

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Housing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Wednesday, 23 January 2013 at 5.30 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Mark Howell

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Bunty Waters

Also in attendance: Ben Shelton

Officers:

Jenny Clark	Lands Officer
Anita Goddard	Housing Operational Services Manager
Stephen Hills	Affordable Homes Director
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer
Gwynn Thomas	Principal Accountant (Housing)
Paul Williams	Equality and Diversity Officer

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

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Housing Portfolio Holder signed, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012.

22. LONGSTANTON: DISPOSAL OF LAND OFF HADDOWS CLOSE

The Housing Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his approval for the transfer and sale of land off Haddows Close, Longstanton, as indicated on the plan attached at Appendix A.

Those present discussed a variety of options in the context of Longstanton Parish Council's present circumstances. The Portfolio Holder was keen to find a way of providing a community facility if at all possible.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **agreed**

1. to offer the freehold of the area hatched red on the plan attached to the report to Longstanton Parish Council for £4,000 for allotment use and to keep that option open for 12 months
2. to transfer the area hatched blue on the plan to Longstanton Parish Council at Nil cost also for allotment use.
3. That South Cambridgeshire District Council should pay its own legal costs as well as those of Longstanton Parish Council
4. That, if after 12 months Longstanton Parish Council had not taken up the offer to buy the land hatched red on the plan, that land should be offered for sale to the occupiers of no. 21 Haddows Close, Longstanton for use as garden land, each party to pay their own legal costs.

23. GT CHISHILL, TRANSFER OF TRACK AT WALLER'S CLOSE

The Housing Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking his approval for the transfer of land at Waller's Close, Great Chishill, as indicated on the plan attached at Appendix A.

Those present discussed a number of options having regard to the potential cost to the District Council of repairing it, and the likely extent of any ongoing maintenance liability. The Portfolio Holder was adamant that, were the land to be transferred at all, it should be to the owner of the land on which the rabbit sanctuary is located, rather than to the rabbit sanctuary itself. Those present then discussed alternative possible solutions were that land to cease being used for charitable purposes and instead be used in a commercial way. It was observed that usual uplift provision would not work in this case, and the Portfolio Holder instructed officers to draw up an appropriate restrictive covenant so as to give the District Council the opportunity to determine a land value and obtain payment should the land be developed for profit at some time in the future.

The Housing Portfolio Holder **agreed**

1. to transfer the freehold of the track at the end of Waller's Close, Great Chishill at Nil cost to the owner of the rabbit sanctuary land at the rear, following repairs paid for by South Cambridgeshire District Council to the track surface, the transfer to include a covenant restricting the use of the track to serve the rabbit sanctuary only.
2. that, should the track be used in future for commercial or housing development on private land rather than solely for charitable purposes, the owner must apply to South Cambridgeshire District Council for release of the restrictive covenant. If this is agreed, it will be subject to the owner paying to the Council any increase in the value of the access from Waller's Close.

24. HRA REVENUE AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES FOR THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO

The Housing Portfolio Holder received and noted a report about the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Estimates for 2013-14 and the HRA Capital Programme up to 2017-18.

Those present focussed on the Council's increased spending power following the HRA funding changes, and on rent levels.

25. QUARTERLY EQUALITIES UPDATE (Q3 2012/13)

The Housing Portfolio Holder **received and noted** a quarterly update on equalities from October to December 2012.

Referring to paragraphs 6 to 13 of the report, the Portfolio Holder welcomed the Council's progress relating to the Equalities Framework for Local Government, and stressed that he wanted to achieve the status of 'Excellent'.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the procedure for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments had now been streamlined. As a result, he instructed officers to ensure that, should an Assessment be more than two months overdue, the relevant Portfolio Holder and Director would be summoned to explain the situation at the next available Housing Portfolio Holder meeting.

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

There was no discussion under this heading.

27. TENANT PARTICIPATION GROUP

There was no representative present at this meeting.

28. FORWARD PLAN

The Housing Portfolio Holder noted that the Forward Plan would be updated and attached to the next agenda.

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Housing Portfolio Holder meeting had been scheduled to take place on Wednesday 20 March 2013, starting at 5.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 6.20 p.m.
