

**HOUSING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**

**9 November 2004**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Berry (P)  
Clohosey (P)  
Higgins (P)  
Hoare (P)  
Maynard (P)

Nunn (P)  
Oxley (P)  
Pines (P)  
Steel (P)  
Tait (P)

TACT:

Mr Rickman and Mr Gilbert-Wood

Others attending who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Davies  
Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

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1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 13 July 2004 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

3. **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT**

(Report CAS29 refers)

Members welcomed the Director of Health and Housing's confirmation that the strategy would be fed into departmental business plans and that this would therefore assist Members in their future monitoring of the Council's progress in achieving sustainable working.

The Committee requested that the draft strategy contain more detailed specific actions and targets and 'measurables' wherever possible.

Further to discussion regarding the distances officers lived from the Council Offices, the Director of Health and Housing confirmed that the Council would be considering travel to work plans.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet have regard to the comments as set out above in its consideration of the finalisation of the Council's sustainability strategy.

4. **HOUSING GENERAL FUND SERVICES BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2004/05**

(Report HO43 refers)

The Director of Health and Housing answered questions and provided more detail regarding the reasons for budget variation and progress against performance indicators as set out in the report.

Following questions, the Director of Health and Housing detailed the potential of Compulsory Management Orders and the emerging legislation regarding gypsy and traveller sites. The Director also confirmed that the trial to accommodate homeless families in hard-to-let sheltered accommodation was to be assessed by the Service Charges Informal Member Officer Working Group.

During consideration of appendix 4 of the report, the Director of Health and Housing advised that on page 8, the 'Paid and Committed' figure within the Progress column of the chart should be amended to read £186,000 rather than £285,500, with the net balance adjusted accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

5. **HEALTH AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT BUDGET 2005/06**

(Report HO46 refers)

Although there were no proposals for growth or savings at this time, it was noted that if any of these were forthcoming they would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee on 7 December 2004.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that although there are no proposals for growth and savings at this time, these may be identified and reported to Members at the meeting of the Housing Performance Improvement Committee on 7 December 2004.

2. That Cabinet be recommended to agree the fees and charges as detailed in section 5 of the report.

6. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2004**

(Report HO44 refers)

The Director of Health and Housing answered questions and provided additional detail regarding the reasons for budget variation and progress against performance indicators set out in the report. The Director reported that projected figures as set out generally indicated that significant variance was not expected at year end.

The Director advised that since compilation of the report, the Audit Commission had visited the Department following recommendations of the CPA inspection largely regarding asset management plans. The findings of the Audit Commission would be reported at the next meeting of the Committee.

Following a question regarding vacant posts within supported housing schemes, the Director confirmed that residents were not given a reduction in the appropriate service element of their rent, as the use of mobile wardens had ensured that the level of service was kept broadly equivalent.

The Director confirmed that procedures had been reviewed recently regarding former tenant arrears and explained that unrecoverable debts were inevitable in some cases.

The Director also explained that the performance indicator for average re-let time for voids was illustrative of the number of empty sheltered hard-to-let units.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be noted.

7. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY – PROGRESS/REVIEW**  
(Report HO40 refers)

The Director of Health and Housing answered a number of questions regarding the functioning to date of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy. He also explained existing legislation and the potential impacts on the discretionary capital allocation regarding the private sector services following the enactment of the Housing Bill. It was requested that a further report on the financial implications of the Bill be provided in due course.

Following consideration of Appendix A of the report (Capital Budget - Discretionary Expenditure) Members noted that almost all discretionary grant aid had been allocated at the half year. Therefore, it was requested that a report be submitted to the Committee early next year detailing if there was a need to increase discretionary grants for the private sector.

RESOLVED:

1. That the projected impacts of the requirements of the Housing Bill following its enactment expected later this year be noted and that a further report on the financial implications of the Bill be provided in due course.

2. That the level and future allocation of discretionary capital available to support the range of assistance, services and partnership contributions be noted, and that the Director of Health and Housing be requested to provide a report detailing any proposals to increase discretionary grants for the private sector.

3. That Officers be congratulated in their implementation of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy since its enactment in July 2003 and for the significant achievements to date.

8. **HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY REVIEW**

(Report HO41 refers)

Members noted that the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy had provided some significant improvements in reducing expenditure regarding bed and breakfast accommodation, as well as providing an enhanced focus on service delivery and customer service.

The Director of Health and Housing answered a number of questions and provided further detail on the specific elements of re-housing of certain client groups, and proactive initiatives and partnerships in undertaking the Homeless and Housing Advisory Service in general for the District.

Members commented that future reporting of the Strategy Delivery Plan should include detail of success of priorities against target dates etc, as this would assist the Committee in its monitoring of the service.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That Officers be congratulated on the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008 to date.

9. **EVAULATION OF CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (CBL) PILOTS**

The following composition of the proposed Choice Based Lettings Informal Scrutiny Group was agreed:

- A representative of constituent Joint Housing Register partners;
- A representative of the Housing Voluntary Forum;
- The Housing Needs Manager;
- The Senior Housing Needs Officer (when appointed);
- Two representatives from TACT;
- Councillors representing each group (one representing each Group);
- A representative drawn from the black and ethnic minority housing service user Jigsaw Group.

The Director suggested that the Group meet once the Senior Housing Needs Officer had been appointed and that Officers formulate a programme of work so that a recommendation could be made to Cabinet by October 2005.

RESOLVED:

1. That a Choice Based Lettings Informal Scrutiny Group be convened as detailed in the report and set out above, and that Member and TACT appointments be confirmed at the next meeting of the Committee.
2. That the proposed terms of reference as set out in Appendix A of the report be noted.

10. **CAPITAL RECEIPTS – TRANSFER OF NON OPERATIONAL PROPERTIES**  
(Report HO45 refers)

Although generally supportive of the proposals, it was agreed that the Director of Health and Housing should incorporate the proposals to transfer the Ground Rented Industrial sites at Winnall in the Budget report proposed for the meeting of the Committee on 7 December 2004. The report would therefore include illustrative figures indicating that the transfers were cost neutral to both the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund.

Furthermore, it was agreed that the Director provide a full list of all the non-operational assets within the Housing Revenue Account for background information in advance of the meeting of the Committee on 7 December 2004.

RESOLVED:

1. That the decision whether to transfer the Ground Rented Industrial sites at Winnall, be deferred to the meeting of the Housing Performance Improvement Committee on 7 December 2004.

2. That detailed illustrative figures indicating that the transfers are cost neutral to both the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund be provided and contained within the Budget report proposed for the meeting of the Committee on the 7 December 2004.

11. **HOUSING INFORMATION SYSTEM AND INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP – PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
(Report HO47 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the proposed terms of reference as set out be agreed and that a work programme for the Group be discussed in due course.

12. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Report PS144 refers)

It was noted that item 4 under Committee Business, Review of Letting Process, referred to the proposals to evaluate a Choice Based Lettings pilot.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 10.35pm

Chairman