

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

20 June 2012

Attendance:

Councillors:

Coates (Chairman) (P)

Stallard (P)

Tait (P)

Other invited Councillors:

J Berry (P)

Bodtger (P)

Izard

Scott

Weir (P)

TACT representatives:

Mrs J Steventon-Baker (P)

Mr J Bond

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4 April 2012 (less exempt items) be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICPATION**

Mr Lander-Brinkley (Chairman of Denmead Parish Council) addressed the Committee with regard to Report CAB2356(HSG) – Proposed Reinstatement of White Wings House bedsits to create a Supported Housing Project for vulnerable adults.

In summary, Mr Lander-Brinkley reported that the Parish Council had taken part in recent consultative meetings with White Wings residents and Ward Councillors, and has noted the support of residents. Subsequent to this, the Parish Council was now requesting several actions to be implemented at the facility. These should include that the existing laundry facility be increased in size and regularly cleaned and that at least 50 per cent more wheely bins be made available. Both client groups should be able to benefit from an enhanced security system. Priority should also be given to applicants for the new facility with a strong Denmead connection. The Parish Council also sought assurances that the existing units currently in use for sheltered accommodation would continue to be used for that purpose.

The Parish Council would also welcome the opportunity to be involved in regular meetings to monitor the operational effectiveness of the new contract.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Head of Housing Services responded to Mr Lander-Brinkley's representation and advised that the operational matters that he suggested would be taken into consideration and were likely to be easily achieved. With regard to there being a priority to existing Denmead residents at the scheme, it was envisaged that the facility would be open to all applicants best suited to the level of support offered. The existing sheltered wing at White Wings still remained a designated facility, however long term assurances for its permanent future could not be guaranteed.

3. **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.**

3. That the decision of Cabinet on 13 June 2012 to recommend to Council approval of Capital carry forwards amounting to £71,000, as detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the Report, be noted.

4. 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 that a supplementary capital estimate of £300,000 be approved to fund Estate Improvement works on Stanmore and the associated Engineering resources required to deliver the programme.

4. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2011/12 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN**

(Report CAB2355(HSG) refers)

The Head of Housing Services referred to on-going work to create effective partnership working with the Council's responsive housing repairs contractor, Osbornes. Following discussion at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it had been agreed that an update report on the functioning of the contract be brought to the September meeting of this Committee.

During discussion of the appendices to the Report, the Head of Housing Services acknowledged that changes to the benefits system from 2013 were likely to impact upon the Council's current top-quartile performance with regard to rent arrears, especially as Housing Benefits would no longer be a direct payment to rent accounts. The likelihood of an increase in arrears would have to be managed within budget profiling and in the meantime, officers were proactively working with tenants to remind them of the consequences of the forthcoming reforms.

With regard to Appendix 2 to the Report – Major Works and Responsive Repairs Indicators, it was confirmed that 'other works' included those undertaken to roofs, new fencing etc.

The Head of Housing Services reported that some of the benchmarking information within Appendix 3 to the Report would be included on the Council's website. A web link would be sent to Members in due course.

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

RESOLVED:

That the performance information in the report be noted.

5. **PROPOSED REINSTATEMENT OF WHITE WINGS HOUSE BEDSITS TO CREATE A SUPPORTED HOUSNG PROJECT FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

(Report CAB2356(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 part of the proposals. She remained in the room and spoke and voted thereon.

The Committee had regard to the earlier representation from Mr Lander-Brinkley and Members had also received a written submission from the Parish Council that had been circulated for information.

The Head of Housing Services answered a number of detailed questions from the Committee.

With regard to the suitability of clients, and their individual support needs being appropriate to the proposed facility, it was confirmed that prospective clients (who were known to Adult Services) would be assessed by a panel made up of representatives from Adult Services, the City Council and the care and support contractor. Therefore, a joint multi-agency decision would be made with regard to the suitability of the new facility for their individual needs. The facility would require to be staffed 24 hours and this was part of the specialist contract to be commissioned with the County Council.

The wing of White Wings House proposed to be developed was currently decommissioned; however the new facility would eventually generate additional income to the Council. Existing infrastructure would be utilised to heat the building and the necessary internal building works were described.

It was confirmed that existing tenants of White Wings have been engaged in regular meetings with the support provider and with Council officers so to answer any questions and to alleviate any concerns or issues that they might have.

As a Ward Member for Denmead, Councillor Stallard welcomed the comprehensive consultation undertaken in recent months, but she pointed out that previously this had not taken place with Ward Councillors or the Parish Council. The Parish had already commenced work on its Community Plan, which had included how it wished to plan for Denmead's ageing population. This had to be revised due to the likelihood of re-commissioning the closed wing of White Wings House for its new purpose. Councillor Stallard requested that consideration be given to further consultation with local schools in the vicinity and with local and neighbouring health authorities.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That in light of the consultation undertaken and the financial appraisal, the White Wings House bedsits be designated for use by vulnerable adults.
2. That the estimated expenditure of £190,000 required to bring the properties up to an acceptable standard be authorised under Financial Regulation 6.4.

3 That authority is given for tenders to be invited for the necessary building and maintenance work.

6. **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.

7. **WINNALL FLATS – NEW HEATING AND HOT WATER SERVICES**
(Report CAB2358(HSG) refers)

The Committee discussed the proposals in the Report and noted that although officers were recommending that communal biomass boilers were likely to be the preferred option, this was still subject to further technical assessment.

The Head of Housing Services reported that there was potential for flexibility for a communal scheme to exclude those tenants and leaseholders who may prefer to source their own solutions, although a biomass system was likely to be considerably cheaper for the individual. The Committee also referred to there being a need to secure and ‘future proof’ the supply of wood chips, although it was recognised that there might be potential for this to be sourced from the Council’s own land. It was suggested that the experiences of other social landlords in implementing similar schemes be explored.

The Committee agreed that to help Members make an informed decision on the most beneficial and cost effective heating solution, a Member Briefing be arranged to explain the technical background and comparative costs on the various potential options. This was likely to be of interest to all Members.

Therefore, pending the Member Briefing, the Committee agreed to note the Report at this time and that a detailed report be brought to its September meeting for decision on the final options.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the approach, proposals and preferred solution (communal biomass boilers) outlined in this report be noted.
2. That a Member Briefing be arranged on future options available for heating and hot water services.
3. That a detailed report on the technical and financial implications of the final options and the final procurement method be brought back to this Committee in September.

8. **DELIVERING THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN – ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**
(Report PER217 refers)

The Committee noted that the Personnel Committee had endorsed the changes to posts as set out in the Report at its meeting held 11 June 2012.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of apprenticeships as part of its survey work.

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

RESOLVED:

That the proposed service changes are noted and funded from the £210,000 general provision included in the HRA budget for 2012/13 to the “HRA Employees” budget to fund the cost of the proposals.

9. **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 previous meeting held 4 April 2012:)
		) Information relating to the
		) financial or business affairs of
		) any particular person
	• Purchase of 41	) (including the authority
	St Catherines	) holding that information).
	Road, Highcliffe,	) (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)
	Winchester)
		) Information relating to a
	• Care and Support	) particular individual. (Para 1
	Arrangements in	) to Schedule 12A refers).
	Extra Care)
	Housing	) Information which is likely to
		) reveal the identity of an
		) individual. (Para 2 to
		) Schedule 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)

10. **EXEMPT MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4 April 2012 be approved and adopted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.35pm

Chairman