

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

4 April 2012

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Cooper (P)

Stallard (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Collin (P)

Pines

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

TACT representatives:

Mrs J Steventon-Baker

Mr J Bond (P)

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 2012 be approved and adopted.

2. **DISCRETIONARY WORKS SCHEME FOR COUNCIL TENANTS**

(Report [CAB2316\(HSG\)](#) refers)

The Head of Landlord Services acknowledged that take-up of the scheme was likely to be extremely popular. Therefore, its initial focus would be reasonably limited to reduce the administrative burden on officers. With regard to works undertaken by contractors, the usual quality checks and use of feedback cards would continue to take place.

During further discussion, it was clarified that it may be acceptable for tenants to pool their allowance for an improvement to a communal area, such as a door entry system. In this case, it was confirmed that the on-going maintenance of the door would be the responsibility of the Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposals set out in the Report be adopted.
2. That subject to a satisfactory equality re-assessment, the Head of Landlord Services be authorised to finalise and roll out detailed policy and procedures in respect of the scheme.
3. That subject to funds being available, up to 5% of the total repairs and maintenance works budget in any one year be earmarked for this scheme.

3. **CHANGES TO THE RIGHT TO BUY**

(Report [CAB2317\(HSG\)](#) refers)

The Committee agreed that the Council would favour the additional sale receipts from the new policy being used to deliver local affordable housing schemes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the impact of the new policy in terms of numbers of applications for the Right to Buy, and completed sales, be reported to future meetings of the Committee.
2. That choices available to the Council in terms of funding the construction of replacement units following additional property sales be considered by the Committee once detailed information is available.

4. **REVIEW OF DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

(Report [CAB2321\(HSG\)](#) refers)

Councillors Collin and Stallard declared personal (but non-prejudicial) interests in actions taken or proposed with regard to this item, because of their position as County Councillors and the joint working with the County Council as part of the proposals. Both Councillors remained in the room and spoke and voted thereon.

The Head of Landlord Services confirmed that previously, all clients were means-tested by the Council with regard to whether they should contribute towards, or pay entirely for capital works. However, as it had been previously found that most cases were allowable, it had been concluded that the administration involved in the means-testing procedures had been unnecessarily burdensome for officers.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that officers investigate the potential to re-introduce means-testing of clients, or for there to be self-certification to demonstrate that clients were unable to contribute to the expenditure. It was noted that some clients may, for example, have specific funds from insurance settlements for necessary disabled adaptations. It was also noted that other benefits were restricted for clients who had capital of more than £16,000.

The Committee also agreed that officers include sufficient flexibility within the 'Assisted Moving Provisions' within the policy to allow tenants to move to accommodation more appropriate to their needs, including the size of the property.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals for the amendment to the Council's existing policy for Disabled Adaptations to Council homes, as detailed in paragraph 6 of the Report, be noted, subject to the following additional considerations (exact wording delegated to the Head of Landlord Services, in consultation with the Chairman):

(a) That with regard to the larger adaptations, the potential to re-introduce means-testing of clients, or for there to be self-certification to demonstrate that clients were unable to contribute to the expenditure, be considered

(b) That there be sufficient flexibility within the 'Assisted Moving Provisions' within the policy to allow tenants to move to accommodation more appropriate to their needs, including the size of the property.

5. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REFORM – CONFIRMATION OF BORROWING ARRANGMENTS**

(Report [CAB2323\(HSG\)](#) refers)

The Committee noted that the Report would also be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 April 2012.

During discussion, the Head of Finance advised that initially it had been unclear how the transaction fees of £54,853 would have been treated within the budget. However, this sum would now be met from projected surpluses for the year.

A revised HRA budget would also be brought forward in due course, having regard to the net impact from the reduction in annual interest costs to the HRA from the borrowing, which totalled £830,887.

RESOLVED:

1. That the final borrowing arrangements detailed in the appendix to the Report be noted.

2. That proposals for revising the HRA budget for 2012/13 be reported to this Committee in September 2012.

3. That transaction fees of £54,853 be met from the 2011/12 HRA budget.

6. **MEASURES TO ADDRESS CONDENSATION / MOULD IN COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

(Report [CAB2324\(HSG\)](#) refers)

During discussion, the Committee acknowledged the considerable impact that the issues referred to in the Report were having on officer resource, as well as on the lives of some tenants.

Members agreed that surveyors should continue to provide comprehensive advice to affected tenants and that additional training be provided to staff to ensure this was consistently delivered. Officers should also acknowledge where physical defects in the buildings may either be causing or exacerbating these issues and that these matters be prioritised accordingly.

RESOLVED:

1. That the current policy for responding to requests for service in relation to mould and condensation be noted.

2. That a further report on options for additional investment be considered by the Committee in September 2012.

7. **PROPOSED NEW HOMES DELIVERY TEAM**

(Report [PER208](#) refers)

The Committee noted that the Report had previously been considered by the Personnel Committee, at its meeting held 28 March 2012, which agreed the recommendations as set out. Cabinet was also to consider the Report at its meeting on 11 April 2012.

The Head of Strategic Housing described his role in leading the Council's New Home Delivery Team. He was in the process of insuring that adequate staff resource would be in place to deliver the new house building programme. An initial strategic approach to the 10 year programme would be reported to the next meeting of full Council. It was envisaged that a detailed report would be prepared for the Committee's 20 June 2012 meeting, setting out initial specific development sites.

During discussion, Members noted that the Council's new council house building programme would complement that currently delivered in partnership with Housing Associations and other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the private sector. It was explained that the necessary expertise to deliver the new build programme was initially likely to be externally procured. One option for consideration could be to use an RSL as the Council's 'delivery agent' in the initial stage. There would also be undoubted impact internally on legal, financial and planning officer time.

The Head of Landlord Services also reminded Members that the Council would be responsible for design of the new homes, which were likely to be appropriate to their location and of traditional materials, especially as the Council would be required to maintain them over the longer term. The Council was also the Local Planning Authority.

RESOLVED:

1. That the approach being taken to this matter, as outlined in the above Report, be endorsed.
2. That a further Report be brought to the Committee on 20 June 2012 to update on the new arrangements.

8. **THE NATIONAL GRADUATE SCHEME AND APPRENTICESHIPS**
(Report [PER210](#) refers)

The Committee noted that the Report had previously been considered by the Personnel Committee, at its meeting held 28 March 2012, which agreed to the recommendations as set out. Cabinet was also to consider the Report at its meeting on 11 April 2012.

The Committee welcomed the proposals as outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary estimate of £35,000 be approved for the Housing Revenue Account.

9. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
##	Purchase of 41 St Catherines Road, Highcliffe, Winchester)) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs of) any particular person) (including the authority) holding that information).) (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)))

###	Care and Support Arrangements in Extra Care Housing)	Information relating to a particular individual. (Para 1 to Schedule 12A refers).
)	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual. (Para 2 to Schedule 12A refers)
)	Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority. (Para 4 to Schedule 12A refers)

10. **PURCHASE OF 41 ST CATHERINES ROAD, HIGHCLIFFE, WINCHESTER**
(Report CAB2318(HSG) refers)

Councillor Tait declared a personal and prejudicial interest with regard to this item, as he had been previously involved in negotiations with the Council with regard to an existing occupier of the property. He left the room during consideration of the Report.

The Committee considered a Report that set out proposals to purchase a property for social housing use (detail in exempt minute).

11. **CARE AND SUPPORT ARRANGMENTS IN EXTRA CARE HOUSING**
(Report CAB2322(HSG) refers)

Councillors Collin and Stallard declared personal (but non-prejudicial) interests in actions taken or proposed with regard to this item, because of their position as a County Councillors and the joint working with the County Council as part of the proposals. Both Councillors remained in the room and spoke and voted thereon.

The Committee considered a Report that set out details of the Council's provision of care and support services in its extra care housing (detail in exempt minute).

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.50pm