest in a property.

33 STRAND HOUSE, RYE

Members received an update on the Council’s possible legal interest in this property – and agreed a course of action. **Clerk**

The meeting ended at 7.47pm

Date Chairman