

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

29 June 2016

Attendance:

Councillors:

Horrill (Chairman) (P)

Miller (P)

Weston

Deputy Members

Councillor Godfrey (Deputy Member for Councillor Weston)

Other invited Councillors:

Berry

McLean

Burns (P)

Scott

Izard (P)

Tait (P)

TACT representatives:

Mr D Chafe (P)

Mr D Light (P)

Others in attendance who did not address the Committee:

Mrs M Gill (TACT)

1. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Godfrey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda items due to his role as a County Council employee. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

2. **TIMING OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

That the meetings of the Committee commence at 4.00pm for the remainder of the 2016/17 Municipal Year, with meeting dates to remain as previously scheduled.

3. **MINUTES**

As an Observer to the Winchester Housing Trust Board, Councillor Tait welcomed the changes to the Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 22 March 2016, less exempt minute, be approved and adopted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

5. **DISPOSAL OF LAND AT COLES MEDE, OTTERBOURNE**

(Report CAB2813(HSG) refers)

The Chairman stated that due to an administrative error, the proposed disposal of land had not been advertised for the required period. Therefore it was proposed that the Report be deferred to enable the proposal to be re-advertised. Any previous comments received would also be taken into account in the revised Report.

The Chairman requested that a special meeting of the Cabinet (Housing) Committee be arranged as soon as possible, preferably during the week commencing 25 July 2016, to consider the deferred report.

Mr Chafe highlighted a mistake with the map provided and the Head of New Homes Delivery agreed to rectify any error prior to the proposal being re-advertised.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be deferred to a future special meeting of the Committee (date to be advised).

6. **SECTION 15A COMMONS ACT 2006 TOWN OR VILLAGE GREENS DEPOSIT OF STATEMENT BY OWNER**

(Report CAB2816(HSG) refers)

The Assistant Director (Estates and Regeneration) advised that an advantage of the proposal would be to offer greater certainty for the Council over the status of land as a town or village green. This was because once a Landowner's Statement had been lodged, it "stopped the clock" and provided a time period of 12 months in which to register applications for existing town or village green status. If no application was made within this period, the Council could be certain that the land was not town or village green. He emphasised that it was not removing rights from people and could be a very useful tool for the Council in furthering its new build housing proposals.

Whilst welcoming the proposals, one Member commented that its usefulness in practice might be curtailed by some members of the public continuing to pursue applications for village green status in order to prevent development near their homes.

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

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet:

1. That the Assistant Director (Estates and Regeneration) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Estates be authorised to complete and deposit statements under Section 15A Commons Act 2006 with the Commons Registration Authority in respect of land within Winchester City Council's ownership.

7. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2015/16 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTTURN**

(Report CAB2808(HSG) refers)

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) drew the Committee's attention to a correction to one of the figures provided in Appendix 4 of the Report as follows:

- Revenue Contribution to Capital – £10,473m (not £10,604m stated)

With regard to Section 6 of the Report, the Assistant Director advised that the Council had determined that changes being introduced as part of the Welfare Bill would affect 79 tenants, of whom 33 were existing Council tenants.

David Chafe (TACT) stated that TACT understood why it was necessary to explain various financial year adjustments in the Report and believed that it demonstrated that the HRA was well controlled and planned and all adjustments were monitored and effectively dealt with by Officers. TACT welcomed that the Housing Business Plan 2015-16 Appendix 5 contained detailed Key Performance Indicators. TACT fully supported the recommendations in the Report and on behalf of tenants, thanked the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) and Team for his work.

The Chairman thanked Mr Chafe for his comments and concurred with his congratulations of the Housing Team.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director confirmed that work was continuing on estates improvements, which were tenant led. Where it was not possible to install UPVC windows (for example, within a conservation area), the possibility of installing secondary glazing was being considered.

One Member acknowledged the contributions of former Councillor Janet Berry to meetings of the Committee and emphasised the importance of the input from invited Councillors continuing.

The Chairman emphasised that all Councillors had also been involved in the consultation on the draft HRA budget through a Councillor Briefing event held in the Autumn of 2015.

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

RECOMMENDED:

1. THAT THE REVENUE BUDGET CARRY FORWARDS AMOUNTING TO £84,300 BE APPROVED, AS SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 4.1 OF THE REPORT, NOTING THAT THESE ARE IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL FUND CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS DETAILED IN CAB2812 (REPORT TO BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET ON 6 JULY 2016).

2. THAT AN ADDITIONAL BUDGET OF £100,000 FOR DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS BE APPROVED TO BE FUNDED BY THE HRA AS REQUESTED IN PARAGRAPH 6 OF THE REPORT.

RESOLVED:

1. That the financial performance information be noted.

2. That the amount of housing debt at 31 March 2016 at £157.353m be approved, as explained in Paragraph 5.2 of the Report.

3. That the capital budget carry forwards amounting to £991,304 as detailed in paragraph 4.1, which have been included in the overall capital carry forward recommendation in CAB2811 (Report to be considered by Cabinet on 6 July 2016).

4. That the key performance indicators and Housing Business Plan outturn be noted, as shown in Appendices 5 and 6 and explained in Section 7 of the Report.

8. PACKAGING AND PROCUREMENT OF HEATING MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

(Report CAB2814(HSG) refers)

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) outlined the issues caused due to the less than satisfactory performance of the current contractor, Liberty. The Report suggested that in the future, the contract period be reduced to three years, but extendable by one to three years by mutual agreement (i.e.

six years maximum). Three years was considered to be the minimum term that would be likely to attract the most competitive interest.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Steve Ruggles who was Chairman of the Scrutiny Group tasked to examine the performance of Liberty Gas (Findings contained as Appendix 3 to the Report). In summary, Mr Ruggles stated that Liberty Gas had not been up to the required standard in terms of providing customer satisfaction at the first visit. In general, their work had generated a lot of call backs.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ruggles and the other members of the Scrutiny Group for their work which had been very useful for Officers in preparing the Report.

David Chafe stated that TACT were aware of the issues that had arisen with Liberty Gas and wished to thank all members of the Repairs Performance Review Group, the Liberty Gas Scrutiny Group, the Council's Property Services Team and Council tenants for their time and hard work in producing the 18 key recommendations. TACT hoped that the key recommendations were implemented as soon as possible and that issues improved in the remaining period of the contract. In addition, further contracts should benefit from the information obtained during the scrutiny exercise. TACT supported the Report's recommendations.

The Assistant Director responded to Councillor's questions about what had caused the current issues with the service provided by Liberty Gas. In summary, this was considered to be due to a number of factors, including poor diagnosis of problems initially resulting in re-visits being required and insufficient time spent by engineers undertaking a boiler service. He confirmed that all engineers were required to be Gas Safe registered. Investigations were underway regarding IT improvements to enable better monitoring by the Council of time spent by engineers on each job.

The Assistant Director explained that a final decision on the preferred method of assessing a new contract had not yet been reached (for example, regarding a price/quality split). Section 3.1 (f) of the Report outlined a number of areas that would be reviewed as part of the modernisation of the existing terms and conditions. This would include, for example, stipulating no sub-contracting of work and altering the payment to contractors to be per property per year.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That, the existing Package 1 (gas servicing and responsive repairs currently awarded to Liberty) not be extended beyond 30/9/2017.
2. That, for appliance servicing and responsive repairs, delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director (Chief Housing

Officer) in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance to select a suitable competitive procurement option, to determine evaluation criteria, to select candidates to be invited to tender or mini competition (existing Framework), and to evaluate tenders and to select a preferred bidder.

3. That, for appliance servicing and responsive repairs, the Councils Contracts Procedure Rule paragraph 2.4 b) i be waived, and delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Finance to select and subscribe to (if deemed appropriate and necessary) an existing external Framework agreement to procure these works.

4. That, for the appliance servicing and responsive repairs, a tender acceptance report be submitted to Cabinet (Housing) Committee before 1/4/2017 to approve selection of the successful tenderer(s).

5. That, the delegated authority detailed in Resolutions 2 and 3 above also be given in respect of the central heating installations.

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>
##	Exempt minute of previous meeting) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs of) any particular person (including) the authority holding that) information). (Para 3 Schedule) 12A refers)

10. **EXEMPT MINUTE**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the previous meeting held on 22 March 2016 be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm and concluded at 5.15pm.

Chairman