

**HOUSING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE****24 January 2005****Attendance:**

## Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Berry (P)  
Clohosey (P)  
Higgins (P)  
Hoare (P)  
Maynard (P)Nunn (P)  
Oxley  
Pines (P)  
Steel (P)  
Tait (P)**TACT:**

Mr Gilbert-Wood and Mr Rickman

**Others attending who did not address the meeting:**Councillor Davies  
Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

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**1 MINUTES**

The Committee noted that at Council on 5 January 2005 the Chairman had drawn attention to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held 7 December 2004, where on page 394 in Minute 581, first paragraph, the words ‘...introduction of Choice Based Letting in March 2005...’ should be deleted and the following words inserted: ‘...investigation of a Choice Based lettings scheme by an Informal Scrutiny Group to be convened after March 2005, with recommendations to Cabinet by October 2005...’ – the existing wording then continues. Council noted this proposed amendment, however its formal adoption was a matter for the Housing Performance Improvement Committee

## RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 7 December 2004, subject to the above amendment, be approved and adopted.

**2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

3 **HOUSING GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING  
APRIL – DECEMBER 2004.**

(Report HO51 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.

Referring to the Departmental Objectives for 2004/05, the Director clarified progress regarding implementation of a Choice Based Lettings scheme, provision of affordable housing and the Council's Accreditation Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

4 **HEALTH AND HOUSING DEPARTMENT GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN  
2005/06**

(Report HO52 refers)

The Committee considered the draft 2005/06 Business Plan for the Health and Housing Department General Fund. During discussion, it was requested that, wherever possible, the Business Plan's headings follow the recent management restructuring of the Department and include 'target dates'.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the proposals and targets as set out within the Health and Housing Department General Fund Business Plan 2005/06.

5 **REVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING GENERAL FUND SERVICES**

(Report HO53 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the proposals agreed by Personnel Committee, Principal Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet be noted, in particular as follows:

(i) That the revised management structure of the Health and Housing Department as detailed in the report has been agreed with effect from the 1 April 2005;

(ii) That the new post of Housing Choices Manager (title to be agreed in consultation with the Vice Chairman of Personnel Committee) has been created from the merger of current team leader roles.

(iii) That the recruitment for the new post of Housing Choices Manager will be ring fenced to allow only the current team leaders to apply and allow the unsuccessful applicant to be redeployed if possible.

6 **TACT COMMENTS ON REPORT HO54**

(Report HO55 refers)

The above item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item on the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration, so as to inform the Committee of the views of TACT, following its meeting held 19 January 2005. The views would be taken into account when considering the Housing Landlord Services Budget and Performance Monitoring April – December 2004 (Report HO54 refers) as set out in the following minute.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that the comments contained within be considered during the item below.

7 **HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICES BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING  
APRIL – DECEMBER 2004**

(Report HO54)

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.

It was agreed that to assist the Committee in its monitoring role, additional commentary and explanations be added to future performance monitoring reports. Consideration should also be given to further training for both Members and TACT on performance monitoring.

The Committee took into consideration the views of TACT as set out in report HO55.

Mr Gilbert-Wood suggested that there would be no improvement to the performance indicators related to the areas of concern as highlighted by TACT if these were not addressed as soon as possible. Mr Rickman advised that he had remained during the confidential discussion of this Report at the Cabinet meeting on 19 January 2005, and had stated that he welcomed the proposals as put forward.

Following discussion, it was noted that the majority of performance indicators that were of most concern to the Committee referred to the performance of those elements of housing services provided by the existing contractor (SERCO). These included responsive repairs and work on void properties.

Members referred to the general principles of the exempt report 'Depot Services Contract – Contractor Performance' (report CAB1012 refers) which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 19 January 2005. The Director of Health and Housing advised that Cabinet at this meeting had discussed the content of the exempt report and had resolved that urgent discussion take place with the contractor on how to improve performance. TACT would be involved in the consultation for these discussions. The Director reminded the Committee that they would continue to be kept informed, via performance indicators as contained within the Landlord Services Performance Monitoring reports, of the progress of those specific elements of the contract regarding Housing services. Both Cabinet and Principal Scrutiny Committee would continue to undertake a monitoring role of the performance of the overall contract.

Following questions, the Director confirmed that there were clauses requiring recovery of costs from the contractor of any works placed elsewhere, for example to other contractors, to increase performance to a satisfactory level should this be deemed necessary.

The Committee expressed their concern that the existing standard of performance of those elements of the contract that related to housing services may decrease further and recommend to Cabinet that urgent consideration be given to the use of alternative contractors where appropriate.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee believes that the performance of SERCO in relation to responsive repairs and work on voids is unacceptable and that urgent action is necessary before standards drop any further.

2. That it be recommended to Cabinet that steps be taken immediately to enforce the provisions of the contract and that it is appropriate to remove a portion of the work from SERCO and allocate it to another contractor so that the performance indicators in the contract are met.

**8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Report PS153 refers)

It was agreed that the establishment of a Choice Based Lettings Informal Scrutiny Group (as approved by Cabinet and Principal Scrutiny Committee) be comprised as follows:

Councillors Clohosey, Higgins, Pines and Tait (names to be confirmed)  
TACT - to be confirmed

**RESOLVED:**

That the membership of the Choice Based Lettings Informal Scrutiny Group be approved as set out above and that the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.15pm.

Chairman