

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

4 February 2014

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 (P)

Mr J Bond (P)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Pines, Ruffell and Tait

Mr D Chafe (TACT)

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 28 November 2013 be approved and adopted.

2. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2014/15 AND BUSINESS PLAN 2014-15 – 2043/44**

(Report CAB2548(HSG) refers)

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) introduced the Report and answered a number of detailed questions from Councillors on its contents.

The Assistant Director confirmed that, although specific reference was made to proposals for replacing heating and external wall insulation at Winnall flats, other energy efficiency improvements were in progress across the whole of the housing stock. The Committee noted difficulties with damp and mould issues in some properties, and the Assistant Director advised that £300,000

per annum had been allocated for the installation of extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms. However, these and other improvements such as insulation, double glazing and central heating also required properties to be adequately ventilated by either opening windows or switching on the fans. It was acknowledged that some tenants were reluctant to do this because of concerns over the rising costs of heating and/or electricity.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director advised that the under-occupation scheme encouraging tenants to downsize would, in the coming year, focus on both those affected by the size criteria and older tenants. He agreed with Members' comments that there was a demand for bungalows and that this would be considered as part of any Development Strategy. The Committee noted that the Westman Road new homes scheme in Weeke did include a number of bungalows.

Mrs Steventon Baker confirmed that TACT had no further comments to make to those included in Paragraph 13 of the Report.

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

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet and Council:

- 1. That the HRA Revised budget for 2013/14 and the Budget for 2014/15 as set out in the Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report be approved.**
- .2 That the HRA Business Plan, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Report, be approved.**
- 3. That the Housing Capital programme as set out in Appendix 5 be approved.**
- 4. That the 2014/15 Maintenance Programme as set out in Appendix 5 and 9 of the Report be approved.**
- 5. That authority be given to incur capital expenditure of £7.176m for the Maintenance, Improvement and Renewal Programme as outlined in this Report and in Appendix 9 of the Report, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 6.4.**
- 6. That the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer), following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, be given delegated authority to make adjustments within the overall Maintenance, Improvement and Renewal programme as set out in Appendix 5 and 9 of the Report, including the flexibility to substitute projects and re-balance expenditure within and between the different elements/schemes in order to meet operational needs, changing priorities and commitment targets, with any**

changes being reported to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

7. That the treatment of surpluses and debt as set out in Paragraph 3 of the Report be noted and the forecast amount of debt reduction at 31 March 2014 be approved at £3 Million.

8. That the Business Plan priorities as set out in paragraph 4 of the Report and the key service priorities for 2014/15 as detailed in Appendix 6 be approved.

3. ESTATES IMPROVEMENTS – WINNALL FLATS
(Report CAB2550(HSG) refers)

In response to questions, the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) advised that during consultation with tenants of the flats, there had been some opposition to any form of parking enforcement that required additional payments from tenants (such as a residents' parking scheme). However, it was important that the additional parking provided remained available for residents of the flats, so the situation would be kept under review.

The Assistant Director explained that residents had expressed differing views over the provision and location of play facilities and therefore further proposals would be considered in 2014/15.

One Member believed that the Report highlighted wider issues in relation to Winnall and the importance of local residents and businesses working together to seek solutions, including the requirement for a comprehensive transport strategy for the area. As Portfolio Holder for Built Environment, Councillor Weston confirmed these matters were under discussion.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposals set out in the report for improvements to parking provision on roads and land at the Winnall flats, at a cost of £122,000, funded from the existing Estate Improvement Programme budget, be approved.

2. That existing garage licence agreements be terminated prior to the commencement of works and that the remaining garages be allocated to existing tenants where possible.

4. **2013/14 Q3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SERVICES**

(Report CAB2551(HSG) refers)

The Committee noted that although the level of rent arrears had increased slightly, this was below the target set in the 2014/15 Business Plan and was not a significant cause for concern. Recent local press reports raising concerns about significant increases in arrears were thought to relate to the private sector and possibly the national situation. The Assistant Director confirmed that the Council worked closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau as part of the tenants' arrears programme.

With regard to issues relating to the ground maintenance contract, the Assistant Director highlighted that tenants had established a Landscapes Scrutiny Group to monitor standards and work with the contractor to achieve improvements. In addition, a Winchester City Council/East Hampshire Joint Environment Scrutiny Committee had been set up with a remit that included this contract.

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

RESOLVED:

That the performance information be noted.

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>
##	New Homes Delivery – Select list of contractors 16 – 35 Units) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs of) any particular person (including) the authority holding that) information) (Para 3 Schedule) 12A refers).

6. **NEW HOMES DELIVERY – SELECT LIST CONTRACTORS 16 – 35 UNITS**
(Report CAB2547(HSG) refers)

One Councillor queried whether there were any provisions requiring contractors to adopt the minimum wage or offer apprenticeships. The Assistant Director agreed to check this with the Head of Estates after the meeting and respond accordingly.

Similarly, the Assistant Director would also check with the Head of Estates why the Invitation to Tender advert (as contained as Appendix 1 to the Report) stipulated a Code for Sustainable Homes (COSE) Level 3 or higher when current Council planning policies required Level 4 or 5. However, he highlighted that it was for the Council to stipulate what code level it required when seeking tenders for individual contracts.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Select List Contracts Procedure Rules required the Council to seek tenders from at least four contractors. The purpose of the Select List of 12 contractors detailed in the Report was to provide suitable competition and choice for the Council, in terms of selecting the most appropriate contractor for each scheme.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the use of a Select List Procedure for the construction of homes under the New Homes Development Programme, as set out in the Report, be approved pursuant to Contracts Procedure Rule 12.1.
2. That the top 12 contractors named in the report who returned PQQs be approved for inclusion on the Select List for New Homes Delivery for 16 – 35 Units.
3. That the Head of Estates be authorised to use the Select List for provides in the range of 16-35 units, and to select which contractors and how many contractors are invited to tender for each contract, taking account of the value of the contract, the contractor's financial standing , the size of the development and the capacity of the contractor.
4. That the Head of Estates continually monitors the performance of contractors to allow the list to be reviewed, such review to take place not later than 1 January 2018.

5. That where a scheme under the New Homes Development Programme is authorised to proceed in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 6.4, the Head of Estates be authorised to let a contract for the construction of the scheme, in accordance with the Contracts Procedure Rules, subject to the scheme being within a previously approved capital budget.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.15am.

Chairman