

**CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE**

**22 September 2011**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Cooper (P)

Stallard (P)

Other invited Councillors:

Collin(P)

Pines

Scott (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

TACT representatives:

Mr A Rickman & Mrs J Steventon-Baker

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1. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman proposed that as he would be unable to attend the next meeting of the Committee on 16 November 2011, this be rescheduled to a later date.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee be rescheduled to Tuesday 6 December 2011 at 10am in the King Charles Hall, Guildhall.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 2011 (less exempt minute) be approved and adopted.

3. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2011/12 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - OUTTURN**

[\(Report CAB2227\(HSG\) refers\)](#)

The Head of Landlord Services drew attention to the continuing improvement to the Council's performance for void property turnaround and in gas appliance servicing. The Head of Legal Services explained that the Council would

continue to work with the courts to enforce its right of entry to service all gas appliances in Council dwellings.

During discussion, the Committee acknowledged that although there had been an increase in work related to anti-social behaviour, this was likely to have become more apparent due to the Council's continued proactive and effective work in making improvements in this area.

The Head of Landlord Services also updated Members on consultation events held at sheltered housing schemes and confirmed that there continued to be positive discussions with tenants on the proposals under consideration. The Committee was also informed that officers were awaiting confirmation from the Government of the rules with regard to the Council's pooling of capital receipts from asset sales. He also undertook to ensure that the individuals currently being trained as part of the Council's Village Agent initiative were provided with an overview of Housing Revenue Account matters.

The Committee agreed that an update report be brought to its next meeting to provide an overview of the progress of the Council's Estate Improvement Programme, including details of those individual projects likely to be deferred, and those to be scheduled for the next year.

During further questions, the Head of Landlord Services clarified that in the past the Council had previously accepted homeless clients from East Hants District Council because it had vacancies in the Council's hostel accommodation at the time. However, as demand for homelessness accommodation had now substantially increased from within the Winchester District, this temporary arrangement had now ceased.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the performance information in the Report be noted.
  2. That an update report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to provide an overview of the progress of the Council's Estate Improvement Programme, including details of those individual projects likely to be deferred and those to be scheduled for the next year.
4. **IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL HOUSING REFORM: DIRECTIONS TO THE SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATOR**  
[\(Report CAB2228\(HSG\) refers\)](#)

During discussion on the proposals for flexible tenancies, the Head of Landlord Services clarified that there would continue to be a presumption that individuals would retain their tenancies, except in certain extreme circumstances. Members were in agreement that the new arrangements should look to address under-occupancy wherever possible.

The Committee referred to the Council's draft response to the consultation on the proposed reforms as set out in the Appendix to the Report. Following

further discussion, it was agreed that the following additions should be incorporated:

- (i) Question 1 – Further guidance to providers and clarity on when it would be more appropriate to use one type of tenancy rather over another *is essential* (rather than beneficial).
- (ii) The Council would stress the need for a change in the relevant rules to permit the Council to be able to retain 100% of the capital receipt from right-to-buy sales (rather than 25%, as currently is the case).
- (iii) Question 3 – Flexible tenancies should exclude provision for right-to-buy.

RESOLVED:

That the draft responses to questions detailed in the Appendix form the Council's response to the Consultation on Implementing Social Housing Reform, subject to inclusion of the additions set out above.

5. **INSTALLING PHOTO VOLTAIC PANELS ONTO COUNCIL OWNED HOMES (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**  
[\(Report CAB2230\(HSG\) refers\)](#)

The Head of Landlord Services confirmed that following a formal procurement process, the initial benefits that had previously been identified of providing solar photo voltaic (PV) panels to Council dwellings on a 'roof rental' basis were less significant than previously thought. In the light of this, it was considered that installation of PV cells by the Council itself (rather than through a third-party provider) would be more advantageous to the Council, and would still yield benefits to tenants, albeit to a small number of properties given the need to self-fund such a project. It was agreed therefore that the potential to generate the necessary resourcing to undertake these projects (including from the new 'self financing' arrangements) should be investigated.

At the conclusion of discussion, although there was disappointment at the outcome of the formal tender process, the Committee noted that the Council remained committed to delivering a programme of energy efficiency improvements, which included proposals to make use of solar energy. Members also welcomed an undertaking that options to identify additional funding options for a small PV installation project would be carried out.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposals to provide solar photo voltaic (PV) panels to Council dwellings through a "roof rental" model as set out in the Report, be not pursued at this stage.
2. That existing plans to fund a small number of installations directly from the Council's maintenance programme be continued.
3. That options for identifying additional resources to fund the installation of solar PV panels, along with other energy efficiency improvements to Council dwellings, be incorporated into the Housing



7. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 2011 be approved and adopted.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF REPLACEMENT GAS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTOR TO COUNCIL OWNED HOMES**

(Report CAB2229 (HSG) refers)

The Committee considered a Report that set out proposals to replace its gas maintenance contractor as well as new ways of packaging and procuring the constituent parts of the existing gas servicing contract (detail in the exempt minute).

9. **INSTALLING PHOTO VOLTAIC PANELS ONTO COUNCIL OWNED HOMES (EXEMPT APPENDIX)**

(Report CAB2230(HSG) refers)

RESOLVED:

That the financial information in the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.15pm