



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 February 2021

7.00 pm – 8.41 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

# 3

#### Membership

<b>Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Colin Fryer	P
<b>Councillor Jenny Miles (Vice-Chair)</b>	P	Councillor Lindsey Green	P
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Julie Job	P
Councillor Stephen Davies	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Jim Dewey	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Chas Fellows	A	Councillor Debbie Young	P
P = Present	A = Absent		

#### Tenant Representatives

Sandra Longstreth P

#### Other Member(s) in Attendance

Councillor Doina Cornell  
Councillor Ken Tucker

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities  
Head of Housing Services  
Head of Contract Services  
Income & Systems Manager  
Project Manager  
Head of Property Services

Housing Strategy and Community  
Infrastructure Manager  
Accountancy Manager  
Democratic Services & Elections Officer  
Senior Democratic Services & Elections  
Officer

Councillor Ross, the Head of Housing Services and Councillor Young gave their thanks to Peter Stoate who had joined Stroud District Council in 2011 and had become the Head of Contract Services for the legacy he had left and offered their condolences.

#### HC.022

#### APOLOGIES

There were none.

**HC.023**                      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**HC.024**                      **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**                      **That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 are approved as a correct record**

**HC.025**                      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

**HC.026**                      **ENERGY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Head of Contract Services provided a general update on the Energy Strategy which had been adopted by Housing Committee in 2017. He confirmed that the piece of work to fully consider all viable options to maximise the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Ratings including costs and timescales had not yet been carried out, they would however ensure that this work had synergy with the Corporate Strategy which had also not yet been adopted.

The Head of Contract Services drew the Members attention to paragraph 2.2 which laid out the average SAP ratings for the Councils properties. He advised that it may not be possible to upgrade all properties to Band C, especially non-traditional builds, however they would be looking to ensure an average rating of C across the properties as a whole. It was also advised that work had been ongoing to increase the carbon savings for some properties, details of works carried out were provided in paragraph 2.6.

It was confirmed that a bid had been placed for The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator, 17 schemes were being considered and an announcement to confirm who had been awarded the funds was imminent. An Energy Innovation Officer had been recently appointed and they would be responsible for developing key messages and actions to assist households to change their behaviour and educate tenants further.

An additional report would be brought to Housing Committee in September to provide further detail around the actions to reduce SAP ratings on the Councils housing stock.

Councillor Davies referred to paragraph 2.1 and asked whether it would be useful to do a comparison to see how much better we were doing against the original standard compared to the new standard. The Head of Contract Services said that it would be possible to compare to the original standard however in terms of overall SAP points it was approximately 6 points different. It was also confirmed that there was an error in the table in paragraph 2.5 which should say '1 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2019' instead of '1 Jan 2019 to 31 Dec 2020', this was similar for rows 1 and 2 which should say '1 Jan 2017 to 31 Dec 2017' and '1 Jan 2018 to 31 Dec 2018'.

Councillor Davies also asked how long it would take to insulate all of the Council stock if we continued at the same rate. The Head of Contract Services advised that an answer could be provided to Councillor Davies outside of the meeting.

Councillor Braun stated that it was great to see an Energy Innovation Officer now in post and asked whether it was worth refreshing the energy strategy prior to the report coming

back to September Committee. The Head of Contract Services advised that they would be planning to do this and that the Energy Innovation Officer could work with the CN2030 Officer to look at the actions and common themes.

Councillor Fryer asked for clarification regarding paragraph 3.6 as to when funds would be available to carry out the works. The Head of Contract Services advised that work had already begun however they needed to ensure that the works were affordable and available, the scenarios had not yet been considered in full and this work needed to be carried out before they could commit.

Councillor Job asked whether there was any data available regarding cost and efficiency for the 5 dimplex quantum systems that had been installed. The Head of Contract Services advised that some data was available however they had struggled to get tenants to provide the data from their energy bills and this would be something that the Energy Innovation Officer would be looking into. Sandra Longstreth, the Tenant Representative, advised that this could be included within her role to try and assist the tenants to engage with the Council.

Councillor Dewey asked whether we had been sharing information with other Councils or on forums to help find ideas for the problems we were facing. It was confirmed that this work is ongoing and that we had been exchanging ideas across the Country and even with partners outside of the UK.

Councillor Dewey proposed an amendment to change b) in the decision box to the following:

'b) Agree that the following will be presented to the September 2021 Housing Committee, to inform the budgeting setting process for 2022/23 and beyond:

- (i) A detailed costed plan setting out options to deliver a whole house retrofit for each home by 2030, to meet the targets in the District Council's Carbon Neutral 2030 strategy
- (ii) An outline costed plan of options to achieve the "Enhanced Improvements" scenario within the timeframe of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (ref: December 2019 Committee paper and link to improvement modelling)

c) Agree that a financial report will be presented to the December 2021 Housing Committee identifying resources from the Housing Revenue Account to deliver these plans.'

Councillor Miles seconded the amendment proposed by Councillor Dewey.

Councillor Davies advised that he did not have any problems with the amendment however he would not be able to vote for the report as it did not reflect the climate emergency that had been declared.

Councillor Braun stated that it was a helpful amendment as it clarified the decision timeframes.

Councillor Miles commended the amendment as it supported the goal to ensure that tenants have warm affordable homes whilst meeting the commitment to maximise carbon reduction.

Councillor Dewey asked Councillors to support the amendment as it would give tenants more security in their homes, reduce fuel poverty in the uncertain times we faced and help support our Carbon Neutral aims.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried unanimously.

Councillor Kay proposed the substantive motion including the agreed amendment, Councillor Miles seconded.

On being put to the vote the motion including the amendment was carried with 7 votes for, 3 votes against and one abstention.

- RESOLVED**
- a) **To note the progress made to date;**
  - b) **Agree that the following will be presented to the September 2021 Housing Committee, to inform the budgeting setting process for 2022/23 and beyond:**
    - (i) **A detailed costed plan setting out options to deliver a whole house retrofit for each home by 2030, to meet the targets in the District Council’s Carbon Neutral 2030 strategy**
    - (ii) **An outline costed plan of options to achieve the “Enhanced Improvements” scenario within the timeframe of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (ref: December 2019 Committee paper and link to improvement modelling)**
  - c) **Agree that a financial report will be presented to the December 2021 Housing Committee identifying resources from the Housing Revenue Account to deliver these plans.**

**HC.027**

**GENERAL HOUSING: ALLOCATION OF GRANT TO EASTINGTON COMMUNITY LAND TRUST**

The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager introduced the report that requested support for the allocation of a £50,000 grant to the Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT) dependent on the completion of a legal agreement. The ECLT had been established in 2013 and had recently completed their first development of 23 houses which had been heavily oversubscribed. They had already been granted funding from Homes England for a further 31 homes but were now requesting funding from the Council for a further development of 17 homes which they would be looking to start in 2026. It was confirmed that the Council had sufficient funds to be able to provide the grant to ECLT. The further development would be dependent on the outcome of a local housing needs assessment which the ECLT would be looking to carry out in 2024 and if for any reason the land was not purchased or used for affordable housing the legal agreement would secure the return of the funding to the Council. The grant worked out at approximately £3,000 per affordable home, the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that in her opinion this was good value for money.

In response to a question from Councillor Davies the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager confirmed that the government had reopened their funding to support CLTs, a further £4million was being provided as revenue funding.

Proposed by Councillor Davies and Seconded by Councillor Kay.

Councillor Davies advised that he was keen to propose this as the new homes would be within his ward, he stated that community land trusts had key benefits including being

able to select local people for the new properties. He advised that it was important that the Council supported more parishes and communities to be able to do this.

The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) had established a community housing hub which provided support and information to rural communities and encouraged any communities looking into this to seek information from the GRCC.

Councillor Braun stated that she was in support of the proposal and that the ECLT had done a fantastic job and already delivered many new units.

Councillor Kay thanked the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager for an excellent report and the ECLT for their well-structured application.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**            **To authorise the allocation of £50,000 Affordable Housing Grant to Eastington Community Land Trust (ECLT), subject to the completion of a legal agreement between SDC and ECLT.**

## **HC.028**                    **SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

The Project Manager introduced the report which was split into two sections, section 1 provided a programme update and section 2 detailed the proposal for the schemes to be modernised in the next financial year. It was confirmed that by mid-April they were hoping to have completed 4 Hubs. The sheltered modernisation housing steering group had considered the current situation when looking at the proposals for the next year and were recommending that the programme now focused on the Independent + schemes to allow feedback from those using the facilities to further develop the Hub model and inform future works.

Councillor Powell asked what the timescales would be for Vizard Close and Jenner Court. The Project Manager advised that each scheme would likely be a 14-week programme but they both would be completed within the next financial year.

Councillor Miles asked how they would carry out in-depth consultations going forward with the restrictions brought by Covid. The Project Manager advised that at Springfield court the consultation was carried out by a telephone questionnaire which proved to be successful as they managed to speak to more residents than they had previously at the consultation coffee mornings, this method would be used going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Powell and Seconded by Councillor Fryer.

Councillor Green advised that she would vote in favour of this because Jenner Court was overdue refurbishment and she had been in contact with many of the tenants about their facilities.

Councillor Miles stated that it was wonderful that despite Covid-19 the programme had stayed on track and within budget and offered her thanks to the Sheltered Housing Team for achieving this.

Councillor Cornell, Dursley Ward Councillor, advised that she was really pleased to see that Vizard Close would be refurbished and supported Councillor Miles in her statements

of thanks to the team regarding the great work that continued throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Councillor Fryer echoed Councillor Cornell's comments and stated it was great to see both Vizard Close and Jenner Court on the list for modernisation works next year.

Councillor Powell thanked the Sheltered Housing Team and advised that he had received very good feedback from Willow Road.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED**            **That Vizard Close in Dursley and Jenner Court in Berkeley will have modernisation works carried out in the financial year 2021/22.**

**HC.029**                    **INCOME COLLECTION STRATEGY 2021-24 (TENANT SERVICES)**

The Income & Systems Manager introduced the report which sought committee's approval for the Tenant Services Income Management Strategy. The strategy set out the direction of income collection and defined what the income management team was doing to support and maximise income solutions for customers to prevent arrears and sustain tenancies and included 5 key priorities.

Proposed by Councillor Powell and Seconded by Councillor Fryer.

Councillor Braun advised that currently there were issues with rent collection and it was therefore important to make it clear what the strategy involved and that show that the Council were able to do as much as they could to support tenants.

Councillor Kay gave his thanks to the incomes team, he stated it was a difficult job as without income the Housing Revenue Account and the work we planned to do would suffer.

Councillor Miles stated that it was very important at this time to have the emphasis on enabling people to have the skills to be able to pay their rent on time, the Income Team would work with people to ensure they have skills to manage their money.

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

**RESOLVED**            **To approve the Strategy**

**HC.031**                    **MEMBER REPORTS**

a) Performance Monitoring:

Councillor Kay questioned whether the contract at Ringfield in Nailsworth had now begun. The Strategic Director of Communities advised that he would check and respond outside the meeting to Councillor Kay.

Councillor Braun highlighted the increase in rent arrears by 35% and advised that this was just the beginning of the impact of Covid and that further impacts were expected over the coming months.

**HC.032**

**WORK PROGRAMME**

There were no questions or comments on the Work Programme.

**HC.033**

**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Member questions were submitted. They were answered by Councillor Ross. (Refer to the Council's [recording](#) and [Agenda Item 11](#)).

The meeting ended at 8.41 pm

Chair