

HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Wednesday, 17 October 2012. Decisions made by the Portfolio Holder will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Cabinet or to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Ian Senior.

1. HINXTON: SALE OF GARAGE SITE, DUXFORD ROAD

The Housing Portfolio Holder instructed officers to sell the garage site off Duxford Road, Hinxtton on the open market.

1. **Other Options Considered:** Offer the site on the open market to be sold for garage use only.
2. Retain the site in Council ownership and consider refurbishment or replacement.

Reason For Decision: The site is too small to offer potential for the development of new housing.

2. TENANCY STRATEGY

The Housing Portfolio Holder approved the Tenancy Strategy as set out in Appendix B and the development of the Strategic Housing Information Portal.

Other Options Considered: The Council has the option of producing a traditional document in paper form that tried to encapsulate all of the different elements related to the development of affordable housing in the District. The complexity of the issues related to development and planning mean that this could have resulted in a very large and unwieldy document that would have been costly to produce, difficult to keep up to date and unlikely to be read.

An alternative option is to place the Tenancy Strategy within a web based tool.

The Strategic Housing Information Portal (SHIP) is a proposed web-based portal that aims to provide relevant up to date information at the touch of a button, with the Tenancy Strategy being the key document that sits within the evidence/information base. Appendix A contains a summary diagram of how the SHIP is expected to be structured.

Reason For Decision: To comply with new legislation under the Localism Act 2011 that states local authorities have a duty to publish a Tenancy Strategy.

3 TENANCY POLICY

The Housing Portfolio Holder approved the Tenancy Policy including the following elements

Issue	Included within new Tenancy Policy	Alternative option
1. Secure tenancies for older people		To retain secure 'lifetime' tenancies for all offers of

and disabled people		housing to older people (aged 65+) and disabled people (long term disability requiring a specially adapted property).
2. Secure tenancies for all other people	To discontinue offering secure 'lifetime' tenants and offer flexible tenancies for a fixed period of 10 years. Twelve months before the end of the flexible tenancy we will commence the review process. Tenants will not be asked to move unless suitable alternative accommodation that meets their needs can be found	
3. Introductory tenancies	To introduce introductory tenancies to all new tenants except those transferring internally where they previously held a secure tenancy or those transferring from an external provider where they previously held a secure or assured tenancy.	
4. Succession	To allow only one succession for spouses and partners, subject to finding the survivor alternative accommodation if they no longer need a property that had been specially adapted.	

Other Options Considered:

Issue	Included within new Tenancy Policy	Alternative option
5. Secure tenancies for older people and disabled people	To offer flexible tenancies for a fixed period of 10 years.	To retain secure 'lifetime' tenancies for all offers of housing to older people (aged 65+) and disabled people (long term disability requiring a specially adapted

		property). Recommended change
6. Secure tenancies for all other people	To discontinue offering secure 'lifetime' tenants and offer flexible tenancies for a fixed period of 10 years. Twelve months before the end of the flexible tenancy we will commence the review process. Tenants will not be asked to move unless suitable alternative accommodation that meets their needs can be found	To continue to offer secure 'lifetime' tenancies for all other people.
7. Introductory tenancies	To introduce introductory tenancies to all new tenants except those transferring internally where they previously held a secure tenancy or those transferring from an external provider where they previously held a secure or assured tenancy.	Not to introduce introductory tenancies but continue to offer secure tenancies across the board
8. Succession	To allow only one succession for spouses and partners	To maintain the status quo for succession, allowing qualifying family members provided they meet the appropriate criteria

Reason For Decision: The policy encapsulates existing practice and those variations agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder in March 2012. The exceptions to this are designed to align the policy with best practice as detailed in the options section.

4. LETTINGS POLICY - AMENDMENTS

The Housing Portfolio Holder approved the amendments to the Lettings Policy subject to clarification of paragraph 3.3.1 (a) and (f) and paragraph 5.5.1 in relation to a child.

1. **Other Options Considered:** To approve the amendments to the lettings policy.
2. Not to approve the amendments to the lettings policy.
3. **Reason For Decision:** The revised lettings policy addresses the changes in legislation, LHA size criteria affecting social housing and enables us to respond better to the impact of the wider welfare reforms
4. Most of the policy changes apply to all seven local authority areas making up the sub regional Home-Link scheme. It is important to maintain consistency across

the sub region to avoid confusion amongst applicants or an increased demand based on a favourable lettings policy.

5. Changes to the matching policy will prevent further allocations of properties which may not be affordable to applicants if they are not in line with the LHA size criteria, resulting in higher levels of arrears on our own tenancies.

5. SERVICE PLANS 2013-14

Priorities endorsed

Other Options Considered: The Portfolio Holder is requested to consider these proposed actions and to suggest changes or additions where required. Service plan actions carried forward from last year are not listed in the table and include:

- Developing tenant engagement in particular the setting up of tenant led scrutiny.
- Delivering the Warm Homes Strategy.
- Homelink developments including the private sector module
- Bidding for/implementation of new Supporting People contract for older people.
- Robson Court (Waterbeach) redevelopment
- Robinson Court (Gamlingay) redevelopment

Reason For Decision: To assist in the finalisation of the Service Plan

6. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL CATERING SERVICE – CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

The Housing Portfolio Holder instructed officers to market test the catering service at South Cambs Hall in order to reduce the current costs to the General Fund and to seek improvements in the quality of the service.

Other Options Considered: As set out in the report

Reason For Decision: As set out in the report