

CABINET

30 June 2003

Attendance:

Councillors:

Campbell (Chairman) (P)

Beveridge (P)
Cook (P)
Evans (P)
Hiscock (P)

Learney (P)
Nelmes (P)
Wagner (P)

Others in Attendance and Speaking

Councillor Pearson

Others in Attendance and not Speaking

Councillors: Davies, de Peyer, Hollingbery and Mitchell

135. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr R Cassidy addressed Cabinet about the proposed development site in Fivefields Road, Highcliffe, for a hostel for vulnerable people.

In summary, Mr Cassidy stated that Highcliffe already supported people in need and with the closure of the local post office and demands on the local church and schools, there was already insufficient resources and support to meet current needs. The proposals would add to this situation, with insufficient regard being given to the consideration of local people or the care of those to be housed at the hostel. The demands would be too great for the Highcliffe area.

He also made reference to the J Thompson & Partners study to investigate the potential for homes in the area and also the strategy for the future of Highcliffe, produced on the consensus of all those who lived in the Highcliffe area. These exercises were on the basis of considering local needs and affordable housing in Highcliffe but yet it appeared that the Council had an alternative agenda to build an ex-offenders unit, and had known about the project for two years. Comments made by officers of Eastleigh Housing Association and by reporters on Radio Solent had confirmed this situation. To proceed with the hostel would be insensitive and not recognise the needs of the Highcliffe area. He concluded that the residents of Highcliffe deserved better consideration than had been given.

Cabinet noted that in addition to Mr Cassidy's speech, the Planning Department had received a petition in respect of the proposed development at Highcliffe, and this would be taken into consideration in determining the planning application.

The City Secretary and Solicitor additionally reported that correspondence had been received from Councillor Pines, a Ward Member, on this subject, and the points made were as follows: -

1. The original consultation and public participation exercise by John Thompson and Partners, considering local needs and affordable housing in Highcliffe has yet to report; it is not fair to members of the public who took the time and effort to assist in that process that subsequent, officer decisions about land use should be made until Thompson's have so reported. This is especially important to the community of Highcliffe, as the sites nominated by officers for supported housing were very much part of the original consultation. Based on this argument alone, at least a delay in the decision-making process is called for.
2. Housing Report HH50, of September 2001 (para 4.7) called for the consideration of "various locations around Winchester" – leaving open whether this meant the City or the district – either way it is unreasonable to nominate one estate without having given at least a passing glance to the wider area as a whole, showing why this one area was chosen above the other parcels of land available for this process. Indeed, it is not yet clear what other land is available – the desk-top exercise done in the Housing Department has not been made available to members so that a balanced decision can be made. Based on this argument, a delay is called for.
3. Highcliffe is a small community on the fringes of the City. It already has mobility, housing, educational, employment and social concerns of its own, as is recognised in national statistics compared with the rest of the district. To effectively single out this area, without regard to balance of facilities within the whole City is therefore wrong in principle and equity. No proposal should be made without conducting a similar Council owned land availability survey in other areas of the city.
4. Members may well have considered, as I did, that the process of putting forward this site (among others in Highcliffe and Stanmore) was the result of a mistake by officers who were rushing to complete a deadline for grant purposes. (HH50 referred to sites but did not mention any – because, it implied, the general argument was being proposed). This is not the case. It appears that as long ago as mid-2001, Atlantic were in active discussions with officers in the Housing Department with specific sites in mind – to the extent that, for example, the Fivefields Road site was considered so 'firm' by Atlantic that they commissioned the plans for that site at that time (dates on the plans submitted to the Planning Department: a constituent's phone calls to confirm statement by Atlantic). Officers have effectively had over 2 years to reveal their intentions to members and the public. No mention of this has, as far as I can discover, been made in any paper to members. I do not feel confident at present that ward members, portfolio holders or the Cabinet could satisfy themselves that they were in a position to make decisions about special needs housing throughout the district, or even within the City, until cards are laid openly on the table. I believe that no decision should be made until this is done.

5. The climate of opposition caused by the sequence of events and the perceived lack of consultation given to residents would make it very difficult for a hostel to be accepted within the community, especially in view of the community's strong awareness of past incidents, and could put hostel residents at risk.

In reply, the Chairman stated that the petition regarding the planning application would be taken into consideration as part of the planning application process. The proposals for Highcliffe were to provide accommodation for 6 residents in a warden assisted hostel. This was a small group, with certain difficulties, and the Council had a duty to provide accommodation. This could be in hostels or in vacant Council stock, but it was more likely that the latter option would be unsupported and would also be in the community. The Council had a duty to house people who required assistance.

In conclusion, the Chairman requested that a report be prepared by the Director of Health and Housing on the points raised, to be submitted to Cabinet. Those points raised in the petition would be considered as part of the application process by the Planning Development Control Committee.

136. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2003 be approved and adopted.

137. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY**
(Report CAB666 refers)

With the consent of the Chairman, the Director of Health and Housing submitted at the meeting further responses to the consultation on the strategy received from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Swaythling Housing Society, Hampshire County Council (Environment Department) and Winchester Area Community Action (WACA) which were broadly in favour and supportive of the strategy.

Under Council Procedure Rule 35 the Chairman stated that Councillor Pearson had requested to speak on this item. Councillor Pearson stated that the strategy did not mention the 4.5% administration charge introduced by the Council for the administration of improvement grants. This charge would be made in cases of grant applications for adaptations for disabled people and works to provide energy efficiency. He asked that the point of reference within the strategy to the administration charge be clarified.

In reply, the Director of Health and Housing stated that reference to the charge was made in paragraph 7.9 on page 17. The introduction of the charge for this complex area of work had been agreed by Cabinet in January 2003 but details of the charge were not included in the strategy specifically as it could be subject to periodic review whereas the strategy was intended as a long-term document.

The Director of Health and Housing made specific reference to the Council's work on home energy conservation stating that the Council would be charged with more responsibility in this area of work. To increase the Council's knowledge of the quality of the private sector housing stock for energy conservation, a questionnaire would be sent out with the electoral forms in the autumn of this year, asking specific questions about the level of insulation within the private stock. This information would assist in helping the Council to meet its targets for grant provision.

At the suggestion of a Member, it was also agreed that information be provided on home energy conservation when applications are received by the Planning Department for building works.

The strategy also contained provision for the voluntary accreditation of landlords of houses in multiple occupation and student lets which would assist in the regularisation of this important area of accommodation.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved.
2. That the comments on the Strategy made by the Local Strategic Partnership and other consultees be noted.
3. That the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy be adopted with effect from 18 July 2003.

138. **PROJECT INTEGRA ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2003/04**
(Report CAB670 refers)

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing informed Cabinet of a number of issues faced by the County with respect to waste collection and disposal over the forthcoming years.

These included issues relating to the collection of garden and kitchen waste, which presently could not be jointly composted. The Project Integra Group were considering options for the separate collection of garden waste only and a paper on this subject would be submitted to Cabinet on 16 July 2003.

Another issue was the income share agreement. At present, income from recycling was voluntarily pooled and was used, for example, for joint research. However, a small number of the Project Integra members were questioning the basis of this agreement.

An additional issue was that the success of the recycling collection scheme was now exceeding the capacity of the Portsmouth recycling facility. This incurred an additional cost to the Project for the further transportation of the recyclable

material to alternative facilities. This situation would continue until the new Materials Recycling Facility at Alton came into operation.

Project Integra was, at present, generating a small positive income but recyclables were vulnerable to cyclical changes in market conditions and the risk remained that income could be negative in the future.

Cabinet discussed the City Council limiting its capacity to collect recyclable materials to assist the County Council in not being overwhelmed in accommodating its disposal. However, this affected the City Council's performance in meeting Government targets for recycling. This problem would be added to if the present problems of the separation of green waste were resolved, as then the green waste collected would also require sufficient capacity for its composting and recycling.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Project Integra Annual Business Plan (ABP) for 2003/04 be endorsed subject to the following reservations:

- (a) "Whilst supporting in principle the Biowaste Strategy detailed in Appendix 5 of the 2003/04 ABP, the City Council does not at this stage commit itself to prohibiting disposal of green waste in domestic refuse bins or providing a chargeable garden waste collection service."
- (b) That the City Council would like to see the following mentioned in the Annual Business Plan: "to help all member authorities to achieve Government targets in the future".

2. That the funding arrangements for Project Integra summarised in Section 4 of this report be endorsed subject to receipt of an Income Share Contract acceptable to the Director of Health and Housing and the Director of Finance in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3. That subject to recommendation 2 above, the City Secretary and Solicitor be given delegated authority to enter into an Income Share Contract as described in this report.

4. That the City Council's subscriptions towards funding of the Project Integra Executive and projects be met from income share with

the remainder retained by Integra 'on account' to offset future expenditure and other liabilities that may arise associated with the Council's membership of Project Integra.

139. **EASTLEIGH BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN REVISED DEPOSIT DRAFT**
(Report CAB673 refers)

In response to Members' questions, the Director of Development Services clarified that, although the Eastleigh Borough Council Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft had not identified a location for reserve provision (2,500 units), the Strategic Planning Authorities would still be able to activate the "reserve trigger". This could lead to Eastleigh then being forced to respond to developer requests for major housing schemes via the appeal process.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the comments expressed in Section 5 of the report, submitted as officer 'holding' representations to Eastleigh Borough Council, be endorsed.

140. **DECISION UNDER SECTION A.2 OF THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS – CONSTRUCTION WORKS AT RIVER PARK LEISURE CENTRE CAR PARK**
(Report CAB678 refers)

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the decision made under Section A.2 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, be noted.

141. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2003/04**
(Report PS86 refers)

In considering the work programme for the Performance Improvement Committees, the Director of Health and Housing stated that the tasks of recycling for the Health Performance Improvement Committee might be better addressed in the 2004/2005 Municipal Year, when the issues arising from the work of Project Integra had been more fully considered. In addition, work on anti-social behavior would be better carried out in conjunction with the Council's work on crime and disorder, which again could be possibly be undertaken in the next Municipal Year. However, this would not limit the work of the Health Performance Improvement Committee as there were a number of performance management issues, which could be addressed if required.

Resolutions 1 and 2 below would be considered at the Principal Scrutiny Committee to be held later on the 30 June 2003.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the items of scrutiny policy review for inclusion in the work programme of the Performance Improvement Committees for 2003/04 as set out at paragraph 9 of the report, subject to recycling issues being undertaken by the Health Performance Improvement Committee in 2004/2005 as outlined above, be agreed.
2. That the officers report on the out turn of the individual Best Value Improvement Plans in their entirety to the relevant Performance Improvement Committee at least annually as part of the Committee's normal work on monitoring overall performance.
3. That each Performance Improvement Committee be allowed to establish up to two Informal Groups to assist on particular reviews if they so wish and that they be requested to fully take account of the resource implications in the way in which the work of such groups is organised.

142. **DRAFT REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY**
(Report CAB680 refers)

The Chairman made reference to the table on page 9 of the strategy, which listed the south-east's top 20 list of the highest proportion of households unable to buy at lower quartile house prices. This work had been carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in its recent report, 'Can Work, Can't Buy'. She questioned why Winchester was not included within this list. It was noted that since the Joseph Rowntree Foundation had carried out the work, additional statistical figures had been obtained which might alter this situation. The Director of Health and Housing added that the Council's housing strategy would also pick up this issue in order that the Council was not disadvantaged if any future Government financial assistance was based on the conclusions of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report.

Additional comment was made that there should be more positive support to the funding of West of Waterlooville on page 4 of the consultation under other key strategic growth points.

Cabinet also discussed that the consultation draft focused on economic growth areas, but little mention was made of local housing need and the funding of affordable housing. It was considered that the gap between income and affordability was widened within Winchester because of its proximity to London and the high income that commuters could command as opposed to those working in the local area. It was agreed that this distortion should be referred to within the consultation document.

It was additionally agreed that the Winchester District Local Plan Committee should also take into consideration in its deliberations issues raised on page 19

of the consultation document regarding sustainable construction in order that the ecological targets of the Government were taken into account.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That a reply outlining the points raised in the report and as agreed below be sent to GOSE:-
 - a. That reference be made to the distortion in the local housing market caused by the high salaries commanded by London commuters as opposed to those working in the local area in respect of the gap between income and affordability in housing provision.
 - b. That the most up-to-date statistics be included to determine whether Winchester is included within the list of households unable to buy at lower quartile house prices if they were having to rely on income alone.
2. That the Winchester District Local Plan Committee take into consideration sustainable construction principles in its formation of any pre inquiry modifications to the Local Plan.
3. That the issues raised in the draft strategy be considered by the Local Strategic Partnership at the next appropriate meeting.

143. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

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>
144	FINANCE DEPARTMENT STAFFING OF THE ACCOUNTANCY SECTION	<p>)) Information relating to a) particular employee, former) employee or applicant to) become an employee of, or a) particular office-holder, former) office-holder or applicant to) become an office-holder under) the authority. (Para 1 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 11) to Schedule 12A refers).</p>
145	BARFIELD CLOSE SCRAP YARD, WINCHESTER	<p>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of) any particular person (other) than the authority). (Para 7) Schedule 12A refers).)) Any terms proposed or to be) proposed by or to the authority) in the course of negotiations for) a contract for the acquisition or) disposal of property or the) supply of goods or services.) (Para 9 to Schedule 12A) refers).)</p>

144. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2003 (EXEMPT MINUTE)**

Cabinet considered an exempt Minute relating to the staffing of the Accountancy Section.

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minute of the meeting held on 11 June 2003 be approved and adopted.

145. **BARFIELD CLOSE SCRAP YARD, WINCHESTER**

(Report CAB 679 refers)

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the rent review at the Barfield Close Scrap Yard be settled at the terms set out in the report.

The meeting commenced at 9.00am and concluded at 10.30am

S Campbell
Chairman