

COUNCIL

15 July 2015

EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 30 JUNE 2015

REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Appendix A to this report sets out an extract from the minutes from Cabinet (Housing) Committee held 30 June 2015 for the consideration of Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council considers the matters set out in the attached minute extract.

Minute Extract from Cabinet (Housing) Committee held 30 June 2015**1. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2014/15 OUTTURN**

(Report CAB2696(HSG) refers)

The Committee noted that Report had not been made available for publication within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the Report onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration to enable its contents to be considered prior to The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 July and Council on 15 July 2015.

The Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) responded to detailed questions from Members and, in particular, the following points were raised:

- a) 24 houses were sold under the Right to Buy scheme in 2014/15, with a further 16 predicted to be sold in 2015/16 and 12 to 16 houses predicted to be sold annually thereafter;
- b) Members expressed concerns about the possible cost implications of delays in the New Homes Build schemes. The delays were potentially exacerbated by the Council's current selection of smaller, brownfield sites which tended to be more complicated to develop. One Member suggested the Council should concentrate on larger areas of land to develop to mitigate this. The Head of New Homes Delivery advised that building costs were increasing by approximately 10-15% per annum so the impact of any delays in tendering for schemes was potentially significant. Officers were seeking to obtain planning consents for as many future schemes as possible in order to maintain flexibility in the programme (i.e. if one scheme was delayed, another scheme could be progressed in its place).
- c) The Assistant Director confirmed that Appendix 4 of the Report did reflect some extra spending required following the results of the Stock Condition Survey. He also confirmed that relevant Housing and Finance Officers were closely monitoring budgets with regard to the potential significant negative impacts discussed above. However, the Government had recently confirmed a positive impact in that the Council would be able to retain an extra £900,000 from Right to Buy receipts, provided they were used for the New Build Programme within the next three years.
- d) The Head of New Homes Delivery advised that tenders were due on the Victoria House scheme in early August 2015 and a Report would be submitted to Cabinet and/or Cabinet (Housing) Committee in September.
- e) The possibility of including shared ownership properties was being examined for both the Victoria House and the Extra Care Scheme in Chesil Street, Winchester.
- f) In response to concerns expressed by a Member regarding the Government's proposals on extending the Right to Buy scheme, the Assistant Director emphasised that proposals were at an early stage and confirmed that a Report on the impact would be prepared for Members as soon as more definite information was available.

- g) In response to questions regarding the possibility of extending energy efficiency measures to Council homes, the Assistant Director advised that a Member Briefing would be organised shortly to consult on priorities within the maintenance programme, including such measures. It was anticipated the Briefing would be arranged for July with a Report back to Committee in the Autumn 2015.

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

RECOMMENDED:

THAT THE REVENUE BUDGET CARRY FORWARDS AMOUNTING TO £62,860 BE APPROVED, AS SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 4.1, NOTING THAT THESE ARE IN ADDITION TO THE GENERAL FUND CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS DETAILED IN CAB2698 (REPORT TO BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET ON 6 JULY 2015).

RESOLVED:

1. That the financial performance information be noted.
2. That the amount of housing debt at 31 March 2015 at £156.722m be approved, as explained in Paragraph 5.3 of the Report.
3. That the capital budget carry forwards amounting to £998,880 as detailed in paragraph 4.1, which have been included in the overall capital carry forward recommendation in CAB2697 (Report to be considered by Cabinet on 6 July 2015).
4. That, subject to it not being called in by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a virement of £150,000 be approved to fund the year 3 programme of loft conversions and extensions, not included in the budget report CAB2652 (HSG) in February 2015, as detailed in paragraph 5.3. The virement is funded from the £1 million originally allocated to the Winnall flats EWI scheme.
