

**HOUSING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**10 July 2002
5.30pm – 9.35pm

PRESENT: Councillor Griffiths (Chair), Councillors, Bagnall, Bell, Currie, James, Liddle, Pinnington, Stebbings, Todd-Jones

ALSO PRESENT : Executive Councillor Housing And Health: Councillor Nimmo-Smith, Councillor Howell

Tenant representatives: Mrs K Harris, Mr B Haywood, Mr T Sweeney

Co-opted Members: Mr H Gault (Cambridgeshire Social Services), Mr M Jones (Cambridge Housing Partnership)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**02/HH/1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Benstead and Ms W Forster (Federation of Housing Associations),

02/HH/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bagnall declared a personal interest in minute number 02/HH/13 – as she was a member of the advisory committees for Women and Homelessness and Women's Aid; she remained in the room and took part in the discussion.

Councillors Pinnington and Stebbings declared personal interests in minute number 02/HH/08 as they were Council tenants; they remained in the room and took part in the discussion.

Councillor Bagnall declared a personal interest in minute number 02/HH/08 – as she was a member of the East of England Development Agency; she remained in the room and took part in the discussion.

02/HH/3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

**02/HH/4A PROVISIONAL GENERAL FUND REVENUE OUTTURN FOR
2001/02 AND BUDGET CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS INTO
2002/03**

The Director of Finance highlighted new requests for carry forward which had been included in Appendix C of the report.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

**02/HH/4B PROVISIONAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN FOR
2001/02 AND BUDGET CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS INTO
2002/03**

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/5 **HOUSING CAPITAL OUTFURN 2001/02**

The report invited members comments on the approval of carrying forward of capital into 2002/03 to fund commitments and slippage on the Housing Capital programme.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations

02/HH/6 **COUNTY- WIDE SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY**

The County Council had submitted the final draft of the Supporting People Strategy for 2002/2007 for recommendation for approval to the Executive Councillor for Housing and Health.

The draft of the Strategy had been approved by the Housing and Health Committee in March 2002 and the changes were highlighted by the officers.

Further detailed changes to the statistical information and costing within the Strategy were due to be made before its submission in September.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor set out below contained on the second circulation agenda.

1. To endorse the Supporting People Strategy 2003 – 2008.
2. That the Council continues with its commitment to work with partner agencies within the County to develop the Strategy in the future and to implement the introduction of supporting people by 1 April 2003.
3. That the Director of Community Services be delegated to approve technical amendments to statistics and costings within the Strategy prior to its final submission in September and that the Executive Councillor, the Chair of Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee and the Housing and Health spokespersons be consulted on these amendments.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/7 **REVIEW OF HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The development of the Housing Asset Management Plan was made necessary by the implications of the Government's Decent Homes initiative. A full Stock Condition Analysis, forming an integral part of the Housing Business Plan, issues arising from a Fundamental Service Review, various changes to legislation and tenants' and councillors' aspiration for the stock had been considered and set out in the review.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as

stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/8 **HOUSING STRATEGY 2003/08**

The report covered the Housing Strategy for 2002 to 2008 and included the bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (formerly the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions) for capital resources for the forthcoming year which required a statement of the local authority's housing strategy, with a Business Plan and Supporting Appendices. The Strategy was based on agreed policies but in some areas a number of points of detail required consideration and these included the Sub regional strategy, the Homeless Strategy, Low Cost Home Ownership, Disabled Adapted properties, the split in resources, the county Supporting People Strategy and the refurbishment of sheltered housing schemes.

The Executive Councillor said that he would consider how the comments by M Jones on the text of paragraph 3.8 of the report, which he had felt gave an impression that people were making themselves homeless to be given housing in the city, could be incorporated. He also noted the concern that was being voiced by residents about the Arbury Camp development which was a forerunner of the impact of other developments on the city's borders.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations for approval by Council and submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

02/HH/9 **REVISING THE TENANT COMPACT FOR 2002/04**

The 'National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts' had been published by the DTLR in 1999, setting out the government's requirements of local authorities regarding tenant participation and consultation. The Framework included guidance on how the council should deal with a number of service-related matters including handling complaints, enquiries and letters and well as how tenants should be involved in running the housing service. The officers' report detailed how these issues were being dealt with and the consultation process used.

Tenant representatives had commented on the hard work carried out by the Council's and the Federation's officers and the satisfactory outcome.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/10 **HOUSING MANAGEMENT BOARD AMENDMENTS**

The constitution and arrangements for the introduction of a Housing Management Board agreed by Housing and Health Committee in March for all matters relating to the landlord function of the Council on its housing estates. This included the Housing

Revenue Account and Major Repairs Allowance and capital spending on the programmed works to Council housing estates.

Amendments to the constitution had been proposed at Council in April 2002, and referred for discussion to the tenants and leaseholders. These had been discussed at two meetings of the tenant's forum, with residents associations and with the Federation of Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents. Discussions about the revised Tenant Compact had also referred to this matter, and tenants asked for a charter for the rules and conduct of the Housing Management Board to be developed and agreed by all parties by Autumn of 2003. A revised proposed constitution was included in the report.

Following discussion, an amendment to paragraph 3.2 of the Constitution of the Board was agreed without opposition:

'3.2 All Councillors, elected tenants and leaseholders shall have an equal vote.'

Members also discussed the scheduling of meetings which they felt should be held some 3 to 4 days before the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report, subject to the amendment of paragraph 3.2 of the constitution as set out above.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

00/HH/11 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2003/04**

This was the second year in which all housing authorities had had to prepare a business plan to deal with the management and repair of their stock over the next thirty years. The government had set a target for all council dwellings to be brought up to a 'decent' standard within the next ten years and for the council's strategy for achieving this to be contained within the business plan.

Since the last business plan was submitted the government had revised its definition of 'decent homes', (see Section 9 of the plan) and these changes had been incorporated into the revised plan. A new computer program has been installed that had stock condition information and allowed the information to be modelled.

Councillor Bagnall said that it was important to assess whether productive use was being made of the HRA balances and the identified needs of the sheltered housing schemes could be met. Her proposal that the following text be added to recommendation 2.4 in the officer's report: 'and to a cost benefits analysis and consideration of the opportunity cost ' was carried with no votes against.

In addition it was agreed that in recommendation 2.6 the ratio be amended to 40:60 instead of 30:70 and that in recommendation 2.5 the words 'except for boiler/heating related work which will take a further three years' be added at the end.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as amended and set out below:

1. The draft Business Plan, attached as an Appendix to this report, be approved and forwarded to the government by the end of July 2002.
2. The policy to use HRA capital receipts from the sale of council houses to support the provision of social housing grants, disabled facilities grants and renovation grants be continued.
3. The officers be asked to exemplify savings in management costs, excluding SLAs, of 2% for 2003/04.
4. Subject to sufficient HRA balances being available, and to a cost benefits analysis and consideration of the opportunity cost, an estimated £1.5m (£500k in 2003/04 and £1m in 2004/05) be allocated for the refurbishment of another sheltered scheme. The final details being subject to the finding of the study referred to in Section 13 of the Business Plan, which will take account of the need to refurbish the scheme to accommodate other client groups in the future, should the need for sheltered accommodation decline.
5. All currently identified 'non-decent' homes be repaired by the end of 2004/05, except for boiler/heating related work which will take a further three years.
6. The ratio of day-to-day to planned repairs of 40:60 be achieved by the end of 2003.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations, as amended.

02/HH/12 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Director of Finance presented a report which set out the financial context in which the budget for the following year would be made, issues which were or would be facing the Council, policy priorities and an indication of the approach which Executive Councillors were minded to take in respect of preparing budget proposals. The document also outlined proposals for consulting the public regarding budget matters.

Members were advised in particular of the pressures on the 2003/04 budget (section 8) and the integration of City Services' budgets (pages 82-85).

The Scrutiny Committee noted that views could be submitted to the Leader prior to Strategy Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 July.

02/HH/13 **GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS – ANNUAL REVIEW 2002**

The Best Value Review of Grants to Voluntary Organisations recommended that committees establish a funding strategy for grants within their remit.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/14 **HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN**

Under Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASWA), the Health and Safety Commission (HSC), had introduced a requirement that local authorities produce a dedicated Health and Safety Service Plan along similar lines to the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) requirement for food safety. In both instances, the HSC and FSA required that the Plans are reported for approval to the

appropriate member forum. The report set out service plans to ensure that national priorities and standards were met.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/15 **MONITORING ETHNIC MINORITY HOUSHOLDS AND THE HOUSING REGISTER**

The report presented the latest snapshot position on the recording of minority households who were accessing the housing register and being rehoused since the last monitoring period September 2000 to June 2002. This confirmed the Council was meeting its commitments to equal opportunities. However the cumulative figures showed that applicants from ethnic minority groups waited longer to be rehoused than other categories and officers recommended further analysis of the data.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/16 **USE OF EMERGENCY POWERS - INSPECTION AND SERVICING OF ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL INSTALLATIONS**

To comply with the constitution, the committee noted the following use of emergency powers: following consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Executive Councillor for Housing, Chair and Spokespersons of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, the Director of Community Services had accepted a tender for the inspection and servicing of electrical and mechanical installations in sheltered schemes. The tender received was valued at £118,995.16 against an original estimate of £60,000. The tender was accepted for 12 months only and officers had been instructed to investigate ways of reducing the cost for future years.

02/HH/17A **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The following nominations were made to the outside bodies shown

Outside Bodies	Appointed Representatives
Cambridge Water PLC	
Councillor Harrison	1 June 2003
Councillor Overhill	1 June 2003
Ditchburn Place/Stanton House Management Committee	
Councillor Smart	1 June 2003
Councillor J Rosenstiel	1 June 2003
Councillor Bradnack	1 June 2003

The Executive Councillor agreed that Councillor Smart be re-appointed as Chair

Health, Housing and Social Care Forum	
Councillor Nimmo-Smith	1 June 2003

Cambridge Community Health Council

Cllr Dryden

31/08/2006

Cllr Nimmo-Smith

31/08/2006

The Executive Councillor agreed to the nominations.

00/HH17B APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Committee was asked to recommend the Executive Councillor to reappoint the following Co-opted members and Tenant Representatives on the former Housing and Health Committee.

Hugh Gault (Social Services)

Mike Jones (Cambridge Multi Agency Accommodation Forum)

Wendy Forster (English Churches Housing)

Brian Haywood, Kay Harris and Terry Sweeney (Tenant Representatives)

It was noted that Alison Fox was an officer of the Cambridge Federation who had regularly attended Housing and Health Committee meetings but was not a formally co-opted member.

The Chief Officer of the Community Health Council, Penny Fowler, had asked whether the CHC could appoint a co-opted member on the Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee. She had suggested that Peter Cryer, one of the non-councillor Council representatives on the CHC, would be very able in this role.

The Committee recommended the Executive Councillor for Housing and Health to

- 1) re-appoint, for the time being, the existing co-opted members and tenant representatives, as shown above, and
- 2) review co-options and member liaison with partner agencies on housing and health issues with a view to recommendations being made to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendations.

02/HH/18 DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS

On 23 May, Executive Councillors had agreed to delegate executive functions to officers as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution. These delegations were very similar to those which existed under the committee system.

The Scrutiny Committees considered the delegations and noted there were no issues for further consideration by the Executive Councillor.

02/HH/19 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Scrutiny Committee agreed that the public be excluded from the meeting for the next item on the grounds that if they were present there would be disclosure to them

of information defined as exempt from publication by paragraph 7 of Part I of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.

02/HH/20 **LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT FUNDING OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS AT HEADINGTON DRIVE, CHERRY HINTON, BY GRANTA HOUSING SOCIETY**

Approval was being sought for the funding of an additional affordable housing scheme through Local Authority Social Housing Grant, to be developed by Granta Housing Society. The scheme of eleven units, formed the 30% affordable housing provision in accordance with PPG3 and Planning Circular 6/98 on a residential development being carried out by Laing Homes Ltd.

The Committee agreed with the recommendation for the Executive Councillor as stated in the report.

The Executive Councillor agreed to the recommendation.