

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 15 February 2012 at 5.30 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Mark Howell

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Jose Hales and Liz Heazell

Opposition spokesmen: Mark Hersom and Edd Stonham

Also in attendance: Alison Elcox, Ben Shelton and Bunty Waters

Officers:

Tracey Cassidy	Supported Housing Manager
Jenny Clark	Lands Officer
Anita Goddard	Housing Operational Services Manager
Stephen Hills	Affordable Homes Director
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mark Howell declared a personal interest as an employee of the Papworth Trust, a charity that includes a Registered Social Landlord.

Councillor Alison Elcox declared a personal interest by virtue of being a South Cambridgeshire landlord.

Councillor Ben Shelton declared a personal interest as an employee of a letting agent in Cambridge.

61. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Housing Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2012, subject to the addition of Gill Anderton and Councillor Ben Shelton to list of those present.

62. WILLINGHAM: ACCESS OVER BRICKHILLS - SALE PRICE OF EASEMENT

Andy Greed and Paul Harris addressed the meeting.

The Housing Portfolio Holder considered a report about a price for the grant of vehicular access across, or Transfer of the Title to, land at the end of Brickhills, Willingham owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council to serve a proposed development on adjacent land that had the benefit of planning permission.

Paul Harris referred to Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 (Power of highway authorities to adopt by agreement). He said that in order for land to be dedicated as public highway and adopted by the Local Highways Authority for maintenance at public expense, title to the land had to be deduced. In this instance, an easement (right of way) would not be sufficient to allow the developer to dedicate the land as highway and, although South Cambridgeshire District Council could do so, the developer would have no guarantee that this would happen, and could therefore be left with a housing development with vehicular access remaining unadoptable and therefore maintainable privately.

A Scrutiny and Overview Committee Monitor questioned the assertion in paragraph 16 of the report that building costs had increased substantially. While the cost of materials might well have risen, that of labour had not.

Andy Greed described the economic viability of the scheme as borderline. He said that any payment made in securing vehicular access to what he described as a "difficult site" would impinge on that viability.

Those present discussed the various figures contained in the report and noted that the aim should be to negotiate the best consideration that could reasonably be obtained. Mr Greed argued that the figure agreed should take into account other costs to be borne by the developer, such as financial contributions due under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **agreed** to transfer Title to the land shaded on the plan attached to the agenda report and defined as vehicular access over SCDC land, for £136,800 (One hundred and thirty six thousand eight hundred pounds) and subject to an overage provision to protect the Council's future interests. Such figure acknowledged South Cambridgeshire District Council's best interests, and represented the revised valuation by Pocock & Shaw (£152,000) less 10%—and was subject to further negotiation between the Council and Developer Applicant, if requested. This consideration was exclusive of South Cambridgeshire District Council's legal costs, which would also be payable by the applicant.

63. SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW

The Housing Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his authority for a restructuring of the sheltered housing service.

The Corporate Manager (Affordable Homes) expressed his appreciation for the contribution made by members of the Task and Finish Group set up to consider the sheltered housing scheme. The Portfolio Holder asked that consideration be given towards the end of 2012 as to whether or not that Group should be reconvened from February 2013.

Those present discussed how the sheltered housing scheme would be focused in future in the light of reduced funding by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Portfolio Holder noted and accepted the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **approved**

1. the structure set out in in Table 1 in the agenda report; and
2. the move to regularise charges for use of the sheltered housing communal rooms by outside groups.

64. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2011/12 - Q3

The Housing Portfolio Holder **received and noted** reports updating him about key performance indicators and the financial position relating to his portfolio for Quarter 3 of 2011-12.

The Housing Operational Services Manager undertook to convey to City Services positive customer feedback relation to the Response Repairs service they provide to residents of South Cambridgeshire.

65. HEALTH AND SAFETY WITHIN THE HOUSING SERVICE

The Housing Portfolio Holder **received and noted** a report updating him about Health and Safety issues relevant to the Affordable Homes service.

66. LEARNING FROM CUSTOMER FEEDBACK (CELEBRATING SUCCESS AND SHARING BEST PRACTICE)

Those present noted this new standing item. The Housing Portfolio Holder had received an e-mail which he said would be of interest to officers.

67. TENANT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Further to the Housing Portfolio Holder meeting on 18 January 2012 (Minute 57 refers – Ballot and Election of Tenant Participation Group Members), the following statement had been received:

"TPG warmly welcomes the Portfolio Holders offer of an agenda item at each meeting; and is grateful for the opportunity to bring items of tenants concern to the attention of the Portfolio Holder. We are discussing how best we might use this opportunity and will come back to a future meeting with the areas of focus we as a group have agreed upon."

68. FORWARD PLAN

The Housing Portfolio Holder noted the Forward Plan as at 7 February 2012. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment would be considered at the meeting in June 2012.

69. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting had been scheduled for 21 March 2012, starting at 5.30pm in the Monkfield Room.

The Meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.
