

HOUSING COMMITTEE

28 October 2014

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7.00 pm – 10.15 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

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	P
Councillor Caroline Molloy	P	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:

Councillor Stephen Lydon	Councillor Chris Brine
Councillor Geoff Wheeler	Councillor Tom Williams

Officers Present:

Strategic Head (Tenant Services)
Supported Housing Manager
Head of Asset Management
Performance and Involvement Manager
Head of Housing Contracts (Interim)

Invited Guests:

Richard Medley – Consultant – Chartered Institute of Housing

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before the business of the formal meeting began the Chair made announcements.

The Chair read out a statement regarding a death in a sheltered housing unit on 5 May 2014

The Chair announced an HQN award for Income Management. The Chair thanked the officers and congratulated everyone involved in attaining this award.

The Chair announced that the Tenant Resource Room had now been officially opened.

HC.026 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Marjoram

HC.027 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Emma Simms and Stephen Robinson declared an interest on Agenda Item No. 8 - Nailsworth Community Land Trust, under paragraph 4.4(a) of the Code of Conduct for Members.

HC.028 MINUTES

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

HC.029 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None received.

HC.030 WORK PROGRAMME

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

- Self Build report to be moved to 24 March 2015 with a Briefing Paper to be distributed with Housing Papers for 16 December.
- Spare room subsidy – A joint meeting of Community Services and Licensing Committee and Housing Committee will take place to discuss this on a date yet to be arranged.
- Universal Credit - Discussion to take place at the joint meeting.

RESOLVED To note the work programme, subject to the inclusion of the above in the 2014/15 work programme.

HC.031 AN ASSET STRATEGY FOR HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Supported Housing Manager presented the report.

Richard Medley, a Consultant with the Chartered Institute of Housing gave a presentation on the Sheltered Housing Schemes.

The following comments were made:

- Residents with Dementia would benefit from dementia friendly environments – contrasting colours on walls and doors – light and dark, art work on the corridors so residents know which floor they are on
- Waist level power points/radiator valves at the top of radiators for older people
- Quick wins – internal decoration programmes, features or facilities - extend programme of wet-room conversions.
- Future decisions – bedsits.

- Intention to have a staged process to the improvements and to have tenant involvement.
- Scheme meetings – councillors should have a briefing note from discussions with tenants.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1. to develop a local housing accommodation standard for Sheltered Housing and Independent Living;**
 - 2. to appraise each of the Sheltered Housing scheme properties to determine those that are suitable for independent living by older tenants;**
 - 3. to consider the timetable and process to be followed to generate options, to be subject to consultation, with those responses then being reported back to Committee for consideration and decision.**

HC.032 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Debbie Young presented the quarterly performance updated from Scrutiny Councillors.

The following points were made by Councillor Young

- Councillors looked at major projects and performance indicators.
- Concerns were expressed over the slippage for the new build programme but satisfactory explanations had been provided by officers.
- The Corriett – there are no lifts to the first floor - part of it is being used for older people who perhaps are less able so there was a need to be mindful of the allocation process.
- Performance – there were no identifiable issues.

The report was noted.

HC.033 NAILSWORTH COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Councillors Emma Sims and Steve Robinson left the Chamber.

The Head of Asset Management presented his report and the Committee were updated on negotiations with Nailsworth Community Land Trust.

Ian Potts, Chairman of the Steering Group for the Nailsworth Community Land Trust was invited to speak. He made the following comments:

- This was a community lead initiative.
- Town Council undertook housing needs survey.
- Need affordable housing in Nailsworth this scheme will build 8 affordable homes.
- Other key issues are community right to build - cannot remove the RTB option.
- NCLT and Aster Housing Association could bring some £1m of external investment into the area.

- This would be first community lead initiative within the Stroud district.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The appraisal for the scheme is based on build costs – Aster homes would recoup the money in 19 years.
- £1m would be brought into Nailsworth by developing the site and the benefits that would bring with it.
- HCA funding available is £16,000 per property, this would require the rents to be affordable.
- NCLT would own the land and lease it to Aster HA for 125 years.

Councillor Debbie Young proposed an amendment to the resolution, which was seconded by Councillor Liz Peters.

Stroud District Council will continue to support the NCLT with the aim of finding a development partner to obtain maximum possible capital receipt for the land at Lawnside. Such a capital receipt to be retained within the ward to facilitate future new build, or purchase of properties for Council use.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Concern that this option would lengthen the whole process.
- NCLT has the support of local community.

On taking the vote on the amendment, it was rejected by the Committee.

Members were advised, if deciding to dispose of the land to NCLT for £1, it would then be leased to Aster Housing Association for 125 years. During that time Aster would more than break even on that site and it could be perceived that a precedent was being set to dispose of assets for less than their value.

Housing Committee NOTES the position on negotiations with Nailsworth Community Land Trust (NCLT), and **RESOLVES** to accept ONE of the following options:

1. To dispose of the site on the open market for maximum financial receipt;
2. To add the site to the Council's in-house development programme;
3. To transfer the site by 20 March 2015 to NCLT for £1 and on such other terms as the Head of Asset Management approves, or
4. To dispose of the site to an appropriate provider of Social Housing at a price no less than £121,500 and on such other terms as the Head of Asset Management approves.

Councillor Mark Rees proposed Option 3 which was seconded by Councillor Gary Powell

RESOLVED To transfer the site by 20 March 2015 to NCLT for £1 and on such other terms as the Head of Asset Management approves.

The meeting adjourned at 9.20 and re-started 9.30

It was proposed and seconded to continue with the meeting.

HC.034 TO CONSIDER METHODS WHICH COULD DELIVER INCREASED NUMBERS OF COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING STOCK

The Strategic Head of Tenant Services presented this report.

The following comments were made:

- The company could provide a mix of properties, ranging from market rent, social, affordable and market sales.
- A task and finish group would set up to consider this, terms of reference would be agreed by Strategy and Resources.

RESOLVED to recommend to Strategy and Resources Committee

1. **That a cross party Task & Finish Group (comprising up to four elected members from the Strategy & Resources and Housing Committees, the Strategic Head (Tenant Services) and the Strategic Head (Finance & Business Services) be established to investigate all options to deliver more housing, including the possible creation of a special purpose vehicle as outlined in the report in conjunction with the review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.**

2. **That the Group aims to submit a report of its findings and recommendation(s) to Strategy & Resources Committee by March 2015.**

HC.035 TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Performance and Tenant Involvement Manager presented her report.

- Review of Scrutiny model undertaken and proposals sent to Housing Quality Network for independent advice – the proposed model will go before Stroud Council Housing Forum in December.
- Tenants led an open day for the tenant resource room and to promote involvement.
- Street Games were a good initiative

RESOLVED To note the update and approve continued work detailed in the Next Steps of this report to deliver year three of the strategies relating to this area of the service

HC.036 MOVING TO A 52 WEEK RENT CHARGE

The Head of Housing Contracts (Interim), presented his report

- Department of Work and Pensions have confirmed that Universal Credit will be used in Stroud from 2015. At the moment they are yet to confirm a date, but as a Council the process will begin in April 2015.
- Tenant consultation had concluded, there was a 7% return, 50% were in favour 44% were to a 52 week rent charge.

RESOLVED To implement changing the current 48 week rent cycle to a 52 week rent cycle from April 2015.

HC.037 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were no member questions.

Meeting ended at 10.15 a.m.

Chair