

HOUSING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

17 March 2005

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman)
Clohosey (Vice-Chairman in the Chair) (P)

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

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

TACT:

Mr Gilbert-Wood and Mr Rickman

Others attending who addressed the meeting:

Councillor De Peyer
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

Others attending who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Love (Chair of the Winchester District Inclusive Housing Needs Forum)

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Chairman, Councillor Coates. The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Clohosey, took the Chair for the meeting.

2 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2005 be approved and adopted.

3 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor De Peyer addressed the Committee and advised that he had made a request to the Director of Health and Housing to provide him with documentation relating to the Council's policies regarding Council house exchanges. In addition he had asked for details of when these rules first applied and arrangements for their review, if any.

Councillor Davies addressed the Committee regarding the Housing Options Appraisal process. Councillor Davies considered that there was an apparent delay between the tenant consultation deadline of 15 February 2005 and notification of these results to the Steering Group on 4 April 2005. This was unfortunate and had received negative

comment from some of his constituents. Furthermore, he asked whether the deliberations of the Committee regarding the report on Delivering Decent Homes (report HO56 elsewhere on the agenda refers) may not be appropriate until the results of the consultation exercise were known.

Mr Gilbert Wood (TACT) stated that TACT had expressed similar concerns at the delay between the tenant consultation deadline of 15 February 2005 and notification of these results to the Steering Group, but acknowledged the constraints that the timetable of meetings presented..

Responding the matters raised by Councillor Davies, the Director of Health and Housing reminded Members that the timetable of meetings for the Steering Group had been agreed some time ago. A meeting timetabled for 2 February 2005 had been cancelled as there was no further information for the Group at this time. A meeting was not arranged in March 2005 due to the Easter break and the subsequent meeting was arranged for 4 April in order to facilitate the onward transmission of the decision of the Steering Group to the meeting of Cabinet on 20 April 2005 and then Council. It was clarified that the report on Delivering Decent Homes (HO56 refers) needed to be agreed so that the programme (for the next 12 months) and necessary budgets could be implemented on time. Furthermore, the tenants' preferred options would not impact on this programme due to timescales involved in implementing any changes, should these be agreed.

Councillor Hiscock (Portfolio Holder for Housing) suggested that as it was for the Steering Group to make the final recommendation to Cabinet and Council regarding the tenant 'test of opinion' exercise and that this could be advertised after this meeting. However a caveat should advise that the final ratification of its decision was to be by made by Cabinet, Council and then the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister/Community Housing Taskforce.

4 **DELIVERING DECENT HOMES** (Report HO56 refers)

Following a question from Mr Gilbert Wood (TACT), it was confirmed that alternative sources of funding as mentioned in paragraph 3 of Section 2.5.2 of the report referred to the Council's Capital Programme, increased income or efficiency savings.

Responding to the concerns of a Member, the Director of Health and Housing confirmed the 'minimal void standard' of vacated properties prior to their reallocation. The Director confirmed that proper integrity tests (with certification) were carried out on electrical and gas appliances.

Further to a question from Mr Rickman (TACT), the Director stated that there was no current policy on the scheduling of work regarding void reinstatement relating to those properties less likely to be re-let immediately.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet that:

1. The proposed affordable Major Repairs, Renewals and Maintenance Strategy 2005-2010 be approved.
2. The proposed Major Repairs, Renewals and Maintenance Programme 2006-2006 be approved.

3. The proposed Repairs Strategy to complete Decent Homes works 2005-2010 be approved.

4. That other proposals, targets and issues contained within the report are noted.

5 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2034 – ANNUAL UPDATE**

(Report HO57 refers)

Following discussion, the Director of Health and Housing agreed that some of the operational targets in the Service Plans could be more focussed and output based.

Responding to the concerns of a Member, the Director of Health and Housing advised that individual cleansing contracts clearly defined those areas of responsibility (such as communal stair wells etc) in addition to those more responsive activities that were at the discretion of the Area Housing Manager. The Committee discussed recent shortcomings of an existing cleansing contract and agreed that, should the recent improvements shown not be maintained in the next 3 months, then the terms of the contract should be revisited. The Director also confirmed that, a percentage of contractors' fees had been adjusted regarding works not carried out to the specification of the contract.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee note with concern existing deficiencies in meeting the terms of a Cleansing contract and requested that they be monitored regarding ongoing improvement.

That it be recommended to Cabinet that:

1. Cabinet have regard to the comments of the Committee as set out above.

2. Cabinet approves the HRA Business Plan Annual Update.

3. That the Head of Housing Landlord Services be given authority to make minor editing amendments in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing prior to final publication of the Plan.

6 **HOUSING SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS IMPROVEMENTS**

(Report HO58 refers)

Following discussion, it was requested that the Director of Development Services provide clarification regarding the portion of capital contributions from owner occupiers regarding private sewage treatment works and whether this was towards major capital works as well as maintenance and other running costs.

The Director of Development Services explained that indicative budgets as set out in Appendix A of the report showed that the long-term budget for repairs would need to be reviewed in due course, especially regarding those plants not originally cost-effective for Southern Water to adopt but that required major repairs to meet Environment Agency standards.

Responding to questions, the Director advised that the officers were satisfied that those plants that had failed sampling tests undertaken by the Environment Agency were due to either sampling error or intermediate faults due to mechanical problems.

RESOLVED:

That it be recommended to Cabinet:

1. That the Acting Director of Development Services, in consultation with the Director of Health and Housing, be authorised to progress the works outlined in this report.

2. That the proposals to carry over the under spend from 2004/05 in to 2005/06 to allow works to be carried out on those sites where delays have been caused by land purchase issues be approved, subject to the final capital commitments at the end of March 2005.

3. That it be investigated whether there need to be provision in the capital budget for carrying out works and replacements to systems to the standards of the Environment Agency that were not likely to be adopted by Southern Water.

7 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**
(Report PS164 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

8 **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

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.

Minute Number	Item	Description of Exempt Information
##	Depot Services Contract- Contractor Performance) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority). (Para 7 Schedule 12A refers).

9 **DEPOT SERVICES CONTRACT – CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE**
(Report HO59 refers)

The Committee considered the above report which set out further details regarding the performance of the depot services contract (detail in exempt minute).

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.30pm

