

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

18 September 2013

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Godfrey (P)

Weston (P)

Other invited Councillors:

J Berry (P)

Izard (P)

McLean (P)

Scott (P)

Rutter (P)

TACT representatives:

Mrs J Steventon-Baker

Mr J Bond (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the Committee:

Councillor Weir

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Nelmes and Tait

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 19 June 2013 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Scott congratulated officers for arranging the recent well attended 'Meet, Greet and Swap' event for Council tenants at the Discovery Centre, Winchester. He suggested that Members be informed in due course of any housing swaps since arranged.

3. **NEW HOMES DELIVERY – HOME LOSS AND DISTURBANCE POLICY**
(Report CAB2515(HSG) refers)

During discussion, the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) clarified that there was some flexibility and discretion within the proposed Home Loss and Disturbance Policy for there to be appropriate compensation in recognition of tenants' previous investment in a property.

The Committee also referred to the Re-Housing Policy that would allow tenants whose properties were required to carry out redevelopment proposals, to be directly matched to a property in a new development. Even though there was other discretionary incentives available, it was questioned whether it was appropriate for tenants who have been asked to move from their home, to be expected to pay a higher rent for a newly built house. It was agreed that The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to give this matter further consideration as part of any future review of the New Homes Development Strategy.

It was explained that under the proposed re-housing incentive, tenants who were currently under-occupying their homes and who had to permanently leave their homes in order for the redevelopment to proceed, would be allowed an additional bedroom above their actual housing need. However, this would still be subject to any consequent appropriate reduction in Housing Benefit payments. The New Homes policy also included proposals for the construction of new dwellings appropriate in size for those wishing to downsize. The Assistant Director reiterated that the Council was generally looking to discourage under-occupancy of Council homes.

Mr Bond (TACT) drew the Committee's attention to TACT's comments set out at paragraph 9 of the Report and requested that it be kept fully informed should any of the proposals be changed.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1 That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to review and report back on the appropriate level of rent to be charged to a tenant whose house is demolished as a direct consequence of redevelopment proposals and who subsequently is offered a property in the new development.

2 That a Council tenant who is required to move as a direct consequence of redevelopment proposals be offered:-

- (i) The statutory Home Loss payment (or an equivalent amount where there is no statutory entitlement, at the discretion of the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer));

- (ii) a Disturbance payment based on their actual removal expenses;
- (iii) a Band 2 priority on the Hampshire Home Choice scheme to secure alternative accommodation either for a temporary or permanent period whilst the development takes place;
- (iv) an offer of a new property in the development of an appropriate size for the household, if such a property is available;
- (v) the opportunity for independent advice as set out in the report.

2. That the Council commissions independent support from an external agency on a “call off” basis to provide appropriate advice to tenants as and when required

4. **AUTHORISATION TO PROGRESS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME: WESTMAN ROAD, WEEKE (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**
(Report CAB2514(HSG) refers)

The Chairman referred to the Leader’s recent announcement at Cabinet on the latest situation regarding the new homes building programme. Three schemes were due for completion in March 2014, with others to be brought forward, should necessary funding become available. The proposals under discussion at Westman Road were scheduled from 2016 onwards.

During discussion, the Head of New Homes Delivery explained that the programme should be sufficiently flexible so that some proposals (such as Westman Road) could be developed at an earlier time should others become delayed. Therefore, schemes continued to be proactively prepared with a view to securing planning permissions. Progression of the Westman Road scheme at this time would also bring certainty to the local community and was more cost effective than incurring additional architect and consultant costs at a later date.

The Head of New Homes Delivery introduced the proposals and corrected an error at paragraph 10.3 of the Report. The final rent levels for the scheme were currently 69.6% of open market rents, not 80%. This percentage had regard to the requirements for the development to meet Code for Sustainable Homes requirements.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Weir (a Ward Member for St Barnabas) addressed the Committee. In summary, she advised that she supported the intention to develop the site and highlighted a number of matters related to the proposals. She suggested that the scheme should include smaller dwellings with a ‘local option’ for older people in Weeke to downsize. This would release family homes in the area for which there was a demand. With regard to the site’s secluded position, Councillor Weir suggested that the design and layout of the scheme and (ideally) permeability

with an adjacent site, would help to ensure that the development was a pleasant place to live and not an isolated cul-de-sac. Finally, Councillor Weir queried whether the proposed improvements to Dean Park as mitigation for the loss of the open space would be of direct benefit to the residents of Weeke.

In response, the Head of New Homes Delivery reported that some connectivity with an adjacent development in Stoney Lane was desirable and discussions were under way with the developer to seek to achieve this. It was also confirmed that accommodation to potentially enable existing tenants to downsize was proposed. Additional open space could not be provided in the Weeke area by way of compensation and therefore improvements to Dean Park were proposed. They would create a better use of existing facilities, including improved access, and would be funded from within the overall budget for the development. The proposed improvements here had also been guided by the outcome of a community consultation exercise and the process of this was described.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1 That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to prepare and submit planning applications to develop Council Homes at Westman Road, Weeke.

2 That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to amend proposals, if necessary, to prepare the schemes for planning application submission.

3 That the Head of New Homes Delivery, in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services, be authorised to take necessary actions to resolve any legal issues that may arise to allow the development of the site for new homes.

4 That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to take necessary actions to comply with any planning requirements

5. **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>
##	Authorisation to Progress Affordable Housing Scheme: Westman Road, Weeke (Exempt Appendix)) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers).
##	Winnal Flats – Gas Main & External Wall Insulation))))

6. **AUTHORISATION TO PROGRESS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME: WESTMAN ROAD, WEEKE (EXEMPT APPENDIX)**
(Report CAB2514(HSG) refers)

The Committee referred to Exempt Appendix 1 that set out a financial appraisal summary and risk management issues related to the proposals.

RESOLVED:

That the exempt information in Appendix 1 to the Report be noted.

7. **WINNALL FLATS – GAS MAIN & EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION**
(Report CAB2513(HSG) refers)

The Committee considered the Report which detailed proposed gas main works, individual gas heating installations and insulation works to Winnall flats, Winchester (detail in exempt appendix).

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.40pm