

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

22 December 2015

7.00 pm – 8:50 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

# 3

### Minutes

#### Membership:

Councillor Mattie Ross**	P	Councillor Elizabeth Peters	P
Councillor Doina Cornell *	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton	P	Councillor Lesley Reeves	P
Councillor Gordon Craig	P	Councillor Mark Rees	P
Councillor Kevin Cranston	P	Councillor Emma Sims	P
Councillor Jonathan Edmunds	P	Councillor Debbie Young	A

\*\* = Chair \* = Vice Chair

P = Present

A = Absent

#### Other Members In attendance

Councillor Geoff Wheeler

#### Officers in Attendance

Strategic Head (Tenant and Corporate Services)	Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)
Head of Housing Contracts	Principal Accountant
Head of Housing Management	Asset Manager (Tenant Services)
Head of Asset Management	Sheltered Housing Project Manager
Business Development Manager	

#### Others Present

Ian Allan – Chair of Stroud Council Housing Forum

The Chair made some announcements prior to the meeting starting.

- The Council had received two awards
  - The Best Partnership Scheme, for working with Lovells at Minchinhampton.
  - Sunday Times award for quality design and innovation at Littlecombe.
- The General Needs and Sheltered Housing satisfaction surveys are very positive and the full reports will be available in the New Year.

**HC.028**                      **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Debbie Young.

**HC.029**                      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**HC.030**                      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A question had been received from Councillor Emma Sims relating to the District Council Garden Competition. An answer was read out by the Chair.

**HC.031**                      **MINUTES – 22 SEPTEMBER AND 12 OCTOBER 2015**

**RESOLVED**                      **That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 September and 12 October 2015 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

**HC.032**                      **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme was discussed, a request was made to bring an update to Committee in February on the position of voids and any improvements which had been made since previously discussed.

**RESOLVED**                      **To agree the Work Programme with the following additions:-**

**Update on Voids – 2 February 2016.**

**HC.033**                      **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVISED ESTIMATES 2015/16 AND ORIGINAL ESTIMATES 2016/17**

The Principal Accountant presented the report. He explained that 2016/17 will be a time of legislative changes that will affect the HRA income. These will be:

- a) Mandatory 1% reduction in social and affordable rents following the implementation of the Housing and Planning Bill 2015-16.
- b) Extension of Right to Buy (RTB) from April 2016 will be phased in for 1.3m tenants of Registered providers (RP's). Local authorities with housing stock will be required to fund the discount offered by RP's to their tenants wishing to purchase their property. What this means to SDC is still unknown and no provision has been made in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- c) From April 2017, tenants with a combined taxable income of £30,000 or more will be required to pay a higher 'Market rent' as opposed to the current social or affordable rent.
- d) From April 2016, five year fixed term tenancies will be introduced for new tenants which has the potential to trigger RTB applications.

The priorities for the service are:

- New build programme
- Sheltered Housing Assets
- Redevelopment of estates

During questions from Members the following was raised:

- There is currently no data on how many people will be affected by the market rent charge for the threshold of £30,000 taxable income. SDC will not benefit from market rent, this will go to government.
- Members asked for figures relating to the RTB, increase/decrease in rents, £30,000 threshold, when they are available.
- Councillor Lesley Reeves was concerned that there had been no consultation with Wotton Town Council on Fountain Crescent.

Councillor Lesley Reeves proposed the motion that item (d) be taken out of the resolution and voted on separately as there had been no time for consultation on Fountain Crescent. This was seconded by Councillor Liz Peters.

During discussion the majority of members felt that nothing could be gained from voting on this separately.

The motion was put to the vote there were 3 Members in favour of removing (d) from the decision, 6 against and 1 abstention.

Following discussion on garage rents, IT project and pension costs a vote was taken on the resolution. This was proposed by Councillor Kevin Cranston and seconded by Councillor Gary Powell with 9 in favour and 2 abstentions.

- RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**
- a) **i) The revised HRA budget for 2015/16 and original HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2016/17 are approved;**
  - ii) The movements to and from earmarked reserves as detailed in table 3 are approved.**
  - b) **That from 01 April 2016:**
    - i) Subject to implementation of proposed government legislation namely, the Housing Bill, social rents and affordable rents be decreased by 1% as calculated in accordance with such legislation;**
    - ii) Garage rents increase by 1% (as detailed in Appendix A);**
    - iii) Other landlord service charges at general needs properties remain at 2015/16 levels (as detailed in Appendix A);**
    - iv) Landlord service charges at Sheltered Housing Schemes are increased by 1% (See para 24 and Appendix A).**
  - c) **That the Capital Programme for 2016/17 be approved.**
  - d) **That the Head of Asset Management be authorised to**

- dispose of the freehold interest in land at Fountain Crescent, Wotton Under Edge on the open market.
- e) To appropriate the former Ship Inn site, Stonehouse from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account at market value to add it to the new build programme for social housing.
  - f) To appropriate land at Wharfdale Way, Stonehouse from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund at market value for canal related development.

**HC.034**

**QUEEN'S COURT, BRIMSCOMBE**

The Principal Estates Surveyor presented the report. The building is approximately 60 years old and is not financially viable to repair. Around 30% of the tenants have applications to move. Keeping it in Council ownership is not recommended. The decanting policy would be used to re-house tenants.

Members were generally in favour of selling the property on the open market.

On being put to the vote Members voted unanimously.

**RESOLVED**

1. To dispose of the Council's freehold interest in Queen's Court on the open market.
2. That Initial Demolition Notices be issued for all dwellings at Queen's Court.
3. That the Council's Decanting Policy will now apply to the residents of Queen's Court.
4. To acquire land and buildings at Queen's Court by Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 if private flats cannot be acquired by agreement, and specifically a) progress a CPO b) establish the public interest case for the CPO c) provide evidence that the disposal referred to at (1) above would be delivered if a CPO were granted d) bring a further report to Committee seeking formal authority to make a CPO when a Statement of Reasons has been drafted.
5. To make budget provision of £400,000 to meet the costs of interim management, property acquisition, relocation and producing a redevelopment scheme.

**HC.032**

**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

Meeting ended at 8.50 pm

Chair