

CABINET (HOUSING DELIVERY) COMMITTEE**17 January 2013****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Tait (Chairman) (P)

Coates (P)

Weston (P)

Other invited Councillors:

J Berry (P)

Izard (P)

Scott (P)

TACT representative:

Mrs J Steventon Baker (P)

1. MINUTES

In response to query from Councillor Coates, the Head of New Homes Delivery advised that he had discussed the possibility of a self-build (now referred to as "custom-build") programme with the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) and negotiations were ongoing regarding a site in the Southern parishes.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 22 October 2012 be approved and adopted.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions asked or statements made.

**3. EXTRA CARE SCHEME – BID FOR HOMES AND COMMUNITY AGENCY
(Report CAB2441(HD) refers)**

The Head of New Homes Delivery advised that the cost of the proposed scheme was estimated to be in the region of £10 million, which would require approximately £5 million from the New Homes Delivery Programme. As a consequence, if the scheme was to proceed, the existing Programme would have to be reassessed and this would be submitted to Cabinet for approval. He emphasised that there was the potential for existing larger Council properties to become available if the current tenants moved into the extra care

scheme. In addition, any reassessment of the programme could take account of the fact that some of the originally proposed schemes were proving to be difficult to progress in practice. Further, he highlighted that new Council homes were already in development on the Micheldever site, with a further two sites due to commence in April 2013. If the extra care scheme was approved, it was anticipated development would commence early in 2014.

The Head of New Homes Delivery highlighted that the principal risk of the scheme was if the Council was unable to identify a suitable site. If this situation was to occur, the Council could return any Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding received, but would incur a negative impact on its reputation in terms of future dealings with the Agency.

In response to questions, the Head of New Homes Delivery advised that the HCA would expect the Council to set rents at an affordable rent level so that there would be no advantage of charging at a lower rate. Initial modelling at an 80% affordable rental level had indicated an approximate rent of £144 per week for a one-bedroom flat and £183 per week for a two bedroom flat (both inclusive of service charges etc). He emphasised that although this was an increase in rental levels on existing Council properties, it offered residents a different housing solution to meet their needs and considerable extra benefits in terms of standard of living.

One of the invited Councillors queried whether the scheme was likely to make available existing two or three bedroom Council properties in practice, as it was noted that the scheme was not just open to Council tenants. The Head of New Homes Delivery confirmed that work on encouraging tenants in general to downsize was on-going. The City Council would manage the allocation of the extra care flats, although the County Council would expect flats to be allocated evenly between tenants with low, medium and high needs.

One Councillor also expressed concern about the proposal to mix rental tenures with shared ownership within the scheme. The Head of New Homes Delivery advised that any shared ownership properties would be managed by Sentinel Housing Association and any risks would therefore be borne by them.

In response to questions, the Head of Landlord Services advised that the Government's Welfare Reforms would only affect tenants of working age and therefore would not impact upon ability to afford the rental on extra care properties.

One Councillor expressed concern that tenants would not want to live in one-bedroom flats as this did not offer them a spare bedroom for friends, relatives or carers to stay. The Head of New Homes Delivery responded that care facilities would be available 24 hours a day as an element of the Extra Care scheme. It was possible for the design to include additional spare flats for tenants' friends/relatives etc to stay in, but this would be at an additional cost to the tenants in terms of service charge.

Mrs Steventon Baker (TACT) stated that she could not support the proposals because of the impact on the programme to build new Council homes for families.

The Committee noted that the County Council, in partnership with Sentinel Housing Association, had recently opened a new Extra Care Scheme within the Hart District and Committee Members were invited to visit. The Committee requested that Officers arrange such a visit as soon as possible (to include Councillors who were invited to attend the Committee and the TACT representative).

Following discussion, the Committee noted the concerns and comments raised by TACT and the invited Councillors as summarised above. However, the increasing demand for extra care housing was also noted, together with the potential for existing Council properties to become available through their tenants moving into a new scheme. Therefore, the Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to register Winchester City Council with the Homes and Community Agency as an Investment Partner.
2. That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to submit a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for specific funding from the Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund to assist in the delivery of an Extra Care scheme on a suitable site in Winchester.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.10am

Chairman