

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 July 2012

EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 20  
JUNE 2012 AND PERSONNEL HELD 11 JUNE 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out extracts of the minutes of Cabinet (Housing) Committee held 20 June 2012 and Personnel held 11 June 2012, with regard to items referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

That The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider and make any necessary decisions on the matters contained in the minute extracts.

## THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 July 2012

### EXTRACTS FROM MINUTES OF CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE HELD 20 JUNE 2012 AND PERSONNEL HELD 11 JUNE 2012

Report of Head of Democratic Services

## **CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE – 20 JUNE 2012**

### **1. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2011/12 BUDGET OUTTURN** (Report CAB2354(HSG) refers)

Councillor Stallard declared personal (but non-prejudicial) interests in actions taken or proposed with regard to this item, because of her position as a County Councillor and the joint working with the County Council as referred to in the report. She remained in the room and spoke and voted thereon.

The Committee noted that at its meeting on 9 July 2012, The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider the proposal to approve a supplementary capital estimate of £300,000 required for the estates improvement works under its rights of call-in.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing Services advised that a supplementary capital estimate was required to supplement the current programme of estate improvement works, and was necessary due to the current capital programme being fully committed. He confirmed that there was a clear set of criteria for bids for funds and that the scheme did not take precedence over on-going comprehensive stock repairs programmes. Furthermore, the supplementary estimate would also help ensure that the benefits of estate improvements programme could be equitably spread across other priority areas in the District, albeit several of the rural areas were not greatly tenanted. The 'priority areas' (and expected milestones for improvements to the lives of their residents) were set out in the Council's Change Plans. A report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee detailing the progress of the estate improvements programme to date.

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

#### RESOLVED:

1. That the financial performance information in the Report be noted.

2. **That it be recommended to Cabinet and Council that the revenue carry forwards amounting to £75,780 be agreed as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report.**

2. **STOCK CONDITION SURVEY OF COUNCIL OWNED HOMES**

(Report CAB2357(HSG) refers)

The Head of Housing Services advised that at its meeting on 9 July 2012, The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider the required virement within the HRA (as set out in recommendation 4 of the Report), under its powers of call-in.

The Head of Housing Services advised that the overall cost of £300,000 equated to approximately £60 per property and that the work would create an accurate forward plan for capital expenditure and data base of the condition of the housing stock. A particular survey 'template' was under development and this would achieve as much as possible from the surveys, including a tenant aspiration questionnaire, health and safety and energy efficiency ratings etc.

The Head of Legal Services suggested that Recommendation 3 to the Report be revised so to provide further flexibility in awarding the contract for the survey work. This was agreed.

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the approach and proposals outlined in the Report for the commissioning of a new stock condition survey are approved.

2. That, in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 2.4b), the use of the City West and Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) Consultants Framework agreement are approved, subject to the Head of Legal Services being satisfied that the framework complies with EU procurement rules.

3. That, delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to approve, in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 2.4b), the use of an alternative framework if more suitable.

4. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing Services to select and appoint a framework consultant to provide stock condition surveying services,

5. **That, subject to the matter being considered by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee under its rights of call-in, the Committee recommends to Cabinet and Council to approve a revenue virement within the HRA 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 and note that the capital budget for External Envelope Works will be reduced because of the reduction in the RCCO.**

6. That a revised Repairs and Renewals programme reflecting these recommendations be brought to this Committee in September 2012.

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD 11 JUNE 2012**

#### **3. COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRAMME AND ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**

(Report PER216 refers - less Exempt Appendix 3)

The Head of New Homes Delivery reported that, since publication of the Report, an inaccuracy had been noticed in Exempt Appendix 3 relating to the Proposed Staff and Budget for the proposed post of Senior Valuer. This post had been incorrectly calculated as a 0.50 full time equivalent (fte) post on a Scale 6 salary, rather than 1.00 fte. Consequently, recommendation 6 of the Report to Cabinet needed to be amended as follows:

"6. That approval is given to a supplementary estimate in the General Fund of £111,678 in 2012/13 (£169,782 in a full year) noting that recharges to the HRA will increase by £235,597 in 2012/13 (£277,014 in a full year."

There was no revision necessary of the recommendations to Personnel Committee.

Councillor Tait stated that, as the new Portfolio Holder for New Homes Delivery, he was still familiarising himself with the preparatory work that had been undertaken by the officers in balancing the judgement of providing in-house professional expertise against outsourced professional expertise, as different models of service delivery had been used by other local authorities in a similar position. He was, however, satisfied that the proposed approach would provide a robust and effective method of delivery.

Councillor Coates also added his support for the proposals as set out.

The Chief Executive added that the proposals had been shaped by the volume of work and skills required to deliver an ambitious housing delivery programme and would provide value for money. A balance would be sought from the amount of work that could be provided from existing in-house staff, before a final decision was taken to proceed with appointing new staff. New staff would only be appointed as the work programme dictated. If required, a Report would be submitted to a future meeting on the effectiveness of the new arrangements in service delivery.

In reply to Members' questions, it was explained that some posts would be shared, for example the Building Surveyor and Senior Valuer posts with Estates, and in other cases the additional staff resource provision would not be specific to a single additional post, but would represent an additional resource (increase in hours) to increase capacity within that Team for service delivery. The latter was the case in providing additional Planning expertise to the new build programme, where expertise could be called upon from throughout the Planning Team, rather than from a dedicated Senior Planning Officer.

In the case of Planning, a Service Level Agreement would be entered into with the Head of Planning Management, to ensure that timely advice on the new build programme was received as a priority within five to seven days. Similarly, discussions would take place with the Head of Legal Services on arrangements for advice from the Housing Solicitor.

Where posts were shared, the management arrangements would see professionals placed in the appropriate Team (Finance, Legal or Estates). However, it was noted that, in line with the priority Members attached to the programme, at least part of each post was funded by the HRA to support the delivery of new homes (as per the exempt appendix), and that would be the first call on their time. The accountability for delivery sat with the Head of New Homes Delivery, who reports to the Corporate Director (Operations) and ultimately the Chief Executive, giving a senior overview of the new home delivery programme.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Izard commented that although other models of delivery did exist, the priority was housing provision and the recommendations when introduced could be monitored closely and external agents could be used as and when required. He supported the proposed approach.

At the conclusion of debate, the recommendations that related to this Committee were agreed for onward consideration by Cabinet on 13 June 2012, subject to the insertion of the words "in principle" in Recommendation 1. The addition of "in principle" was to bring to Cabinet's attention the Committee's uncertainty over the balance to be struck between in-house and external provision of professional advice.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the following additional posts required to deliver the development programme, as set out in Appendix 2, be approved in principle and added to the establishment:

- Housing Solicitor (0.5 FTE),
- Admin/Trainee Project Manager (1 FTE),
- Building Surveyor (1 FTE),
- Senior Valuer (1 FTE),

- Senior Planner (0.5 FTE),
- Housing Finance Accountant (0.25 FTE).

2. That the existing posts listed as set out in Exempt Appendix 3 be moved into the New Homes Delivery Team:- Head of Strategic Housing (Post 286), Strategy and Enabling Officer (1026), HARAH Housing Officer (1030), Community Planning Manager (134), Community Officer (135), Strategy Enabling Officer (326).

#### 4. **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 a
		) particular individual. (Para 1 to
		) Schedule 12A refers).
		)
		) Information which is likely to
		) reveal the identity of an
		) individual. (Para 2 to Schedule
##	Council House New Build Programme and Additional Staffing Requirements.	) 12A refers)
		)
		) 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 to
		) Schedule 12A refers)

5. **COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRAMME AND ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**

(Exempt appendix 3 to Report PER216 refers)

Copies of the revised Appendix 3, which related to the Proposed Staff and Budget for the proposed post of Senior Valuer, were circulated at the meeting and are bound with the final copy of the Report.

In answer to a Member's question, the Corporate Director (Operations) explained that the time allocation of the post of Head of New Homes Delivery would be 10% to the General Fund for the undertaking Section 106 Agreements and 90% to the Housing Revenue Account. However, these figures could be adjusted in accordance with experience as the new build programme developed.

RESOLVED:

That Exempt Appendix 3 to Report PER216, as amended, be noted.

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