

# Strategic Housing Partnership Meeting

July 7th 2015

Helen Russell, CHIBAH

## 1. Val Pierce (BHCC lead of Welfare Reform):

Universal Credit (UC) will be rolled out to single JSA claimants making a new claim will start in 12/15. All to move to UC by 2019.

Housing providers will need to rework their relationships with BHCC. Needs planning for.

7% drop in rent collection in existing UC areas. DWP offering budget support but not being taken up. Claiming online is assumed. Grappling with supporting those who can't use online systems. Council only has access to the same web page that claimants have.

UC is about supporting people into work. It seeks to find £12bn in savings, only £2bn found so far. UC goes with you to a new area if you move.

Benefit cap is being reduced to £23k and might drop to £20k. Cap increases ways in which people are worse off. An issue is how to keep PRS letting to those in need. Only 7% of welfare budget goes to single unemployed people, the rest is to people in work or the disabled.

Government assumption is the poor will move out of rich areas. Interim Head of Housing (Patrick Odling-Smee) said we must provide affordable housing to those in need. The NHS, the council and the PRS are all having problems with finding new housing opportunities. The Govt. would need a primary legislation change to find £12bn worth of savings (which represents 10% of income of every working age household in UK).

I said that such a demographic shift will cause social fragmentation.

## 2. Excess winter deaths

World Health Organisation (WHO): 40% of such deaths result from inadequate housing; worse in UK than in 'cold' countries.

11% in B&H are in fuel poverty. BHCC bidding to central government to install gas central heating; to the EU for advice on energy efficiency; to Community Works for welfare advice and energy efficiency and to provide home visits. Focusing on PRS.

The evidence in B&H that more deaths are in PRS is that the condition of the majority of PRS properties is old and poor. Kaiser Merza stated that the death rate is higher and increasing in care homes.

A Decent Homes Standard Bill for the PRS is being tabled.

If tenants say they want better quality, then rents will go up.

Martin Reid stated that cohorts of landlords need to scale up investment which could then be used to seek match funding.

**3. PRS Scrutiny Panel Report:** will need action planning meetings.

#### **4. Universities update:**

A Good Behaviour Guide is coming out in September. One Stop Shops are being set up on a permanent basis following success of North Laine experiment. UOB Student Strategy is nearly ready. No news on Preston Barracks development.

#### **5. Housing Strategy update**

There are big gaps in completing the strategy with Energy Efficiency & Student Strategy, waiting for UOB Strategy; BHCC housing strategy ties in with PRS scrutiny. If the City Plan does not get accepted, the housing supply aims in city housing strategy will be affected. A dozen large sites are at pre-application stage. Next step is to create the Action Plan on the strategy and the Housing Investment Plan, but delayed by stalled decision on City Plan.

Simon Newell stated that the SHP needs to understand other land use needs in relation to housing. Ed Allison-Wright (B&H economic Partnership) I called for more joined up work between partners. Simon Newell agreed we need to identify where issues are connected. But the LSP has no Chair and no agenda.

**City Plan:** current consultation is on second round of modifications only, not specific to Urban Fringe as previously understood. Inspector's report due Sept 2015, final report due October; to be adopted by Jan 2016.

Simon to create structural map of city partnership issues and activity for November SHP to enhance joined up thinking.

#### **6. Planning update Rob Fraser:**

Falmer Avenue 36 Hyde; Preston Rd 25 flats, 7 houses Southern, incl. 40% affordable; Astoria 73 1, 2, & 3 bed student flats, Mike Holland.

There's been a 'noticeable upturn' because the London market is overheated; expecting a greater level of investment in B&H. Development costs are £400 - £500 per square foot.

Problem for B&H in producing too high density levels is that there is a gap in infrastructure provision.