

SPECIAL MEETING OF HOUSING COMMITTEE

2 October 2013

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7.00 pm – 8.35 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

Minutes

Membership:

Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)	P	Councillor Liz Peters	A
Councillor Chris Brine (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Gary Powell	P
Councillor Philip Booth	P	Councillor Frances Roden	P
Councillor Gordon Craig	P	Councillor Emma Sims	P
Councillor Paul Hemming	P	Councillor Tom Williams	P
Councillor Brian Marsh	P	Councillor Debbie Young	A

P = Present A = Absent

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Geoff Wheeler
Councillor Liz Ashton

Officers Present:

Strategic Head (Tenant Services)	Development Officer (Tenant Services)
Head of Housing Contracts	Head of Asset Management
Business Development Manager	Democratic Services Assistant
Business Accountant HRA	

Invited Guest:

Sandra Mutton, Chair of Stroud Council Housing Forum

HC.029 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Liz Peters and Debbie Young.

HC.030 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

HC.031 COUNCIL NEW BUILD PROGRAMME

The Head of Housing Contracts presented the above report on various aspects of the Council's New Build Programme. The report identified that a project board had

been set up to ensure the delivery of the Council's objective to deliver 150 new owned Council homes within the next five years. A budget of £15million had been approved by Council in January 2013.

In response to questions from Members, Officers reported that a high level of energy efficiency was being built into the homes. In particular it was recognised that an annual energy cost, to a maximum £1000, should be an ambition of the Council for future developments.

In response to questions about the possible use of Church Street for housing it was reported that it was always intended that the site should be used for car parking.

A question was raised about the viability of converting ex scheme managers units into general needs accommodation. The Chair stated that each individual scheme would be looked at on merit. In some instances it would not be practicable to convert to general needs and the use for sheltered accommodation would be more appropriate.

A Member questioned the robustness of the data provided in relation to where homes were planned to be built. In particular it was questioned whether homes were being built in locations that would provide access to employment and transport. It was also suggested that the Council did not have full data on the size of the private rental market. It was also questioned whether the housing register was up to date and accurate.

Officers reported that the housing needs survey, which was undertaken every five years, was used to inform the location of new building. In respect of the housing register, Officers were not aware of any potential flaws in the data but agreed to investigate and produce a briefing note for Members.

Referring back to the question of energy efficiency, the Chair of the Stroud Council Housing Forum (SCHF), reported that tenants were reassured by the Council's commitment to attain a high level of energy efficiency for the properties. It was agreed that there should be a review of the energy efficiency figures at an appropriate stage of the new build programme.

A Member raised a question about the value of the Hanover project particularly as the company itself was in the process of disposing of other properties within the district. In response, the Chair of SCHF stated that tenants did support the proposals. During a wide debate a number of issues were raised.

A Member proposed that item (c) from the decision box be deleted and that the Council should not pursue the acquisition of the Hanover Sheltered Housing Scheme. Having been seconded, the amendment was put to the vote and declared LOST by two votes in favour to eight against.

A Member felt that insufficient discussion had taken place about the Woodchester project. This was noted by the Chair.

RESOLVED

- a) **To approve the 'First Division' New Build programme;**
- b) **To approve that the Decant Policy be applied to tenants at the Wharfdale and Woodchester sites;**

- c) To approve the acquisition of the Hanover sheltered scheme at Dursley for £700,000.**

HC.32 WOOLAWAYS REGENERATION PROGRAMME

The Head of Housing Contracts presented the above report which updated the Committee on the proposed programme in respect of the Woolaways Regeneration at Leonard Stanley and Top of Town. The Council had undertaken extensive consultation in respect of the project and as a result would be focussing on 1 and 2 bedroom properties. Overall, the projects would add a further 17 units to the original plan and turn 59 units into a total of 109.

In response to questions from Members, Officers reported that the shared ownership figure of 50% was the current market figure and was not a firm policy decision. Officers agreed to prepare a briefing note for Members on Shared Ownership, Fixed Equity and Home Buy. Members welcomed this suggestion.

Members were pleased to see that the schemes were progressing and welcomed the report.

- RESOLVED**
- a) To approve the proposed programme in respect of the Woolaways Regeneration Programme at Leonard Stanley and Top of Town;**
 - b) To approve that the Decant Policy be extended to all sites under development at Top of Town.**

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Chair