

HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S MEETING

TUESDAY, 1 APRIL 2014

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on Tuesday, 1 April 2014. 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 Maggie Jennings.

1. **WILFORD FURLONG/BRICKHILLS, WILLINGHAM**

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the initial steps for the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills Project at Willingham as follows:

- (a) To undertake a more in-depth survey of residents about where they live and how they feel about their home and current surroundings,
- (b) Re-survey all our 82 tenanted homes for consistent SAP and EPC ratings and asset information work with Saunders Boston, Architects to plan Open Days / Planning for real days to explore options with residents,
- (c) Approach the scheme as an infill re-generation and renewal scheme; giving better neighbourhoods to existing residents and added value of additional homes to let, and
- (d) Explore the option of an additional new build site in the locality.

Other options considered:

- (a) **Infill development possibilities** – there is quite a lot of open space and underused garage forecourts which could accommodate some additional new homes for the Council.
- (b) **Reconfiguring hard & soft landscaping** – there is the opportunity to include some of the underused open space areas into existing residents gardens, and possibly incorporate off road parking in some areas of the estate. The open space currently provides for no equipped area of play, is this something that residents want?
- (c) **Property improvements** – The properties are expensive to maintain in terms of responsive repairs. Capital investment from the Housing revenue Account over an agreed period could reduce the burden on our day to day repairs budget
- (d) **Increasing energy efficiency across our stock** – the properties vary in terms of SAP ratings from 52 to 96. The SAP average in the area is 71 and is considered low against our overall existing stock which measures at 73.

Reason for decision: The Council is proposing a significant regeneration scheme for this estate and it is important to begin that process by working closely with existing residents to understand what they want to achieve for their area and homes.

2. REPAIR AND REFURBISHMENT OF COUNCIL HOUSES OF NON-TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTION

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the Non-Traditional Construction Strategy.

Other option considered:

To instruct further investigation into the option for disposal.

Reasons for decision:

- (a) To repair the defective stock is a legal requirement in accordance with the Housing Act 1985. They do not require to be brought up to a mortgage standard but do seek a guaranteed life of a minimum of 25 years.
- (b) The properties are in very poor condition and failure to act will result in further deterioration and possible structural collapse. A recent survey of a vacant Airey suggests it is in extremely poor condition in comparison with other properties of the same construction in different regions.
- (c) The residents of the properties suffer from very high fuel bills and condensation issues related to poorly insulated homes. With rising fuel prices this will only increase.
- (d) The failure of some key components such as the roofs of Hauxley bungalows are increasing. This is resulting increased response repairs and, in some cases replacement, that does not achieve the economies of scale of a planned improvement programme.
- (e) The reform of the Housing Revenue Account has enabled resources to become available to repair and refurbish these properties.