

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 17 March 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Mark Howell

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor and Opposition spokesperson: Liz Heazell

Opposition spokesperson: Frances Amrani

Also in attendance:

Officers:

Stephen Hills	Corporate Manager, Affordable Homes
Paul Howes	Corporate Manager, Community and Customer Services
Steve Annetts	Planned Maintenance Manager
Gemma Barron	Partnerships Manager
Anita Goddard	Housing Operational Services Manager
Leslie Lazell	Services Project Manager
Schuyler Newstead	Housing Development & Enabling Manager
Paul Williams	Equality and Diversity Officer
Guy Moody	Democratic Services Officer

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Val Barrett.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Portfolio Holder declared a personal interest as an employee of the Papworth Trust, which has an RSL as part of its operation.

Cllr Frances Amrani declared a personal interest, as her brother is a Council tenant.

60. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held 17 February 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

The Portfolio Holder was advised that nine gas boiler safety checks remained outstanding. One case had been passed to the legal team whilst the other eight had been retained to allow staff to undertake further attempts at securing entry.

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that the tenancy agreement would be amended to reflect a 'zero tolerance' approach to restricting entry and that a report detailing proposed changes to the tenancy agreement would be presented to the Portfolio Holder at a future meeting.

The Portfolio Holder was further advised that to prevent services becoming overdue

interval timers were being fitted to boilers, which would require frequent manual resetting once twelve months had elapsed. Such measures were designed to encourage tenants to permit the servicing of the boilers.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that protocol dictated that if a member of the housing team smelling gas on visiting a property should call the emergency services or Transco and not force entry to the premises.

The Portfolio Holder restated his request for a member of the Legal Team to be present at his next meeting.

Action: Fiona McMillan

61. MOBILE WARDEN SCHEME

The Corporate Manager, Community and Customer Services presented a report to inform and update the Housing Portfolio Holder with regard to the current status of, and the Council's support to, Mobile and Community Warden Schemes.

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that the scheme provided support, rather than care, to local residents by undertaking such activities as shopping or other 'low level' services. Such support was available to all, although residents of sheltered housing did not normally use the service, but were able to do so on payment of the charge.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that, in general, there were no waiting lists for clients wishing to join the schemes.

In reply to a further question concerning the apparent low cost of the scheme the Portfolio Holder was advised that many village schemes were underpinned by volunteers' hours and different schemes provide different levels of support.

The Portfolio Holder expressed a wish for a presentation outlining the work of the schemes at a future meeting. The Portfolio Holder requested that representatives from two schemes be invited to talk about their work in their villages. The meeting should take place after the meeting to be held early in 2010/11 between SCDC officers, Care Network and Age Concern.

Action: Gemma Barron

The Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

62. BALSHAM: OPTIONS FOR BEDSITS

The press and public were excluded from the meeting for the duration of this item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act.

The Housing Development and Enabling Manager presented a report to advise the Housing Portfolio Holder about the progress made so far regarding the future options for the bedsit bungalow 22-46 Mays Avenue, Balsham.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the final unit had been vacated and local residents were keen to see the site developed. In light of the time lapse since the original decision (nine years) the Portfolio Holder was further advised that it might be appropriate to revisit

the decision made regarding the site.

The Portfolio Holder requested that:

- A consultation exercise be carried out in line with the original decision made in 2001,
- All options be explored
- Balsham Parish Council and the local Member be consulted.

Action: Stephen Hills, Schuyler Newstead.

The Portfolio Holder requested clarification of the rules concerning the pooling of capital receipts from the sale of demolition sites should the receipts be reinvested in housing projects.

Action: Stephen Hills.

63. HRA BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11 - 2014/15 / SERVICE PLAN 2010/11

The Corporate Manager, Affordable Homes, presented the HRA Business Plan 2010/11 – 2014/15 and the Affordable Homes Service Plan 2010/11.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that there had been minor wording changes since the first drafts had been presented, the statistics identified as incorrect had been amended, finance data had been updated and comments made by SMT had been incorporated.

The Portfolio Holder was further advised that, for historic reasons, Council would approve the HRA Business Plan, but that it was the intention to work with Democratic Services to amend the Constitution to prevent this in subsequent years.

Action: Stephen Hills / Democratic Services

The following amendments to the Affordable Homes Service Plan were requested:

- State the average cost of a house in the district (page 8).
- Clarify the number of households seeking assistance with affordable housing, and include the date of the data (page 9).
- Reword the paragraph about Gypsies and Travellers in the threats section of the strengths and weaknesses (page 15).
- Explain the origin of the targets for the repairs PIs (page 20)
- Detail how much money had been transferred from housing assets receipts to support General Fund expenditure (page 33).

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that the results from the General Needs survey would be used in next years plan to ensure that it met the needs of younger tenants.

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that the DLO had tendered for work in order to expand its scope of operations.

In reply to a question concerning the nature of the anti social behaviour reported the Portfolio Holder was advised that no details were available. The Portfolio Holder was further advised that provision of an Anti Social Behaviour Caseworker was a mandatory requirement for the Council and that the post had been with a dedicated Anti Social Behaviour Officer within the Housing team.

Subject to the minor wording amendments discussed at the meeting, the Housing Portfolio Holder **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** the HRA Business Plan 2010/11 – 2014/15.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the Affordable Homes Service Plan 2010/11.

64. FORWARD PLAN

The Corporate Manager, Affordable Homes advised the Portfolio Holder that the Housing Management Strategy and the report on Tenant Participation would be available in draft format at the next meeting.

The Forward Plan was **NOTED**.

65. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Portfolio Holder noted the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 21 April 2010.

The Meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.
