

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

24 March 2015

7.00 pm – 8.28 pm  
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

# 3

### Minutes

#### Membership:

Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Doina Cornell (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Lesley Reeves	P
Councillor Gordon Craig	P	Councillor Mark Rees	A
Councillor Caroline Molloy	A	Councillor Steve Robinson	P
Councillor John Marjoram	A	Councillor Emma Sims	P
Councillor Liz Peters	P	Councillor Debbie Young	P

P = Present    A = Absent

#### Other Councillors Present:

Councillors John Jones, Tom Williams, Penny Wride

#### Officers Present:

Strategic Head (Corporate Services)	Strategic Head (Finance and Business Services)
Head of Housing Contracts (Interim)	Head of Asset Management
Head of Housing Management	Asset Manager
Principal Accountant	

#### HC.049            APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Marjoram and Mark Rees.

#### HC.050            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

#### HC.051            MINUTES

Subject to amendment of the last paragraph, to omit 'the' before Carl Brazier's name.

**RESOLVED    That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 December 2014 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.**

**HC.052            PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None received.

**HC.053            WORK PROGRAMME**

The meeting considered the Committee’s work programme and updated it accordingly.

**23 June 2015**

- IT System report
- Welfare Reform Update
- Sheltered Housing Assets Update

**22 September 2015**

- Right to Buy PV implications

**Future meetings**

- Review of Service Development Groups

**RESOLVED    To note the work programme, subject to the inclusion of the above in the 2015/16 work programme.**

**HC.054            BUDGET MONITOR REPORT 2014/15 – Q3**

The Principal Accountant presented his report. This was the third and final budget monitoring report for the HRA for this financial year. Actual performance will be presented to committee in June.

An explanation was given on how the purchase of land at Fountain Crescent could be funded, possibly through the Right-to-buy receipts.

Concern was expressed regarding the way the financial reports on the HRA are presented to Committee. The Constitution working group is looking at ways reports can be improved.

Members were supportive of the purchase of land at Fountain Crescent, a good opportunity for housing in the south part of the district.

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<p><b>(a) to note the outturn forecast for the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme for 2014/15</b></p> <p><b>(b) To approve the requests to carry forward revenue budgets as detailed in paragraph 5.</b></p>
<b>RECOMMENDED TO STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>	<p><b>(c) To approve the purchase of land at Fountain Crescent, Wotton-under-Edge for £450,000</b></p>

**HC.055**            **HOUSING SMALL SITES INCLUDING SELF-BUILD**

The Head of Asset Management presented his report. A list of small sites is being compiled by the project team, Committee will be updated at their meeting on 23 June 2015.

The small sites would provide land for new homes, make the best use of Council assets and in a small way contribute to the housing allocation in the Local Plan. The sites would be sold on the open market at market value. HRA sites can be added to the development programme.

Paragraph 3.2 of the officer's report stated that '*Under the delegation scheme the Head of Asset Management will consult with the Strategic Head of Tenant Services, ward members and committee chair/vice chair on any disposal in this programme.*'

**RESOLVED**    **To delegate authority to the Head of Asset Management with the proviso of 3.2 of the report, to dispose of the next tranche of small sites for new housing on such terms as he/she considers appropriate and continue the process so long as it is practicable to do so.**

**HC.056**            **UPDATE ON THE SOCIAL SECTOR SIZE CRITERIA**

The Head of Housing Management gave a verbal update. There are approximately 400 residents affected by this issue, no one has been evicted because they are living in a property which is too big for them, where residents are able to move help has been given with removal costs. When people do move, children and schools are taken into account.

**RESOLVED**    **to note the report and be kept informed of new developments relating to this issue.**

**HC.057**            **SHELTERED ASSET REVIEW**

The Head of Housing Management gave a verbal update. Interviews with consultants have taken place and an appointment has been made. The consultants will look at the sheltered housing stock and work with officers to design a programme to improve the housing stock.

The process will be lengthy – 8 to 10 years to complete. There are 29 sheltered housing schemes throughout the district and the programme of works would need to serve current and future residents for the next 25 years.

Committee will be updated in June 2015 with a report to Committee in September on recommendations to move forward with the project.

**HC.058**            **PERFORMANCE MONITORING UPDATE**

Councillor Debbie Young gave an update, she commented that some of the figures on the performance monitoring system were out of date, perhaps the meetings to discuss performance monitoring could take place before Stroud Council Housing Forum and be able to feed into Housing Committee.

Issues discussed were as follows:

- New Build at Mankley Road, Leonard Stanley had been delayed because of drainage and soakaways.
- Continuity of staff and projects is a concern.
- A 7 bedroomed property has been returned to the Council and will be converted to one two bed unit and one three bed unit.

**HC.059**            **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Two Member questions were received from Councillor Gordon Craig. Only one of his questions could be answered in the public domain. The question and answer is attached to these minutes, as it was unable to be answered fully at the meeting.

Meeting ended at 8.28 pm.

Chair

**Member Questions to Housing Committee – 24 March 2015**

**Agenda Item No 11**

QUESTIONS FROM	QUESTION TO
<p><b>Councillor Gordon Craig</b></p>	<p><b>Councillor Mattie Ross, Chair of Housing Committee</b></p>
<p>When are we going to have our joint meeting with Strategy &amp; Resources committee to discuss a policy change that would enable all new council houses to have a local leasing agreement attached to their first letting?</p> <p>By local leasing it is meant that priority would be given on the first letting only, to people who either live in, or have a strong connection with the parish these new houses are in.</p> <p>By taking this approach we would be signalling our regard for the continuation of communities and showing our commitment to helping young people find housing in their rural community where invariably due to the premium prices across all housing options they are currently priced out.</p> <p>It would appear that officers may be of the opinion that need is the most important criteria and while this point can be argued in an urban situation, there are additional pressures in a rural environment and with respect, officers are not necessarily as close to these pressures as councillors.</p> <p>I feel that an urgent review of our policy regarding the letting of our new builds is required. The first step on that journey being the joint meeting. Please can I have a commitment to set it up at an early stage, with this item at the top of the agenda?</p>	<p>When this issue was raised at the October Housing Committee meeting it was confirmed that local lettings plans for new build schemes would be brought forward on an ad hoc basis, but that the Council's current lettings policy is the Glos Homeseekers choice based lettings policy. Further, that to change this would be a far greater undertaking and would have significant implications on the council's letting arrangements. Minute HC.25 sets this out in more detail.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that letting policies are the remit of the Community Services and Licensing Committee and that a possible joint meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair of both Housing and Community Services and Licensing Committee could be considered to discuss this issue.</p>

	<p>The Council's Housing Advice Manager also issued an information sheet in October to all members explaining what is meant by "local connection", the legislation on which allocations are based, and how GlosHomeseecker prioritises applicants.</p> <p>The New Homes and Regeneration Steering Group has invited the Housing Advice Manager to its next meeting in April to discuss lettings policy and local lettings plans.</p> <p>It is anticipated that a local lettings plan for the Mankley Road site in Leonard Stanley will be brought to Committee in the new Civic Year. This will also provide an opportunity for members to consider the approach for lettings on new build schemes on the Council's small sites and the Council's lettings policy.</p>
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