

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on  
Wednesday, 16 March 2016 at 5.30 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Mark Howell

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bunty Waters

Opposition spokesmen: Anna Bradnam

Also in attendance: Kevin Cuffley, David McCraith

### **Officers:**

Gill Anderton	Head of Housing Development (New Build)
Julie Fletcher	Head of Housing Strategy
Anita Goddard	Head of Housing and Property Services
Stephen Hills	Director of Housing
Victoria Wallace	Democratic Services Officer

Wendy Head, Chairman of the Tenant Participation Group, was also in attendance.

### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mark Howell declared a non-pecuniary interest as an employee of the Papworth Trust.

### **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

### **3. WILFORD FURLONG/ BRICKHILLS WILLINGHAM REGENERATION PROJECT**

The Head of Housing Development (New Build) presented the report which set out a revised project plan and long term approach to the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills regeneration scheme in light of the recent changes to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

The report referred to an EU funding bid submitted by the Council, for the roll out of solar photovoltaic panels at the estate. Further to this, the Head of Housing and Property Services informed Members and the Portfolio Holder that it was unlikely this bid would be successful, but that an alternative funding scheme was potentially available. It was clarified that with any funding for the panels, the Council would own the panels and would receive the feed in and export tariff for these.

Regarding the energy efficiency improvement works to properties that were proposed, the following points were clarified:

- A detailed cost analysis of the works would be carried out however it was estimated that this would be in the region of £25,000-£30,000 per property dependent upon what each property required.
- Internal improvement works would be carried out first to enable the windows and doors to be improved before external cladding was put on the property.
- The Quantum Heating System proposed was a high tech and efficient system

which had good reviews from residents who already had these systems installed.

The Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the revised phasing and longer term approach to the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills regeneration scheme as specified in Option C:

- To use existing revenue budgets, and top slice them to achieve 'energy efficiency improvement works' (EEIW) to each of the Council owned properties on the estate.
- Postpone any work on infill property construction or hard and soft landscaping works until all potential alternative funding options had been explored.

This required:

Final property surveys by April 2016 to assess suitability for the following works funded in 2016 and beginning by Q2 2016/17:

- New electric Quantum Heating Systems
- New windows and doors
- New bathrooms and kitchens as appropriate

The following works funded in 2017:

- Installation of External Wall Insulation (EWI). Works staggered to allow for budget and to ensure all internal and external works completed before EWI installed.
- Continued roll out of Solar PV installations across the council owned properties on the estate.

A further update would be presented after six months into the new financial year.

#### 4. THE HOUSING HANDYPERSON SERVICE PILOT PROPOSAL

The Head of Housing and Property Services presented the report which sought approval to set up a Handyman Service for tenants for a one year trial period.

The following points were clarified:

- The Council would not be subsidising the £20 per hour charge.
- Works would be carried out by Mears.
- If approved, the aim would be to start the service pilot in June 2016.
- The contact centre taking calls for the service, would be based in Cottenham.

Members present at the meeting, along with the Chair of the Tenant Participation Group, expressed support for the proposal.

Some concern that the £20 hourly charge was too high was expressed. Some Members thought that £15 per hour was more in line with what should be expected and in line the charges of local tradespeople. The Portfolio Holder pointed out that the Council did not want to compete with local tradespeople and take business away from them so agreed with the proposed £20 hourly rate.

The Housing Portfolio Holder:

- a) **APPROVED** the Handyman Service pilot proposal
- b) **AGREED** to a further report to be brought back in January 2017 for consideration following evaluation of the initial 9 months of the service.

## 5. AFFORDABLE HOMES DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2016/17

The Head of Housing Strategy presented the Affordable Homes Draft Service Plan 2016/17.

The following points were clarified:

- Following successful tenancy fraud investigations, the Council was exploring commercial opportunities around tenancy fraud whereby the Council would offer a tenancy fraud service to external organisations and be paid for this work.
- Where high value council properties had to be sold to a third party, the Council was seeking to commission expert consultancy to investigate the best options for which third party would be best to sell the properties to.

The Housing Portfolio Holder:

- a) **APPROVED** the Affordable Homes Service Plan for 2016/17
- b) **NOTED** the progress to date on existing projects within the 2015/16 Service Plan.

## 6. TENANT PARTICIPATION GROUP

The Chair of the Tenant Participation Group (TPG) updated the Portfolio Holder and Members on the work of the TPG. The group was in the process of identifying members to carry out scrutiny work. A topic for scrutiny was yet to be decided.

## 7. COUNCIL NEW BUILD PIPELINE

The meeting moved to closed session for the exempt report to be discussed. The Head of Housing (New Build) presented the report which provided an update on the Council's new build programme, advising of the changes to the pipeline and an initiative to secure new capital receipts for the Housing Revenue Account.

It was clarified that the parcels of land identified for self-build, would be sold by the Council with outline planning permission. Members were informed that the Council was not yet restricting the self-build register.

A progress report would be presented to the Portfolio Holder at a future meeting. Members congratulated the Head of Housing (New Build) and her team for the work they had been undertaking and achievements made.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the contents of the report, in particular the pipeline of schemes currently funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and the sale of the HRA plots to provide an ongoing income stream.

## 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 15 June 2016 at 5.30pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 6.35 p.m.**

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