

HOUSING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**10 July 2003****Attendance:**

Councillors:

Steel (Chairman) (P)

Clohosey (P)
Berry (P)
Craig
Hoare (P)
Love (P)Maynard (P)
McKay (P)
Nunn (P)
Oxley (P)
Tait (P)**Others in attendance:**Mr A Rickman (TACT)
Mr B Whitfield (TACT) (Standing Deputy for Ms V Hamshere)
Councillor Allgood

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions asked or statements made.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Maynard be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2003/04 Municipal Year.

3. APPOINTMENT OF TACT CO-OPTEEES

RESOLVED:

That Ms H Dewdney and Mr A Rickman (Deputies Ms V Hamshere and Mr B Whitfield) be appointed as TACT co-optees on the Committee for the 2003/04 Municipal Year.

4. TIME OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That future meetings of the Committee commence at 6.30pm for the 2003/04 Municipal Year.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 11 March 2003 numbered 945 – 949 be approved and adopted.

6. **PROCEDURES FOR THE PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**

(Report PS80 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

7. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2003/04**

(Report PS86 refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Allgood (Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee), detailed the discussions held that had led to the compilation of the work plan.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

8. **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE WORKPLAN**

(Report HO15 refers)

It was agreed that an Informal Group on Supported Housing would study strategic issues regarding the District's Supported Housing requirements. The Informal Group would also ensure that a future strategy would be an open and transparent.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft work programme as set out be agreed.

2. That an Informal Group be established on Supported Housing to be comprised of the following Members:

Councillors: Craig, Love, Maynard and Tait and Mr A Rickman (TACT).

9. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SERVICES – FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE OUT TURN 2002/03**

(Report HO11 refers)

Members noted that due to the timing of the TACT Rent and Business Planning Forum, it had not been possible for the formal comments from TACT to be included within the above report, as was the normal practice. The TACT comments were therefore circulated to the Committee at the meeting. Although these had not been available within the statutory deadline, the Chairman agreed to accept the comments onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration in order to assist Members in the facilitation of debate on the matters contained within the report.

The Director of Health and Housing detailed reasons for variance and proposed carry forward of savings, and answered questions related to services and core activities.

The Director of Health and Housing confirmed that the demand-led budget for disabled adaptations would inevitably increase in response to the Government's policy to cater for the disabled within their own homes as much as possible.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be requested to approve a carry forward of £58,450 within the Housing Revenue Account as follows, for the reasons stated in the report:

- (i) £38,880 to support the introduction of resource accounting and long term business planning to the housing revenue account.
- (ii) £19,570 to the implementation of the Tenants Compact.

10. **HOUSING GENERAL FUND SERVICES – FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE
OUTTURN 2002/03**

(Report HO12 refers)

Members noted that due to the timing of the TACT Rent and Business Planning Forum, it had not been possible for the formal comments from TACT to be included within the above report, as was the normal practice. The TACT comments were therefore circulated to the Committee at the meeting. Although these had not been available within the statutory deadline, the Chairman agreed to accept the comments onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration in order to assist Members in the facilitation of debate on the matters contained within the report.

The Director of Health and Housing detailed reasons for variance and proposed carry forward of savings, and answered questions related to services and core activities.

The Director of Health and Housing informed the Committee that the proposed carry-forward sum of £7,000 for Home Energy Conservation (paragraph 3.4 of the report refers) had not been included within the carry forward figure as set out in the recommendation. Therefore, with the agreement of the Committee, the proposal for a carry forward of £128,000 was amended to read £135,000.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be requested to approve a carry forward of £135,000 within the Housing General Fund as follows for the reasons stated in the report and outlined above.

- (i) £87,000 for the final phase of the community planning study process;
- (ii) £15,000 of Government housing needs grants to assist the developing of a Housing Association Management Agency (HAMA) partnership with Drum Housing Association.
- (iii) £26,000 to cover potential claims for support to tenants regarding the supporting people process.

- (iv) £7,000 to fund agency staff to undertake the processing of home energy conservation questionnaire.

11. **HOUSING BEST VALUE REVIEW – PROGRESS AGAINST THE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

(Report HO14 refers)

Members noted that due to the timing of the TACT Rent and Business Planning Forum, it had not been possible for the formal comments from TACT to be included within the above report, as was the normal practice. The TACT comments were therefore circulated to the Committee at the meeting. Although these had not been available within the statutory deadline, the Chairman agreed to accept the comments onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration in order to assist Members in the facilitation of debate on the matters contained within the report.

The following suggested revised target dates (for those areas that were currently behind schedule against the improvement action plan) were discussed:

- (i) 'Improve IT links with cash office' - revised target date October 2003.
- (ii) 'Determine most appropriate option for structure of landlord services' - revised target date December 2003'.
- (iii) 'Establish new performance targets' - the Committee noted that an item referring to the void management process was to be considered elsewhere on the agenda (report HO13 refers) and that there would also be a further report on this matter to the Committee at its meeting on 27 October 2003.
- (iv) 'To raise means-tested threshold (from £500 to £4,000)' - the Committee noted that this would be subject to a review with Social Services and that this outcome would be reported to the Committee at its meeting on 10 December 2003.
- (v) 'To increase the number of direct debit payment dates available to tenants' - revised target date of August 2003.
- (vi) 'To provide additional support to tenant liaison function' - revised target date of July 2003 (the closing date for an advertisement for support officer post was 11 July 2003).
- (v) 'To introduce housing surgeries across the district' - the Director of Health and Housing advised that much preliminary work had been done regarding this matter and that it was likely that housing surgeries should be up and running by September 2003. However, there would be no formal feedback available until the meeting of the Committee on 10 December 2003.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress against the Best Value Improvement Action Plan be noted.
2. That the revised target dates as set out above, be noted.

12. **HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF VOID MANAGEMENT (LESS APPENDIX 2)**

(Report HO13 refers)

Members noted that due to the timing of the TACT Rent and Business Planning Forum, it had not been possible for the formal comments from TACT to be included within the above report, as was the normal practice. The TACT comments were therefore circulated to the Committee at the meeting. Although these had not been available within the statutory deadline, the Chairman agreed to accept the comments onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration in order to assist Members in the facilitation of debate on the matters contained within the report.

The Director of Health and Housing also circulated a further appendix to report HO13 which outlined more detail of the current general needs voids. The Chairman agreed to accept the appendix as a matter requiring urgent consideration even though it had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline, as the extra information would assist Members in their discussion of the item.

The Committee noted the existing problem of void garages. The Committee welcomed the identification of the exact number of void garages as included at Appendix 3 of the report and the Director's intentions to reduce the number of voids as soon as possible. Although it was noted that an identification of 'proper use' of garages should be eventually undertaken, the Committee noted that it was preferable at this stage to identify the reasons for, and the number of, void garages.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

13. **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.

Minute Number	Item	Description of Exempt Information
##	Housing Performance Monitoring Of Void Management (Exempt Appendix 2)	Information relating to any particular occupier or former occupier of, or applicant for, accommodation provided by or at the expense of the authority. (Para 3 to Schedule 12A refers).

14. **HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING OF VOID MANAGEMENT - APPENDIX 2**
(Appendix 2 of Report HO13 refers)

The Committee considered the information on the current number of void properties. In response to questions, the Director of Health and Housing detailed various reasons why properties might remain empty for longer than the Council would wish.

RESOLVED:

That the content of Appendix 2 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.45pm.

J Steel
Chairman