

**HOUSING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MINUTES**14 January 2004
5.30pm - 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors Adey (Chair), Councillors Adigun-Harris (as Alt), Bagnall, Bell, Coleman, Downham, J Smith, Stebbings, Todd-Jones

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Smart (Executive Councillor for Housing and Health); Non-voting, co-opted members Mr B Haywood, Mrs K Harris (Cambridge Tenant Federation representatives), and Mr H Gault (Cambridgeshire Social Services),

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

04/HH/01 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 5 November were confirmed as a correct record

04/HH/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pinnington, Dr D Gregson (Cambridge Primary Care Trust) and Miss J Tipple (Cambridge Tenant Federation representative).

04/HH/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stebbings declared a personal interest as a Council tenant in relation to item 04/HH/08 below. He remained in the room and took part in the meeting.

Councillor Bagnall declared a personal interest as a member of Cambridge Women's Aid and of Cambridge Women and Homelessness Group in relation to item 04/HH/09. She remained in the room and took part in the meeting.

04/HH/04 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

04/HH/05 SALARY COSTS FOR NEW STAFF AND SETTING UP COSTS OF NEW POLICY TO PROVIDE GRANTS AND LOANS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/01)*

The report by the Director of Community Services set out the details of the Private Sector Loan Scheme and the actions required to put the scheme in hand. The Scheme had been approved on 5 November 2003 by the Executive Councillor (Housing and Health). The revenue costs associated with the implementation of the Private Sector Loan Scheme were £14,000 in 2003/04, £78,630 in 2004/05 and £73,350 ongoing costs for a further period of 4 years. The scheme would require the approval of sufficient capital receipts to generate interest to fund the revenue costs noted above.

The Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

04/HH/06 **KEY DECISION: SERVICE PLANS AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT & CAPITAL BUDGETS, REVISED 2003/04, DRAFT BUDGETS 2004/05 AND FORECAST 2005/06** (See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/02)

The officers report set out parts one and two of the Service Plan containing the performance over the 2002/03 financial year and performance to date for 2003/04. Part three looked at the service proposals, objectives and budgets for 2004/05 and forecast for 2005/06. The Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider whether service priorities and resources needed to be refocused to enable objectives and targets for the current and future years to be met.

An amendment was put by the Chair to the recommendations to “reduce revenue (S7): ‘income anticipated from Revenue Services as reciprocal cash collection arrangements are reviewed’ to £15,000 (ongoing). There is a corresponding adjustment in the Commercial & Human Resources budget proposals”. This would have an impact on Executive Councillor decisions h) and i) within the recommendations. The amendment was carried by 5 votes to 0.

The Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report, as amended, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

04/HH/07 **KEY DECISION: SERVICE PLANS AND GENERAL FUND & CAPITAL BUDGETS, REVISED 2003/04, DRAFT BUDGETS 2004/05 AND FORECAST 2005/06** (See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/03)

The officers report set out parts one and two of the Service Plan containing the performance over the 2002/03 financial year and performance to date for 2003/04. Part Three looks at the service proposals, objectives and budgets for 2004/05 and forecast for 2005/06. This information will enable the Scrutiny Committee to consider whether service priorities and resources may need to be refocused to enable objectives and targets for the current and future years to be met.

An amendment was put by the Chair to the recommendations:

- 1 Delete revenue bid B1b ‘review of members appeals process’ (remove £15,000 in 2004/05 only).
- 2 Reduce revenue bid B1c ‘prevention of homelessness – advertising, research work and leaflets etc’ from £25,000 to £10,000 (2004/05 only).
- 3 Revise Priority Policy Fund bid PPF4 ‘Bed & Breakfast Floating Support Worker’ to £21,000 in 2004/05 only.
- 4 Prioritise the Priority Policy Fund bids in the following order (highest priority first):
 - a. PPF4 ‘B&B Floating Support Worker’ (£21,000 in 2004/05 only)
 - b. PPF1 ‘Private Sector Housing EHO Post’
 - c. PPF5 ‘To maintain level of grant to Cambridge Women’s Aid’
 - d. PPF3 ‘Homelessness Strategy Support’.
 - e. PF2 ‘Landlord Accreditation scheme

This would have an impact on Executive Councillor decisions e), g) and h) within the recommendations. The amendment was carried by 5 votes to 0.

The Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report, as amended, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

04/HH/08 **KEY DECISION: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2004/05 TO 2034/35** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/04)*

The Officers' report presented the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan for approval in accordance with government requirements. The plan looked at the issues surrounding the provision and operation of the council's housing stock; approval of the plan would form the basis of the future use of resources for the housing stock and, with the HRA Service Plan, inform the future development of the housing service.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/09 **KEY DECISION: GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS FOR 2004/5** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/05)*

The report set out recommendations arising from the Best Value Review of Grants to Voluntary Organisations for a move towards the purchase of services from voluntary organisations through service level agreements in place of recurrent grant funding. The report set out a funding strategy which would be reviewed by Strategy Scrutiny Committee with the strategies recommended for adoption by other committees. The report analysed the grants awarded in 203/04 and proposed levels of grant 2004/05.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/10 **FUTURE OF THE HOUSING PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/06)*

The report by the officers considered the future need for the Housing Performance Monitoring Panel (HPMP) and how its function could be undertaken by the Housing & Health Scrutiny Committee and the Housing Management Board (HMB). In view of the change in the constitutional role of committees and members it was considered that there was no longer a need for a HPMP. Its role could be more appropriately undertaken by the Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee as a scrutiny function and by the HMB. Wider involvement with tenants could be developed on a more informal basis through the Tenant Participation mechanisms.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/11 **PROPOSAL TO CREATE AN ALLOWANCE FOR ELECTED TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDER/S ON HOUSING MANAGEMENT BOARD** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/07)*

The officers report dealt with consultation which had shown that the six elected tenants and leaseholder representatives felt they understood an allowance would be made available soon after the Housing Management Board began in October 2002. As well as being of practical help as a recompense for their time, they also felt the payment of an allowance would give elected tenants and leaseholders a respected voice and status. From an administrative point of view, the system proposed in this report gives a maximum of transparency, without losing the necessary flexibility to individual circumstances.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/12 **KEY DECISION: ALLOCATIONS POLICY** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/08)*

The Officers report presented a revised consolidated Housing Allocations Policy incorporating changes made at successive committees and suggested further amendments to the Policy as a result of changes in legislation brought about by amendments to the Housing Act 1996 made by the Homelessness Act 2002.

The report set out the proposed changes and means of its implementation.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/13 **DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMBRIDGE STANDARD: INTERIM REPORT**
(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/09)

The officers' report considered the scope and method to be adopted in consultation with stakeholder groups for the establishment of the Cambridge Standard for the maintenance and management of the City's housing stock. The report outlined the work undertaken so far and set a timetable to ensure determination of the standard.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/14 **DEVELOPMENT OF 'ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES' FOR HOUSING REPAIR, MAINTENANCE, DEVELOPMENT AND REFURBISHMENT ACTIVITY** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/10)*

The officers' report proposed principles for adoption as Council policy for the protection of the environment, the minimisation of waste, reduction of energy consumption and employment of sustainable construction activity within housing investment programmes sponsored by the Council. A major investment programme on the housing stock was about to begin, and contractors and designers working on behalf of the Council should be bound by these principles.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/15 **TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY 2003** (See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/11)

The officers' report reminded members that Council was required to carry out a major satisfaction survey of its tenants every three years, in a government specified format. The details of similar Surveys carried out in previous years were set out and the results of the survey in 2003 were summarised. The results of the current survey were also compared with the effect on performance indicators BVPI 74 and 75.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/16 **INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW OF GAS MAINTENANCE** (See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/12)

The officers' report set out the results of the Internal Auditors report on the Gas Maintenance Contract and proposed new arrangements to avoid the reoccurrence of a similar situation. The lessons learnt and the actions taken to remedy the problems experienced were summarised in the report.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation.

04/HH/17 **KEY DECISION: OPTIONS APPRAISAL FOR THE WHITLOCKS SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME** (See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/13)

The officers' report set out options for the disposal of Whitlocks Sheltered Housing Scheme in the light of evident tenant dissatisfaction with the accommodation offered. Of the 6 options put forward, members indicated that the sale of the site on the open market (Option 6) would provide the best return and could help to reduce the cost of placing families in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Commercial and Human Resources Scrutiny Committee were to consider the terms of the sale, in the light of this Committee's comments and the executive Councillor's decision at its meeting on 15 January 2004.

The Committee agreed the recommendation set out in the report, by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendation

04/HH/18 **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL'S PRIORITY LIST OF BIDS RECEIVED FOR THE HOUSING CORPORATION'S 2004/05 AND 2005/06 APPROVED HOUSING PROGRAMME (AHP)**

The Executive Councillor (Housing and Health) had approved, in consultation with the Chair and Spokesperson, the prioritised list of bids for submission to the Housing Corporation for Social Housing Grant funding under the Corporation's Approved Housing

Programme (AHP). The submission had had to be made before the meeting of Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee

The Committee noted the decision made by the Executive Councillor.

04/HH/19 **WRITE OFF OF FORMER TENANT ARREARS** *(See also Record of Decision 040104/h&h/14)*

The report set out details of four cases of former tenant arrears together with a summary of the action taken to try to recover the debt amounting to£12,326.70.

The Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor agreed the recommendations.

CHAIR