

HOUSING COMMITTEE

28 June 2016

7.00 pm – 9.50 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

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Minutes

Membership:

Councillor Mattie Ross **	P	Councillor Norman Kay	P
Councillor Chas Townley *	P	Councillor Phil McAsey	P
Councillor Catherine Braun	P	Councillor Jenny Miles	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton	P	Councillor Elizabeth Peters	A
Councillor Colin Fryer	P	Councillor Tom Skinner	P
Councillor Julie Job	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P

** = Chair * = Vice Chair

P = Present A = Absent

Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive	Property Manager
Strategic Head (Tenant & Corporate Services)	Accountancy Manager
Asset Manager	Sheltered Housing Project Manager
Head of Asset Management (Joint)	Principal Site Officer
Business Development Manager	Principal Sheltered Housing Officer
Head of Housing Management	Senior Housing Strategy Officer
Tenancy Operations Manager	Democratic Services Officer

Others Present

Councillors Nigel Cooper, Doina Cornell, Stephen Robinson, Ken Tucker, Tom Williams and Ian Allan, Chair of Stroud Council Housing Forum.

HC.001

APOLOGIES

An apology of absence was received from Councillor Elizabeth Peters.

HC.002

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

HC.003

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

HC.004 **MINUTES – 29 MARCH 2016**

RESOLVED **That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2016 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

HC.005 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were none.

HC.005 **WORK PROGRAMME**

A draft work programme had been circulated prior to the meeting and a discussion with committee members to discuss future business and Task and Finish Groups would take place either on 19 July or 2 August 2016.

RESOLVED **To hold a meeting to discuss the future Work Programme.**

HC.006 **APPOINTMENT OF PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPRESENTATIVES**

RESOLVED **Councillors Catherine Braun and Debbie Young were appointed as representatives for 2016/17 and would provide a record of areas of work that had been monitored and report back to Committee.**

HC.007 **THE FUTURE OF TENANT INVOLVEMENT**

Members received a power point presentation from the Head of Housing Management on the feedback from the Task and Finish Group, together with the comments of the Stroud Council Housing Forum on the future of tenant involvement.

The following responses were given to questions:-

- Road shows will be held in different areas of the district to enable tenants to give their views.
- Cambridge City Council also allowed tenants to be members of their Housing Committee.
- Mystery shoppers will continue.
- The term of the two tenant representatives will be one of the points to be discussed and decided by the tenants themselves. The selection will be made with the assistance of an Independent Tenant Advisor and a job description would be written advertising the two tenant representative positions.
- The road shows that had previously been held had been very successful and engagement with tenants had proved very informative.

Ian Allan, Chair of Stroud Council Housing Forum confirmed that the road shows had allowed tenants to talk in a relaxed atmosphere with officers. They were a good initiative adding that the Council is a good landlord.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank all Chairs of Stroud Council Housing Forum for their work that they had undertaken in the past.

- RESOLVED RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** **To support the approach as described in the presentation.**
- (a) The membership of the Housing Committee be amended to include two co-opted tenant members (with no voting rights) who may speak in Committee on Council housing matters.**
- (b) That Stroud Council Housing Forum (SCHF) be immediately replaced by formal and more effective tenant consultation arrangements and events.**

HC.007 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) OUTTURN 2015-16**

The Accountancy Manager explained that the above report was a more detailed report on the HRA and the impact of the discrepancy had an impact on the opening balance of the new financial year.

In response to questions the following points were clarified:-

- The rules regarding RTB receipts had not changed but clarification was sought from the CLG on what was and was not eligible. The position would be clearer after a reply had been received.
- The HCA had changed their priorities and the Council could only bid for shared ownership schemes.
- The budget for kitchens and bathrooms had been overspent by £216k because works had been brought forward.
- Because of problems with a contractor a new contract commenced from 1 April 2016 and this was why all outstanding invoices were paid before the new contract commenced.
- Monitoring of budgets would be one of the issues that the Performance Monitors would be scrutinising.

- RESOLVED** **(a) To note the headline outturn position on the HRA for 2015/16.**
- (b) To note the movements on HRA balances and reserves set out in Table 3.**

HC.008 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN**

Members received a power point presentation from the Head of Housing Management on the draft HRA business plan.

A Task and Finish Group would be set up consisting of members and staff to provide a final Business Plan to be presented at September's meeting. The following members expressed an interest: Councillors Norman Kay, Chas Townley, Tom Skinner, Julie Job and Colin Fryer. The Chair suggested that Ian Allan, the Chair of Stroud Council Housing Forum also joined the group, which was agreed by Committee.

The plan would be reviewed regularly to respond to issues and future challenges.

RESOLVED To set up a Task and Finish Group to develop a HRA Business Plan which will be presented at September's meeting.

HC.009 **CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Property Manager outlined the above report and sought Committee's agreement on the content and direction of the strategy and approval of the programme of property reviews.

Officers clarified the following queries:-

- The one, 6 bed property was being converted into two dwellings.
- A new bullet point could be added to paragraph 1.4 of the Strategy "To remove our carbon footprint."
- A visit to Exeter is planned where passive housing would be included in the visit.

RESOLVED To approve the programme of property reviews for Housing Revenue Account property.

RECOMMENDED That the Corporate Asset Management Strategy is approved.
TO STRATEGY
AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

At 8.40 pm the meeting adjourned and reconvened at 8.50 pm.

HC.010 **SHELTERED MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

For the benefit of new members the Head of Housing Management outlined the background behind the review of the Council's 29 sheltered housing schemes. The schemes were originally built between the 1950's-1990's and were of different construction methods and did not meet today's standards.

The Head of Asset Management (Joint) confirmed that following receipt of the report from Ark, 6 of the sheltered housing schemes required rebuild and/or an improvement programme and the methodology was set out within the report. Attention was drawn to paragraph 4.2 of the report; the recommendations for each scheme. The disposal of the identified properties would be funding the decants and voids.

The Sheltered Housing Project Manager and his team confirmed that each of the affected tenants had been visited individually and follow up visits and communication were ongoing to ensure that the changes were implemented through consultation in a structured and timely manner whilst addressing any concerns. A road trip had taken tenants to other sheltered schemes within the district which had proved a success.

In reply to members' questions the following points were clarified:-

- All tenants are starting to engage with officers and are looking at other accommodation.

- The older persons dwellings were protected from the Right to Buy scheme.

Councillor Norman Kay proposed a Motion to amend paragraph d. of the decision box to now read:-

“To dispose of the Council’s freehold interest in Ringfield Close on the open market. That officers investigate proactively the possibility of a partnership with a housing association to build sheltered flats on the garage site adjacent to The Ridings and that this is considered by committee alongside other options for the future of the site at the appropriate time.” The amendment was seconded by Councillor Chas Townley.

The Proposer outlined the reasons for the amendment referencing paragraph 2.6 of the report and the demand for sheltered housing in Nailsworth.

Officers advised that they could explore other options and bring these back to Committee. But stated that by amending the decision box further may affect the land value and create a domino affect.

Councillor Steve Robinson, a Ward Member for Nailsworth explained that the GRCC had carried out a housing survey which had resulted in the need for 2 and 3 bedroomed housing and 54 affordable homes in Nailsworth.

Councillor Norman Kay proposed a further amendment to the end of paragraph c. of the decision box by the addition of the following words “with a preference for 2 or 3 bedroomed homes on site.”

The Chair raised her concerns that by changing the wording in the decision box again may affect the valuations which officers had based their recommendations.

The Officer confirmed that the further amendment may affect the valuation and delivery time and strongly recommended Members not to amend the decision box further.

The Proposer withdrew his further amendment.

The Vice-Chair reminded members that from the housing need survey 2 and 3 bedroomed properties were required across the district and future planning applications needed to comply with the Council’s housing strategy. When applications are submitted for large dwellings the Town and Parish Councils, Councillors and members of the local community should object on the grounds of the housing needs survey. He suggested that perhaps training could be provided.

Upon the vote members unanimously agreed the decision box, with the amendment to paragraph d.

RESOLVED

Dryleaze Court, Wotton-Under-Edge:

- To retain 31 bungalows and flats and associate them to Dryleaze House.**
- To dispose of the Council’s freehold interest in Dryleaze Court on the open market.**

Ringfield Close and Park Road, Nailsworth:

- c. To dispose of the Council's freehold interest in 26 and 28 Ringfield Close on the open market.
- d. To dispose of the Council's freehold interest in Ringfield Close on the open market. That officers investigate proactively the possibility of a partnership with a housing association to build sheltered flats on the garage site adjacent to The Ridings and that this is considered by committee alongside other options for the future of the site at the appropriate time.
- e. To redevelop the Council's properties at Tanner's Piece to provide flats for Older People.
- f. That the Head of Housing Contracts reviews the future of the general needs properties at Upper Park Road, as part of the strategy for the Council's non-traditional housing stock.

Cambridge House, Dursley:

- g. To retain the 4 sheltered bungalows currently associated with Cambridge House.
- h. To dispose of the Council's freehold interest in Cambridge House on the open market.

Glebelands, Cam:

- i. To redevelop its sheltered scheme at Glebelands
 - i. using half of the site to provide flats,
 - ii. using the other half to provide bungalows and houses through a joint venture.

Stonehouse Schemes:

- j. To remodel and retain Burdett House, Stonehouse.
- k. to consider the future of the sheltered scheme at Willow Road, Stonehouse as part of a wider review of the Park Estate and potential estates renewal project.
- l. To approve the proposed redevelopment schemes subject to further reports to Committee on scheme design and financial appraisal, overall 30 year plan modelling and confirmation that funding is available.

HC.011

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were none.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Chair