

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 18 November 2015 at 5.30 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Mark Howell

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bunty Waters
Opposition Spokesmen: Anna Bradnam, Jose Hales, Hazel Smith

Also in attendance: Val Barrett, Kevin Cuffley, David McCraith

Officers:

Anita Goddard Housing Operational Services Manager
Stephen Hills Director of Housing
Paul Williams Equality and Diversity Officer
Julie Fletcher Head of Housing Strategy

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 17 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

3. SUB-REGIONAL HOME-LINK ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS POLICY - UPDATES AND AMENDMENTS

The Director of Housing presented the proposed updates and amendments to the Sub-Regional Home-link Policy. These were discussed:

- Regarding the amendments proposed to the policy in relation to unacceptable behaviour, it was clarified that this went beyond wear and tear to properties. 'Unacceptable behaviour' was not legally defined in the policy and Members were informed that discretion would be applied and individual circumstances taken into account with regards to this.
- Clarification was provided around the 'Right to Move' guidance. Members were informed that this had been introduced by the Government in order to support residents' efforts to get into employment. The amendments suggested to the Council's policy reflected this guidance, with property needing to reflect residents' work needs.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the amendments to the Home-Link Allocations and Lettings Policy.

4. SPENDING PROGRAMME FOR COMMUTED SUMS

The Head of Housing Strategy presented the report setting out the planned spending programme to ensure that commuted sum money, received in lieu of affordable housing, was spent on the provision of affordable housing within specified time limits.

It was clarified that the commuted sum for Little Wilbraham had been specified by Section

106. If this was not spent on affordable housing in Little Wilbraham by April 2017, the sum would have to be given back to the developer. Members were informed that options would be looked at for spending this money within the timescale.

Members were informed of the system that was in place to monitor Section 106 payments and the deadlines for spending these. Little Wilbraham was the only village in the district with outstanding Section 106 monies to be spent.

Councillor Hazel Smith declared an interest as Treasurer of Emmaus and queried the committed funding for this scheme, as detailed in the report. It was clarified that the Emmaus scheme, for which planning approval was being sought, had been earmarked as a likely scheme if planning was approved.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** Option A to:

- a) note the current position of the commuted sum budget
- b) agree that the default position for future funding should be to contribute to the Council's own new-build programme.
- c) agree that where monies cannot be spent within the set timescale, the funding shall be offered to housing associations where a need for additional resources is required to make an affordable housing scheme viable. This can be offered in conjunction with unspent Right to Buy receipts.

5. AFFORDABLE HOMES DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2016/17

The Director of Housing presented an update on the revised Affordable Homes Service Plan for 2016/17.

Members were informed that the Service Plan reflected recent Government policy announcements but allowed for when more detail of these was known. This would be presented to the Housing Portfolio Holder again in March 2016.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **ENDORSED** the Affordable Homes Service Plan 2016/17.

6. EQUALITY SCHEME 2015-2020 (2015-2017 VERSION)

The Equality and Diversity Officer presented the final draft of the Equality Scheme for 2015-2020 (2015-2017 version).

Discussion ensued and issues raised were:

- The Local Member for Melbourn raised the Melbourn Mobile Community Warden scheme. 25% of people under this scheme had dementia and thanks to the scheme were able to remain in their own homes rather than having to go into residential care. Lack of funding of the scheme was raised. It was advised that this was an issue for the Leader of the Council.
- The Local Member for Milton informed Members that there was only one community care warden to cover Milton.

The Director of Housing informed Members that he sat on the new County Council Ageing Well Group and would reflect the points raised at this forum.

- With regards to the Together for Families partnership (TFF) the Portfolio Holder requested that the work that TFF was doing in South Cambridgeshire be outlined in the Equality scheme, if this information was available.

- The life expectancy of Gypsy and Travellers was noted and it was clarified that this was compared to the settled community.
- The total household figure for the district would be checked.
- Under '4.4 The Council as a Service Provider', the exact figure for the number of homes being managed would be provided.

The Council's Equality Objectives were presented. The Equality Officer clarified that the objectives were kept as broad as possible. Any further suggestions with regard to these objectives would be sent to the Equality Officer by 25 November 2015. The objectives were discussed:

- Under 6.3.1, 'short period' would be amended to 'sustained period'.
- Members were informed that an officer had been recruited to Housing, to support the Gypsy and Traveller community in the district. Another officer would be recruited to Planning. The officer that had been recruited to Housing would be invited to attend the next Housing Portfolio Holder meeting.
- Members were informed that a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment was being undertaken.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **ENDORSED** the final draft Equality Scheme for 2015-2020 (2015-2017 version), subject to the suggested amendments.

Any further suggestions for amendments were to be sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer by 25 November 2015, for approval by the Housing Portfolio Holder.

7. **TENANT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

The Chairman of the Tenant Participation Group (TPG) provided an update on the TPG. It was hoped that the TPG would start a new project in the New Year.

8. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Housing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the work programme.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 16 March 2015 at 5.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 6.40 p.m.
