

**CABINET (HOUSING DELIVERY) COMMITTEE****22 May 2013****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Tait (Chairman) (P)

Godfrey (P)

Weston (P)

**Other invited Councillors:**

J Berry (P)

Coates (P)

Izard (P)

Rutter (P)

Scott (P)

**TACT Representative:**

Mrs J Steventon-Baker (P)

Mr J Bond (P)

**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillors Hiscock, Pines and Weir

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, less exempt items, held 27 February 2013 be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr A Rickman spoke regarding Report CAB2486(HD) and Mr B Espiner spoke regarding Report CAB2484(HD). Their comments are summarised under the relevant Minute below.

3. **UPDATED COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRAMME**

(Report CAB2486(HD) refers)

The Head of New Homes Delivery introduced the Report and drew Members' attention to the main changes to the programme. He clarified that the New Queens Head and Somers Close schemes, listed in Appendix 1 under 2014/15, were linked and any progress would be subject to ongoing

discussions with the local community and work on the Stanmore Planning Framework.

The Chairman announced that the Milland Road scheme would be deleted from the Programme (scheduled for 2013/14) as there was an issue with one of the new tenants being unaware of the Council's proposals and it was therefore considered inappropriate to proceed at the current time. A further Report would be submitted to a future Committee examining the various issues that could arise when the Council sought to demolish existing Council housing stock.

During the public participation period, Mr A Rickman (a Council tenant) raised a number of concerns in relation to the proposals regarding sale of smaller plots, as summarised below:

- Would the plots be suitable for building purposes?
- Due to the plots size, would the homes built be able to be affordable?
- Would the land be sold below market value in order to make any new homes viable?
- How many plots were being considered?

The Chairman thanked Mr Rickman for his comments and requested that these be addressed in a further Report to a future Committee meeting. This was agreed. As an initial response, the Head of New Homes Delivery advised that one option would be to sell a plot (at under-value) to a person currently on the waiting list for housing in order for them to self-commission a new home. Alternatively, a plot could be sold at auction to the highest bidder which would create the most capital receipt to fund the existing programme. As an initial estimate, there were thought to be between 10 and 15 potential plots. He explained that it was considered to be less viable for the Council itself to build new homes on small plots because it would require the same amount of officer time and preparations as for a larger plot. The Head of New Homes Delivery noted the request for more information on which prospective tenants on the housing waiting list would also be interested in undertaking a self-commission of a property.

In response to questions, the Head of New Homes Delivery advised that the New Queens Head in Stanmore had been purchased by the Council who had employed a security firm to maintain the site's security, with the aim of preventing anti-social behaviour. He clarified that planning permission would be required to demolish the existing building on the site, although this was a possibility that might be investigated further in due course.

In response to questions, the Chairman stated that Registered Providers were still able to approach the Council if they were interested in providing affordable housing on any site. Some Members expressed concern that Recommendation 1 of the Report implied that all future receipts would only be used to fund new builds undertaken by the Council itself. The Housing Project Accountant explained that if a Registered Provider wanted to progress a scheme, then this would still be possible, but would require Member approval.

A number of Members requested that the final recommendation regarding small plots should be amended to reflect the discussions held above and the request for a further Report on the issues raised. However, following discussion where the Head of New Homes Delivery assured Members that there were no immediate plans to sell any plots, the Committee did not consider any amendment was required.

Mrs Steventon Baker (TACT) requested that TACT comments be included in future Reports. She also welcomed the decision to not progress the Milland Road scheme at the current time and stated that the general position of TACT was to encourage the Council to supply Council homes to tenants on a secured tenancy.

One Member commented that one year after the proposals for building new Council homes had been agreed, he expected there to be a rapid acceleration in delivery. However, with the Milland Road scheme no longer to be progressed, there was some concern about how the delivery would be achieved in 2014/15 in practice.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Pines queried whether the Chairman would undertake a review of progress. The Chairman highlighted that the target set was very challenging and he would be discussing this further with the Leader and would talk to Councillor Pines regarding his suggestions outside of the meeting.

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

**RECOMMENDED (TO CABINET AND COUNCIL):**

**1. THAT THE REVISED HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) NEW HOUSEBUILDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME BE APPROVED, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX 1 OF REPORT CAB2486(HD), SUBJECT TO THE DELETION OF THE BUDGET PROVISION FOR MILLAND ROAD.**

**2. THAT THE USE OF ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS AND CAPITAL RECEIPTS TO FUND THE HRA NEW HOUSEBUILDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME BE APPROVED.**

**3. THAT THE FOLLOWING BUDGETS IN THE 2013/14 GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME BE DELETED:**

- (i) AFFORDABLE HOUSING / REGENERATION - £148,000;**
- (ii) AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDED BY DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS £1,441,000.**

## RESOLVED:

1. That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to proceed with commissioning the relevant professional assessments required to progress to a full planning application for the sites in the development programme subject to the requirements of the Council's Contracts and Financial Procedure Rules.

2. That the Head of New Homes Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and New Homes, be authorised to substitute schemes on the development programme with alternative schemes and report back to Cabinet (Housing) Committee at the earliest opportunity where this has occurred.

3. That, subject to the approval of the revised HRA New Housebuilding Programme by Council, the following capital spending on initial fees in 2013/14 be approved in accordance with Finance Procedure Rule 6.4:

- (i) Westman Road - £80,000
- (ii) Victoria House - £314,000
- (iii) Charles Close - £160,000
- (iv) Hillier Way - £90,000
- (v) Dyson Drive - £80,000
- (vi) Somers Close / New Queens Head - £170,000

and that it be noted that further reports will be submitted to the Committee for approval of the remaining budget provisions when tenders have been received for each scheme.

4. That the Head of Estates be authorised to sell surplus small plots of land held within the Housing Revenue Account, to be identified by the Head of New Homes Delivery in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and New Homes, to generate capital receipts to fund the Council House New Build Programme.

4. **AUTHORISATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS TO CONSTRUCT COUNCIL HOUSING SCHEMES AT: BOURNE CLOSE, OTTERBOURNE AND STATION CLOSE, ITCHEN ABBAS**  
(Report CAB2487(HD) refers)

In response to questions, the Head of New Homes Delivery advised that although a contingency budget had been allowed in relation to the Itchen Abbas scheme, the risk of further funding being required was principally borne by the contractor. The scheme contingency budget was based on provisional estimates calculated by the Council's agent and the builder; if this was not

sufficient the Council would be liable for the extra cost. Other factors could also increase the overall cost of the scheme which are outside the contractor's control, such as adverse weather and site access issues.

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 agree to enter into a design and build contract with F E Chase and Sons Ltd to build the new Council Homes at former garage court Bourne Close, Otterbourne.

2. That the Head of New Homes Delivery be authorised to agree to enter into a design and build contract with F E Chase and Sons Ltd to build the new Council Homes at former garage court and sewage treatment plant at Station Close, Itchen Abbas.

3. That, in accordance with Finance Procedure Rules 6.4, the following capital expenditure be approved:

- (i) Itchen Abbas - £676,000
- (ii) Bourne Close - £431,000

That the following rent levels (based on 52 rent weeks) be agreed for the new homes at the time of initial letting:

- (i) Bourne Close - £148.03 per week
- (ii) Itchen Abbas - £142.79 per week for 3 bed houses and £118.99 for 2 bed houses

and authority be granted to the Head of New Homes Delivery in consultation with the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) and Chief Finance Officer to agree the final rent prior to letting the dwellings.

5. **APPROPRIATION OF LAND – ABBOTTS BARTON**  
(Report CAB2484(HD) refers)

The Head of New Homes Delivery emphasised that the purpose of the Report was to seek authority to advertise the Council's intention to appropriate land. In addition, it did not mean that the Council were intending to develop all of the areas outlined in the maps contained as Appendices to the Report. A further decision would be required on this following a report back to Committee.

During the public participation period, Mr Espiner addressed the Committee on behalf of himself and Mr Connell who was unable to attend the meeting, and his comments are summarised below. Members noted that the detail of both Mr Espiner and Mr Connell's comments and concerns had been circulated to

Committee Members and relevant officers the day before the meeting. In summary, Mr Espiner expressed concern that the wishes of the local community opposing development on Charles Close (within the central green area) and Dyson Drive Green were being ignored. This was to the detriment of the environment and the requirements of children on the Abbotts Barton estate. Mr Connell raised a number of detailed concerns in relation to the effect of the Town and Village Green status application on the Council's current proposals.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Hiscock spoke as a Ward Member for St Bartholomew and highlighted that although Abbotts Barton residents accepted the requirement for additional housing, there appeared to be total opposition to any development around Charles Close, in addition to differing opinions regarding Dyson Drive. He expressed concern that the areas outlined in the plans as appendices to the report appeared to be considerably larger than had been included in previous plans. He also queried the effect of the application to register the land at Dyson Drive as a town or village green.

The Head of Legal Services confirmed that a copy of Mr Connell's concerns had been received and any matters requiring further legal consideration would be included in the Report back to Committee following the advertisement and consultation period. This Report would also include detailed plans setting out the exact area of land under consideration. The Committee also noted that an application to register land as a town or village green did not prevent the Council from progressing matters in the mean time.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to advertise, for 2 consecutive weeks, the Council's intention to appropriate land at Dyson Drive, Hillier Way and Charles Close (as indicated in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to the Report) for planning purposes, pursuant to Section 122(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. That a report be brought back to the Committee at a later date to determine, in the light of any representations received and detailed consideration of the financial implications,, whether or not these sites should be appropriated for planning purposes pursuant to Section 122(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. **APPROPRIATION OF LAND – WESTMAN ROAD, WEEKE**  
(Report CAB2485(HD) refers)

The Committee noted the points raised in relation to the appropriation process as detailed in the Minute above.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Weir spoke as a Ward Member for St Barnabas and stated that, in principle, she had no objection to the proposals, provided the use of the land was informed by the extensive consultation work ongoing with the local community. She also believed that Westman Road would not be suitable for any development which generated a high degree of traffic movements and highlighted the requirement for homes to meet the needs of elderly people in the area.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Weir for her comments.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to advertise, for 2 consecutive weeks, the Councils intention to appropriate land at Westman Road (as indicated in Appendix 1 to the report) for planning purposes , pursuant to Section 122 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972

2. That a report be brought to Committee at a later date to determine, in the light of any representations received and detailed consideration of the financial implications, whether or not these sites should be appropriated for planning purposes pursuant to Section 122(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

7. **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>
##	Exempt minutes of the previous meeting	) Information relating to the ) financial or business affairs ) of any particular person ) (including the authority ) holding that information). ) (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

8. **EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
(Report CAB2464(HD) refers)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting held 27 February 2013 be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.40am

Chairman