

**CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE**

**29 June 2011**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Cooper (P)

Stallard (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Collin

Pines (P)

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

TACT representatives:

Alan Rickman and Paul Bungey

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1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Thompson declared a personal interest, due to her involvement as previous Portfolio Holder in matters referred to in Reports below. She remained in the room and took part in discussion thereon.

2. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2010/11 OUTTURN**  
[\(Report CAB2193 \(HSG\) refers\)](#)

The Head of Landlord Services advised that the process of financing the Hampshire Home Choice lettings system was to be reviewed, to acknowledge that the scheme operated on a sub regional basis. The Council's current contribution to the costs was the highest of the partnership. The charge was based on numbers of lettings for Council stock, but all other partners paid a significantly lower flat charge.

The Head of Landlord Services also clarified that, with regard to 'costs of disposals' in Appendix 2, that figure had no net impact to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The treatment of that item within the Council's accounts would be clarified with the Head of Finance.

The Head of Landlord Services confirmed that a revised HRA budget would be presented to the Committee in the autumn and that it would include provision for changes to overhead charges and reduced staffing costs.

RESOLVED:

That the financial performance information in the Report be noted.

3. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING OUTTURN 2010/11 – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) SERVICES**  
[\(Report CAB2194 \(HSG\) refers\)](#)

The Head of Landlord Services drew attention to the significant improvement to the Council's performance for void property turnaround. That figure was now above average and further improvement was being sought to bring it within the top 25% nationally. With regard to the monitoring of targets for responsive repairs, there would be more detailed future monitoring of that area of the contractor's work.

The Committee noted that, to date, 98.4% of gas appliances in Council dwellings had been serviced. It was recognised that it was important that 100% were serviced; however, gaining access to undertake the work had not always been made possible by the tenant. There were between 50 and 70 properties where that had been the case. The Head of Legal Services explained that it was usual for the courts to prefer that the Council gained access to those properties under terms of tenancy agreements, rather than by serving injunctions. There was agreement that as tenants' safety was paramount and that there may be liability on the Council as a landlord if this was compromised by faulty equipment, appropriate action should be pursued to seek to further increase the level of servicing.

Members referred to the Council's work to rationalise provision for tenants with learning difficulties within the Council's stock. The Head of Landlord Services reported that leases had been agreed for previous hard-to-let sheltered accommodation, pending formal consent from the Secretary of State being gained to change the status of the dwellings. He gave assurances to the Committee that a key requirement of those leases was that there must be appropriate support packages in place for the clients.

The meeting referred to the comments of TACT at paragraph 5 of the Report. The Head of Landlord Services explained that properties considered for conversion to provide additional Council dwellings (such as Compton Post Office) were surveyed, and that the work included assessing the potential for adding new-build extensions to provide suitable accommodation. However, funding was generally not available for the adding of extensions (or loft conversions) to existing stock to create extra space.

RESOLVED:

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

2. That the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Landlord Services work with the Head of Landlord Services and the

Head of Legal Services to progress a review of processes to ensure that all gas appliances in HRA properties are serviced.

4. **DELIVERING DECENT HOMES – REPAIRS AND RENEWALS PROGRAMME 2011/12**  
[\(Report CAB2195 \(HSG\) refers\)](#)

The Head of Landlord Services clarified that the budget for the overall programme had previously been agreed and that the detail of the programme was as set out in the Report for information. Therefore, the Recommendation of the Report was for the Committee to note, rather than to approve the programme.

It was reported that the issue of solar PV installations was still under consideration. If the Council was to undertake a small installation project itself, capital resourcing would be required and that had been accounted for within the Major Repairs, Renewals Maintenance budget 2011/12, via asset sales capital receipts. Further details would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee, including details of a trial which would eventually inform any wider project.

During discussion, the Head of Landlord Services also explained that, although a programme of planned maintenance for Council dwellings was desirable, the programme was currently under-funded. Therefore, some matters such as cyclical re-painting of external areas of dwellings would only be undertaken when deemed absolutely necessary. It was also confirmed that the contractor would be undertaking a new systematic approach to survey work and he was satisfied that there would be consistency between surveyors in requesting works.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Major Repairs, Renewals and Maintenance Programme be noted.

5. **SUPPORTED HOUSING PRIORITIES AND EMERGING ISSUES**  
[\(Report CAB2196 \(HSG\) refers\)](#)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ms Georgiana Robertson from Hampshire County Council Supported People.

The Head of Landlord Services explained that, if the Council was to continue to deliver its supported housing services to clients with a wide range of needs, it would need to cover its running costs by attracting further subsidy, or from the further rationalisation of the service. Further to this, he also updated the Committee that the County Council was currently undertaking its own strategic review of support services for Older Persons.

Although the review was likely to conclude that some of its own new projects would not receive funding, it was unclear at this time how the County Council may intend these savings to be made. The conclusion of the review was likely

to impact on the Council's extra care services and therefore the Head of Landlord Services suggested that the formal consultation exercise with affected tenants (as proposed in Recommendation 1) be postponed until that work had been completed.

Ms Robertson reiterated the excellent ongoing partnership work with the Council regarding extra care services. The impact of the County Council's review (due to conclude in July 2011) was unlikely to lead to a reduction to the level of service to clients.

During further discussion, the Committee noted that if the Council was to continue to provide support for the current wide range of support needs, then it was necessary to make better use of the existing resources available, including the proposals to co-locate the two existing Extra Care teams. It was agreed that once the Supporting People Strategic Review of Older Persons' services had been concluded, and future funding assured, a full consultation would be carried out with existing tenants at the three affected schemes referred to in the Report. That would inform a final decision to be made on scheme designations. In the meantime, officers would progress a temporary amendment to allocation arrangements for those schemes.

During further discussion, it was also explained that although there may be capacity to expand the existing Community Alarm system, the level of response time might have to be reduced. The Supported Housing Informal Policy Group would consider aspects of the supported housing service in-depth and make recommendations to the Committee in due course.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That, subject to the outcome of the Supporting People Strategic Review of Older Persons' Housing, a consultation exercise with the tenants at Victoria House, Matilda Place and Danemark Court over proposed changes to the Extra Care service be undertaken, and a temporary amendment to allocation arrangements for those schemes pending a final decision (as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report), be approved.

2 That the Supported Housing Informal Policy Group be asked to consider the highlighted questions/issues in relation to the future of the Supported Housing Service as referred to in the Report and make recommendations on the preferred options.

6. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REFORM – POTENTIAL DEMOLITIONS AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROPERTY (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**  
([Report CAB2200 \(HSG\) refers](#))

The Committee noted that this Report was not notified for inclusion within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept this item onto the agenda, as an item requiring urgent consideration, in order that the matters detailed within the Report could be determined at the earliest opportunity.

The Head of Landlord Services explained that a comprehensive asset management strategy for the Council's housing stock and non operational assets was an essential part of the future self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). He clarified that, as referred to in paragraph 2.1, a Member Briefing on the impact of self-financing would be arranged in September 2011.

During discussion, the Committee was advised that the list of potential disposals and demolitions, as set out in the Exempt Appendix to the Report, was likely to require revision, as some sites previously identified may subsequently be unsuitable for re-development. Members agreed that the Head of Landlord Services, in consultation with the Chairman and members of the Committee, be authorised to update the list accordingly.

Members reiterated that direct consultation with those tenants affected by proposals should be undertaken at an appropriate time and that wider tenant consultation exercises (other than those living at the affected properties) be undertaken as appropriate.

RESOLVED:

1. That the considerations regarding potential disposals and demolitions as highlighted in the Report be noted.
2. That approval be given for the commencement of direct consultation with those tenants who may be affected by the proposals outlined in the Report.
3. That the Head of Landlord Services, in consultation with the Chairman and members of the Committee, be authorised to update the list of potential disposals and demolitions as set out in the Exempt Appendix of the Report.

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>
##	Housing Revenue Account reform – Potential demolitions and disposal of HRA Property (Exempt Appendix)	) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

8. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REFORM – POTENTIAL DEMOLITIONS AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROPERTY (EXEMPT APPENDIX)**

(Report CAB2200 (HSG) refers)

The Committee noted that this Report was not notified for inclusion within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept this item onto the agenda, as an item requiring urgent consideration, in order that the matters detailed within the Report could be determined at the earliest opportunity.

During discussion, the Committee referred to the information in the exempt appendix to the Report (detail in the exempt appendix).

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 1.10pm

Chairman