

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE**26 March 2014**Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Godfrey (P)

Weston (P)

Other invited Councillors:

J Berry (P)

Scott

Izard (P)

Rutter

McLean (P)

TACT representatives:

Mrs J Steventon Baker (P)

Mr J Bond (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillor Tait

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Pines

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That, subject to a correction to page 5, New Homes Delivery (“requiring contractors to adopt the ~~minimum~~ *living wage*...”), the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4 February 2014 be approved and adopted.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No statements were made or questions asked.

3. **OPTIONS FOR INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
(Report CAB2573(HSG) refers)

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) introduced the Report which set out a range of options the Council could investigate to maximise the delivery of affordable homes.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director explained that the option to create a new company was the option most likely to produce the largest number of affordable homes. However, this was a relatively new approach for local authorities and was unlikely to be without risk. This option would require extensive financial and external legal advice, in addition to drawing on the experiences of the few other Local Authorities that had chosen to establish such a company.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Tait addressed the Committee in support of the recommendations within the Report and the need to maximise the opportunities to develop affordable homes within the District.

Mrs Steventon Baker confirmed that TACT supported the delivery of affordable homes.

At the conclusion of debate, the Committee agreed that, for the reasons set out in the Report, the options be investigated further and reported back to the autumn meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee confirms its interest in exploring options to increase the supply of affordable housing.
2. That officers commission the appropriate legal and financial advice to develop the proposals set out in the Report with this being funded from the HRA Revenue New Build Feasibility Budget.
3. That the Chief Finance Officer, in conjunction with the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer), be authorised to apply for additional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) debt headroom to be distributed by Local Enterprise Partnerships.
4. That the Head of New Homes Delivery reports back on progress of the above to the autumn meeting of this Committee.

4. **PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN WINCHESTER**
(Report CAB2549(HSG) refers)

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) introduced the Report which sought approval for the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013/4 – 2018/19. The Committee noted the new Strategy had been subject to a thorough consultation process and a peer review from other Local Authorities.

Members noted that a key theme of the new Strategy was early intervention to prevent homelessness and later, corrective action.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director agreed to clarify the Strategy, in particular, regarding the role of the Government's 10 Local Authority Challenges and the Local Action Plan.

The Committee also discussed how the Council sought to help people who were intentionally homeless (through the No Second Night Out Programme) and that the Strategy linked with the Troubled Families initiative and the County Council's Childrens Services department. Members also discussed the Council's support for the proposed wet shelter from the capital programme.

TACT representatives had no comment on the Report.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the outcome of the Diagnostic Peer Review of the Housing Options Service be noted.
2. That the Prevented Homelessness Strategy 2013/14 – 2018/19 be approved.
3. That the General Fund spending plans, and associated releases from the Homelessness Prevention Earmarked Reserve, as set out in Appendix 2 and subject to confirmation of government grant funding after 2014/15 be approved.
4. Removal of the budget of £50,000 from the Capital Programme in 2014/15 for a Wet Shelter be approved.
5. That officers proceed with submitting an application for the Homelessness Gold Standard.

5. **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>
##	Supporting People Funding for Older Persons Services' and Socially Excluded Services) Information relating to any individual. (Para 1 of Schedule 12A refers)) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual. (Para 2 of Schedule 12A refers)) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority. (Paras 4 of Schedule 12A refers).

6. **SUPPORTING PEOPLE FUNDING FOR OLDER PERSONS' SERVICES AND SOCIALLY EXCLUDED SERVICES**
(Report CAB2574(HSG) refers)

Councillor Godfrey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of this item 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.

The Report set out the possible effects stemming from the County Council's decision to significantly reduce funding for the Supporting People Services on the City Council's services and tenants, and on the housing partners that contribute to meeting housing need in the District.

This required a further review of the services the City Council provided regarding Older Persons' Services and Socially Excluded Services to clarify which services the Council was under a duty to provide (and therefore, where relevant, could be funded from Housing Benefit) and any additional services that residents were willing to fund themselves. As an example, Members gave an initial consideration to the possibility of providing a wider community alarm service for older residents.

Following debate, the Committee agreed to establish an Informal Policy Review Group to examine these issues in detail and report recommendations to the autumn meeting of this Committee.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed funding reduction relating to Older Persons and Socially excluded services as set out in the Report be noted.
2. **That an Informal Policy Review Group be established to review options for adapting existing services for Older People and consider the most appropriate funding measures for those services.**
3. That the existing Informal Scrutiny Group for Homelessness considers measures to mitigate the impact of funding reductions for projects that support vulnerable and “socially excluded” individuals.

7. **VOTE OF THANKS FOR THE CHAIRMAN**

This was the last meeting of the Committee to be chaired by Councillor Coates and therefore the Committee recorded its thanks and gratitude to Councillor Coates for his hard work and leadership on housing issues.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.40am.

Chairman