

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD 9 JULY 2012**

1. **CONSIDERATION OF ITEM UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S POWERS OF
CALL-IN**

(i) **COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRAMME AND
ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS (EXCLUDING
EXEMPT APPENDIX 3)**

(Report PER216 refers)

The Committee noted that this Report had been considered both Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 June and Personnel Committee, held on 11 June 2012, where the recommendations had been agreed as set out.

The Chairman requested that, in addition to the consideration of the supplementary estimate under the Committee's powers of call-in, Members consider any other matters that they wish to raise in relation to the Development Process for either the Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.

A Member raised concern that the creation of the new team had reduced the number of posts in the Strategic Housing Team, which promoted affordable housing through registered providers. As the majority of new affordable homes would continue to be developed through registered providers, the Member questioned whether this reduction would lead to a net reduction in the number of new affordable homes being built. The Corporate Director (Operations) explained that the new team would continue to promote the development of affordable housing on private developments (usually through Section 106 Agreements) as well as promoting the new Council House build programme.

During debate, several Members questioned why it was necessary to create a new team to undertake work which could broadly be considered part of the existing Estates Team's responsibilities. In response, the Chief Executive explained the Estates Team did not have sufficient resources to ensure the prompt development of new build programme, in accordance with Members' expectations. Whilst the new team would be created from existing Council staff with relevant skills, as schemes progressed, it was likely that those staff would call on existing expertise within the Estates Team and other teams where necessary. He added that the creation of the new in-house team would be more cost effective than outsourcing the work and that the best way to progress individual schemes was

likely to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The Committee noted that, in the creation of the new team, the Council had learnt (and would continue to learn) from other Local Authorities and housing associations to ensure the effective delivery of new affordable homes.

In response to concerns raised by Mr Mills in public participation, the Head of New Homes Delivery agreed that careful consideration should be given to the consultation with existing tenants regarding the creation of new Council housing. He indicated that communications and consultation would be considered in the Development Strategy.

At the conclusion of debate, the Committee welcomed the creation of the new team and wished it well with its work. However, they underlined the need for the team to remain flexible, the importance of communication, future benchmarking (eg dwelling unit costs) against other local authorities/registered providers and the role of the new Cabinet (Housing Delivery) Committee.

**THAT COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THERE ARE
NO MATTERS THAT THE COMMITTEE WISHES TO
DRAW TO ITS ATTENTION**

RESOLVED:

1. That the Decision of Cabinet to Approve a supplementary estimate in the general fund of £95,715 in 2012/13 (£147,958 in a full year) noting that recharges to the HRA will increase by £227,616 in 2012/13 (£266,102 in a full year), be not called in for review.

2. That the Head of New Homes Delivery be asked to give specific consideration to communications and consultations issues in the preparation of the Development Strategy report for Cabinet (Housing Delivery) Committee

(ii) **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2011/12 OUTTURN**
(Report CAB2354HSG refers)

The Committee noted that this Report had been considered by Cabinet (Housing) Committee at its meeting held on 20 June 2012 and at Cabinet 4 July 2012 where the recommendations had been agreed as set out.

THAT COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THERE ARE NO MATTERS THAT THE COMMITTEE WISHES TO DRAW TO ITS ATTENTION.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of Cabinet to approve a supplementary estimate of £300,000 to fund estate improvement works in Stanmore (and the associated engineering resources required to deliver the programme), be not called in for review.

(iii) **STOCK CONDITION SURVEY OF COUNCIL OWNED HOMES**
(Report CAB2357HSG refers)

The Committee noted that this Report had been considered by Cabinet (Housing) Committee at its meeting held on 20 June 2012 and at Cabinet 4 July 2012, where the recommendations had been agreed as set out.

Councillor Coates explained that the last full stock condition of Council owned homes was in 1987. In the proposed review, a contractor had agreed to undertake the work at an average cost of £60 per dwelling and this included a visual inspection of roof spaces, where applicable.

In response to a question, it was noted that the result of a separate survey on the condition of the Council's garages would be considered by Members in the near future.

At the conclusion of debate, the Committee supported the proposed survey.

THAT COUNCIL BE ADVISED THAT THE COMMITTEE SUPPORTS THE PROPOSALS.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of Cabinet to approve a supplementary estimate within the Housing Revenue Account of £300,000 in 2012/13, with the revenue support to the capital programme (RCCO) being reduced in order to meet the stock survey costs which are a charge to revenue (note that the capital budget for External Envelope Works

will be reduced because of the reduction in the RCCO), be not called-in for review.

2. **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>
) Information relating to any individual (Para 1 Schedule 12A refers).
) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (Para 2 Schedule 12A refers).
	Appendix 3 Council House New Build Programme and Additional Staffing Requirements) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated 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 (Para 4 Schedule 12A refers).

3. **APPENDIX 3: COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRAMME AND
ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**
(Report PER216 refers)

The Committee considered the above exempt appendix, which set out detailed financial information relating to the proposed staff budget costs. This information had been revised as of 11 June 2012, following the publication of the Report for Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the appendix be noted.