



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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HOUSING COMMITTEE

10 September 2019

7.00 pm – 9.10 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

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Minutes

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 Jim Dewey	A	Councillor Phil McAsey	P
Councillor Chas Fellows	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Colin Fryer	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present A = Absent

Tenant Representatives

Letitia Gardiner P

Officers in Attendance

Head of Housing Services	New Homes and Regeneration Manager
Interim Accountancy Manager	Projects Officer
Project Officer	Tenancy Operations Manager
Senior Housing Strategy Officer	Principal Sheltered Housing Officer
Head of Community Services	Director of Development Services
Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager	Democratic Services & Elections Officer

Councillor Townley, the Chair, advised Members that Allison Richards had taken voluntary redundancy and thanked her for her long service at Stroud District Council, he also advised that Tim Power would be leaving later this month and that he was very grateful for all the work Tim had been involved with over the years.

HC.015

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dewey and Job.

HC.016

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

HC.017 **MINUTES – 11 JUNE 2019**

RESOLVED **That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2019 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

HC.018 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

HC.019 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20 QUARTER 1**

The Interim Accountancy Manager introduced the first quarterly budget monitoring report of the year and advised that Budget Setting and the Quarter 2 report would be brought to the Housing Committee in December 2019. It was stated that the overall overspend for the service in quarter 1 was £55k, this overspend related to homelessness; the budget had been increased however the Interim Accountancy Manager advised that homelessness would need to be allocated a greater resource at the next budget setting. The Interim Accountancy Manager drew attention to several paragraphs covering the General Fund Capital Programme and the Housing Revenue Account Budget. With regards new builds and regeneration it was advised that the Tanners Piece development may come in under budget due to a lower build cost than budgeted and the approved contingency budget not being fully used.

Councillor Young asked why Table 2 showed items that had not been allocated budgets at the last budget setting. The Interim Accountancy Manager advised that these items were carried forward and at the last budget setting it would not have been known that these items would need budgets in the current financial year. Councillor Young asked if a note could be included in future reports to make this clear.

The Chair thanked Officers for a clear and concise report.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

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

HC.020 **PROPERTIES AT GLOUCESTER STREET AND BRADLEY STREET, WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE**

The New Homes and Regeneration Manager introduced the above report to the Committee and advised that permission had been granted for the development at the Development Control Committee on 3 September 2019. An update was given stating that demolition notices had been served on all 4 properties and a conditions survey has been completed on 2 properties. It was also advised that the layout plan included in the document pack had been amended due to comments received from the Highways Authority prior to the Development Control Committee.

Councillor Braun asked if Officers had any concern regarding the parking for Plots 4 and 5 as this had been raised by Wotton-Under-Edge Town Council. She stated that it was a busy road and that visibility would be poor for anyone reversing out of the parking space. The New Homes and Regeneration Manager advised that the Highways Authority were happy with this and that the site itself would make it difficult to amend the location of the

car parking spaces, it was hoped that residents would reverse into the spaces rather than reverse out.

Councillor Braun also asked how long current tenants would be given to find a new suitable property; the New Homes and Regeneration Manager advised that they would be given as long as was needed to find suitable alternative accommodation.

The Chair and Councillor Kay thanked the Officers for their work and professionalism.

Councillor Braun stated that the new development would have many benefits for the local area.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED **To approve the redevelopment of properties at Gloucester Street/Bradley Street, Wotton-under-Edge to provide 8 new affordable rented council homes.**

HC.021 **SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The report listed above contained a brief update on the Sheltered Modernisation Programme Phase 1 and Phase 2, the Project Officer advised that the previous ARK report had categorised the Willow Road sheltered housing scheme as 'red' which identified it as suitable for disposal or alternative use. The categorisation given was due to a few factors including high tenancy turnover, anti social behaviour and limited access to amenities. The Project Officer drew attention to Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 which showed that from further monitoring, the issues identified in the ARK report had lessened and that the option of redeveloping the site didn't appear as viable. The Project Officer therefore advised that they were recommending a change of categorisation from 'red' to 'amber' to allow the scheme to be brought forward in the planned programme and to be scheduled into the Sheltered Modernisation Programme.

Councillor Powell thanked the Officers for their work and advised he had been to visit Willow Road sheltered housing, the residents had asked what timescale the programmes would be working to and what work would be carried out. The Project Officer advised that if the decision to re-categorise the housing was made by Committee then they would keep residents informed of any timescales and changes, more answers would be available by the end of the year.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED **To amend the categorisation of Willow Road sheltered housing scheme from 'red' to 'amber' and include it within the Sheltered Modernisation Programme for improvements to be made to communal areas.**

HC.022 **HOUSING STRATEGY 2019 – 2024**

The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager introduced the above report, it was advised that the Committee had approved the draft strategy in December 2018 and

the consultation had been completed between 7 March and 2 May 2019. The consultation had been advertised widely and they had a total of 50 individuals and organisations respond during the consultation.

The Chair stated that this was an excellent piece of work and it was good that the action plan was available.

Councillor Braun questioned whether the action plan would be reviewed on an annual basis as most of the actions listed are for the next year or 2 years. The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that the action plan would be updated regularly and it was hoped this would be on a 6 month basis to ensure the plan remained up to date.

Councillor Kay asked whether the action on homelessness and the plan to acquire a property to help was moving ahead. The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that unfortunately they were struggling to get responses from the landowners and they may have to reluctantly pursue a different purchase and withdraw from negotiations with the landowners. Councillor Townley confirmed that other options were being looked at to gain temporary accommodation.

Councillor Young asked whether recognition of the issue of coercive control and rent arrears had been included in the Housing Strategy or whether the Homelessness Strategy had been cross-referenced in this document. The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that in the homelessness section there is a cross reference to the Homelessness Action Plan.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED To approve the Housing Strategy 2019-2024 for publication.

HC.023 TENANT SATISFACTION (STAR) SURVEY RESULTS

The Projects Officer advised that overall the response rate was disappointing and that this highlighted the changing communication preferences of tenants. It was stated that 83% of sheltered respondents were satisfied with our services overall, however the ratings for general needs were slightly reduced. There were however good levels of satisfaction seen within the following categories:

- Quality of their home
- The ease in which they can report repairs
- How the repair request was handled
- Quality of their last completed repair.

The Projects Officer also highlighted that improvements needed to be made to establish a repairs appointment system and develop aspects of communication and digital media.

Members asked questions and received replies on the following topics:-

- Customer service and handling of enquiries
- Use of mystery shoppers
- Dealing with complaints
- The use of ICT and a new system.

Councillor Kay asked whether Members could be given a timetable showing the timescales for the regeneration of neighbourhoods. The Projects Officer confirmed she would be happy to provide a briefing note for Members.

Councillor Braun stated she would like to see an action plan that links to the conclusions and recommendations in the report that would show what and when changes are going to be made. She also asked when satisfaction would be checked again. The Head of Housing Services advised that the legal requirement to check satisfaction is every 3 years but this could possibly be brought forward to 12 or 24 months.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED To note the Tenant Satisfaction (STAR) Survey Results Report.

HC.024 SHELTERED HOUSING CALL MONITORING SERVICES

The Principal Sheltered Housing Officer introduced the above report which recommended the replacement of the existing hard wired system with an opt in opt out service. The recommendation was to replace the system with Careline which would provide a more tailored service and was also inline with the Old Persons Strategy and corporate approach. It was stated that the results from the consultation were overwhelmingly positive.

Councillor Braun stated that this was a good idea and was a more modern approach which would be more responsive, she raised a question regarding the costs of the new system for tenants. The Principal Sheltered Housing Officer advised that if a resident opted in to Careline it would cost £1.68 plus VAT a week.

The Chair reiterated to the Committee that the current cost for the Tunstall system was covered in the service charge however the new Careline system is an optional system which was not covered in the service charge. The Principal Sheltered Housing Officer stated that those that couldn't afford it would most likely qualify for other allowances that would cover the cost.

Councillor Powell asked if this system could be used in the private sector. The Head of Community Services confirmed that the Careline System was available to private residents and that there are about 1800 customers that currently use this system in the Stroud District.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED 1. Authorise officers to arrange for the decommissioning of the existing hard wired monitoring services.

2. Authorise officers to arrange for the replacement of the current system with Careline.

HC.025**REVISIONS OF THE INTRODUCTORY AND SECURE TENANCY AGREEMENT'S TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The Chair announced a change to the order of the Agenda, the Committee agreed to take Agenda Item 14b after Agenda Item 11.

The Tenancy Operations Manager introduced the above report and advised that consultation had taken place between June and July 2019, the consultation had been promoted through text, the website and invites had been sent to roadshows. 4 changes had been made to the terms and conditions, the changes had been made because of the feedback received during the consultation.

Members asked questions and received replies on the following topics:-

- Plain English
- Whether residents receive a one to one in order to run through the terms and conditions when taking on a tenancy
- Paragraph 2.6 and bullet point 7.5.1 regarding informing the Council if they do own their own property.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

- 1. To agree to the revisions of the Introductory and Secure Tenancy Agreement's Terms and Condition to commence from 4 November 2019.**
- 2. To agree that the comments made throughout the consultation process be published with the official response onto the Council's website.**
- 3. To agree for revised copies of the Introductory and Secure Tenancy Agreement's Terms and Conditions be published on to the Council's website.**

HC.026**MEMBERS' REPORTS****Tenant Representatives verbal update**

The Tenant Representative advised that mentoring had now begun and that she would be attending digital and effective tenant training. She also advised that she would be exploring the tenant empowerment strategies and would utilise the knowledge of the neighbourhood ambassadors.

The Head of Housing Services advised that Juliette Smith had resigned from the Committee and would try to get another Tenant Representative on board as soon as possible, the decision would be made by full Council.

HC.027**HRA DELIVERY PLAN REVIEW**

The Head of Housing Services introduced the above report, the HRA Delivery Plan had been discussed at Housing Committee in June 2019 and it was agreed to begin consultation with the tenants and leaseholders, the main themes covered in the consultation were home, community and environment. There was a good turnout during

the consultation process with a total of 342 attendees at 34 events held at various locations throughout the district.

The Head of Housing Services drew the Committees attention to the findings from the consultations which were included in paragraphs 3.1 & 3.3 of the report and the suggestions for new priorities in paragraph 3.5. It was advised that a final report would be brought back to the December Committee, and that the Housing Review Panel on the 12 November would be used as a workshop to look at the feedback received from leaseholders and tenants.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED **That the consultation feedback is noted and that a new delivery plan is presented to Committee in December 2019 based on the findings and links to the CDP and MTFP.**

HC.028 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Chair confirmed that a performance management report, which showed a brief summary of the progress on the Corporate Delivery Plan actions, had been circulated.

Councillor Green and Councillor McAsey were appointed as Performance Monitors.

HC.029 **MEMBERS' REPORTS**

Housing Review Panel

The Chair confirmed that Housing Review Panel meetings had been scheduled for 8 October and 12 November. The meeting on 8 October 2019 would include updates on the homelessness review, the cross authority homelessness work and homeseeker plus. The meeting on 12 November 2019 would centre around the Housing Delivery Plan.

HC.030 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Braun stated that there shouldn't be a performance monitoring report scheduled for the February Housing Committee and asked whether any feedback on the STAR survey actions could be provided in an update in the spring. The Chair advised this may be included in a future meeting of the Housing Review Panel and that the Head of Community Services or Community Services Manager could provide an update.

HC.031 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Chair