

HOUSING COMMITTEE**9 April 2019**
7.00 pm – 9.42 pm
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud
Minutes**3****Membership**

Councillor Chas Townley (Chair)	P	Councillor Lindsey Green	P
Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Julie Job	A
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton	A	Councillor Phil McAsey	A
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Simon Pickering	P
Councillor Colin Fryer	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present A = Absent

Tenant Representatives

Letitia Gardiner	P	Juliette Smith	P
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Officers in Attendance

Director of Development Services	Head of Housing Services
Project Manager	Tenancy Operations Manager
Policy Implementation Manager	Principal Accountant
New Homes and Regeneration Manager	Democratic Services Officer

Others in Attendance

James Manifold from Impart Links Consultancy

The Chair welcomed the two Tenant Representatives to their first meeting of the Committee.

HC.048**APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Clifton.

HC.049**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Young declared an interest in agenda item HC.052 and left the meeting during the discussion.

HC.050**MINUTES – 5 February 2019****RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

HC.051 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

HC.052 **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL: PETITION FOR OUR HOMELESS**

Debbie Hicks presented a petition asking the District Council not to accept any money from the Social Improvement Board (SIB). The Petition argued that the SIB did not provide effective public accountability and the most appropriate way to do this was through the local authority. It was recognised that Stroud District Council was doing some good work in tackling homelessness.

The Chair responded to the comments made and recorded his appreciation of the work undertaken by Officers in supporting homeless people in the district. He noted that the private rented sector accounted for 1 in 5 homes in the Stroud District and that Housing Benefit had been frozen for four years. Members expressed the view that a discussion on Homelessness was important and noted that there was a demand for social housing in the district.

The Chair gave a presentation on the details of; waiting lists, temporary accommodation, positive action to prevent homelessness across authorities in the South West including other districts in Gloucestershire. The presentation highlighted the positive action being undertaken in Stroud District.

RESOLVED **To note the petition.**

HC.053 **OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING STRATEGY (HRA)**

The Project Manager and the Head of Housing Services presented the report which set out the vision for older people's accommodation for the next five years. There had been consultation with stakeholders and the Strategy established six unique objectives which would in turn realise the District Council's vision. An action plan had been developed which would be reviewed on a bi-monthly basis.

Members noted that the report did not provide an update on the current provision, it was suggested that future updates should reflect this and this was acknowledged by Officers. In response to further questions it was reported that there would be further discussions with adult social care at the County Council and that tenants would be able to move between provisions subject to the allocation schemes.

RESOLVED **a. To adopt the Older People's Housing Strategy (HRA) 2019 - 2023 and Action Plan.**
b. To agree a review date of 2 years from adoption of the strategy.
c. The Head of Housing to provide regular updates on current provision.

HC.054 **DECANT POLICY**

The New Homes and Regeneration Manager presented the report which was an opportunity to revise the policy to enable tenants to be directly matched to sheltered properties across the entire district or to general needs properties within the same or adjoining Parishes and to be placed 'Gold Band' for all other properties.

Members agreed to add a line to the policy to clarify that tenants returning to a newly built home would do so on a social rent and the decision box was amended accordingly.

- RESOLVED**
- a. **To adopt the revised Decant Policy.**
 - b. **To include at item 7 of the policy that tenants returning to a new housing development will pay the social rent for the new property that they are returning to.**
 - c. **To grant delegated authority to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Head of Housing Services and the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee to amend the policy to reflect operational changes, updates in terminology or changes due to legislation.**

HC.055 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 - MONTH 10**

The Principal Accountant reported on the potential movements in the budget to the year end of 31 March 2019. The final outturn report would be presented to the Council's Strategy and Resources Committee before the next meeting of the Housing Committee. Table 2 of the report identified the main variances. The Capital Programme Budget, Table 2 identified the underspends and the associated slippage. The Chair noted the variance in the HRA Summary in Table 3 and commented that this showed a considerable amount of budgetary control.

Members commented that in some instances additional budgets had been requested but not spent. Officers replied that some of the slippage was due to contractors not being able to deliver the work or projects. Reference was made in respect of the budget for park homes and Members asked if sufficient promotion was being given to ensure residents were aware of the available funding.

Members discussed the budget and underspend on Disablement Grants, which was due in part, to capacity issues. It was agreed to ask the District Council's Representative on the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Lydon to raise this with the County Council.

RESOLVED **To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund and HRA Revenue budgets and Capital programmes for this Committee.**

RECOMMENDED **That, subject to the overall position at outturn, the carry**
TO STRATEGY & **forwards and reserve transfers detailed in this report are**
RESOURCES **approved.**
COMMITTEE

HC.056 **DE-POOLING OF RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES**

The Tenancy Manager reported that whilst the Council levied service charges to tenants of flats, sheltered schemes and leaseholders, there were a number of charges incurred, funded not as part of a service charge but as part of rental income such as grounds maintenance. The report proposed charging separately for services which would create a fairer charging process.

Members welcomed the report and noted the opportunities for improved quality of service and also the greater fairness of charging that would follow. Officers confirmed that the project would take 8 – 9 months to complete.

RESOLVED **To authorise Officers to carry out further investigation and bring a report back to Committee setting out potential options at a later date.**

HC.057 **REVISION OF THE INTRODUCTORY AND SECURE TENANCY AGREEMENTS AND CONDITIONS**

The report set out the Council's proposals to review the existing tenancy agreements to ensure they were robust, fit for purpose and transparent. Members noted that the proposals set out clearly the responsibilities of tenants and the obligations of the Council. In response to questions from Members, Officers confirmed that support would be given to tenants to explain the changes to their tenancy agreements and that a full consultation process would be undertaken including the use of social media.

RESOLVED **That Officers are authorised to undertake formal notice of change to the terms and conditions of the Council's tenancy agreement.**

HC.058 **REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE 2020**

Before the debate on the item, Councillor Young raised a point of order and proposed that the agenda item be deferred as tenants had not had an opportunity to bring forward their views.

On consulting the Director of Development Services and referring to the Council's Standing Orders the Chair ruled that the item could be considered and not deferred.

The report set out the number of contracts that Tenant Services had in place to deliver asset related services for the upkeep of the Council's housing stock. Officers stated that if the item had been deferred then there would be a delay in the review process. They also confirmed that there would be ongoing consultation throughout the review process. This would supplement the stakeholder workshops that had already been held. The workshops had considered a long list of eighteen options for change, these were then reduced to four.

Members noted that the review had provided a lot of information about the services provided and the proposed options would give a focus on quality of service as well as value for money. Officers confirmed that tenant representatives would be involved for inspections and the design of the service.

RESOLVED

- a. **Approve the in-sourcing of the Housing Reactive Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) Service from 1 April 2020.**
- b. **Approves Option 10 (App L) of the cost benefit analysis (CBA) report, and taking into account the risks and mitigations the potential contracting-out of a small proportion of the service delivery as described in Option X.**
- c. **Agree delegated authority to the Head of Contract Services to progress and implement the insourcing of the R&M Service, and procurement of all other support services as required in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee, Head of Legal Services and the Section 151 Officer.**

RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL **An additional revenue budget of £53k in 2019/20 and £132k in 2020/21 to cover the one-off implementation and set-up costs, and a new capital programme for HRA IT systems totalling £175k over 2019/20 and 2020/21.**

HC.059 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the work programme and added the 'Ship Inn' site at Stonehouse to the programme.

HC.060 **MEMBERS' REPORTS**

(a) Housing Review Panel

Notes of the meeting of the Panel held on 12 March 2019 had been circulated to Members.

(b) Performance Monitoring Report

Councillor Braun presented the performance monitoring report and highlighted the delivery plan for affordable housing projects.

(c) Tenant Representatives verbal update

As this was their first meeting the representatives had no report to present.

HC.061 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 9.42 pm.

Chair