

Housing Management Board

8 November 2004

5.30pm – 7.35pm

Present: Tenant Reps: T Sweeney (Chair), S Best, C Christofis, J Griffiths, B Haywood, L Routledge,

Councillors Armstrong, Blencowe, Downham, James, J Smith, Stebbings

Also Present: Councillor C Smart (Executive Councillor Housing and Health)

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Board noted that, following a ballot of members before the meeting, Terry Sweeney had been elected Chair by 6 members voting in his favour and 4 members voting for Brian Haywood.

Terry Sweeney thanked the Board and acknowledged the contribution made to the work of the Board and representative groups by Brian Haywood over the last few years

2 HOUSING MANAGEMENT BOARD MEMBERSHIP MR C CHRISTOFIS**Exclusion Of The Public**

The Board excluded the Press and Public from the meeting for this item on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Category 1 as defined in the Council's Constitution part 4B.

The Chair said that Mr Chris Christofis had not attended four successive meetings of the Board. These were the meetings were held on 12 January, 19 April, 5 July and 6 September 2004. The Board's constitution provides that:

12.3 "If a tenant or leaseholder representative fails to attend three successive meetings of the Board then the Board may remove them from office, having first taken reasonable steps to invite them to explain the reason for their absence."

In the light of this, the Board was asked to consider whether to remove Mr Christofis from office.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services had written to Mr Christofis to explain the procedure which would be followed prior to and at the meeting, and to invite him to explain the reason for his absences.

He had been invited to make either a written submission explaining the reason or reasons for his absences, or to make an oral statement at the meeting.

Copies of the letter to Mr Christofis had been circulated to members of the Board.

As he had not made a written submission, the Chair asked Mr Christofis if he wished to provide an explanation to the Board so that they could take this into account when considering what action to take.

Mr Christofis said, briefly, that he had a number of personal reasons for not attending the Board's meetings and that, in addition, his work had taken him away from Cambridge. He had been unable to attend for these reasons.

In response to members questions Mr Christofis asserted that he had informed a member of the Board of his likely absence from meetings but was unable to recall which member. He said that he had not been warned of the possible consequence of non-attendance.

Mr Christofis left the meeting while the Board considered what action to take.

The Board noted that while Mr Christofis had not been specifically warned of the consequences of non-attendance, like all other members he had been given a copy of the Board's constitution on his appointment. No member or officer present could recall being notified by Mr Christofis of his absence from meetings. In particular, Mr Haywood (who was Chair of the Board at the relevant times), the Executive Councillor for Housing and Health and the Committee Manager all confirmed that they had not been notified by Mr Christofis that he would be absent from any of the meetings.

The Board considered the reasons for Mr Christofis' absence from meetings and on the grounds that he had not provided sufficient grounds for his retention as a member of the Board,

RESOLVED by 7 votes to 0 that Mr Christofis be removed from office.

Mr Christofis was then readmitted to the meeting and the Chair advised him of the Board's decision. Mr Christofis then left the meeting, although he attended at a later stage of the meeting as a member of the public.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 5 July and 6 September 2004 were confirmed as a correct record.

4 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public

7 ISSUES FOR THE BOARD'S CONSIDERATION FROM THE AGENDA FOR THE HOUSING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR 10 NOVEMBER 2004

Members considered those items on the Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee agenda for 10 November 2004 which came within the Board's Terms of Reference. The item numbers refer to the agenda for the Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee agenda.

5 REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT OF FENCING PROGRAMME 2003-4

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

6 KEY DECISION - PARTNERING AGREEMENT WITH CITY SERVICES

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

8 HOME AID PREFERRED CONTRACTOR LIST

Members asked about the monitoring and qualification of contractors appearing on the list of preferred contractors and the length of contracts.

The officers explained that the nature of the agreement with contractors would enable the monitoring of one-off contracts by officers.

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

9 COUNTY-WIDE BV REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING

Members noted that the Director of Community Services would be submitting a more detailed report in the next cycle on the implications of the review for the City Council's sheltered housing.

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

10 CAMBRIDGESHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE STRATEGY 2005-10

The Board noted that the county council would be required to make efficiency savings of 7.5% during 2005/06 and that this would have an inevitable impact on the City's resources under this budget.

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

11 HOUSING STOCK OPTION APPRAISAL - RESULT OF TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PREFERENCE BALLOT

Cllr Smart said that there was no doubt about the tenants strength of feeling on the options available and that she would abide by the result of the ballot, taking into account any comments raised by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked officers and members for the fair manner in which the ballot had been conducted.

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

12 KEY DECISION - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF POLICY & PROCEDURES

The officers said that the policy and procedures provided in the agenda were open to amendment as a result of experience and practice. Members with concerns about specific areas were invited to bring them to the officers attention so that further action could be taken. Any changes would be the subject of consultation and an annual update would be made available to members and other interested parties.

The problem of young people riding small motorbikes or scooters without a licence, insurance or helmets was an example of a recent issue that was of increasing concern, It was the subject of the Police's attention and would be followed up as a matter of widespread concern.

Members felt that the paragraph in the Policy related to Demote Tenancies required clarification to tie it in more closely with the associated procedure.

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

13 KEY DECISION - SERVICE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND REVENUE & CAPITAL REVISED BUDGETS 2004/05 A HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT Housing Revenue Service Plan

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

14 DISPOSAL OF SELECTED HOUSING PROPERTIES

Agreed that the recommendation to the Executive Councillor Housing and Health be supported.

16 DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY A

Exclusion Of The Public

The Board excluded the Press and Public from the meeting for this item on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Categories 7 and 9 as defined in the Council's Constitution part 4B.

Members expressed concern over a number of issues in the report, the estimated value of the property, the cost of its refurbishment and the need for more information on the internal layout. They felt it would not be possible to support the recommendation in the report until the information was available. Officers said that the required information would be provided for members of the Commercial and Human Resources Scrutiny Committee which was meeting on 9 November and the Housing and Health Scrutiny Committee which was meeting on 10 November.

8 HOUSING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Members received the information on progress against the performance indicators during the 2nd quarter of the year. The report set out officer action to be taken as a result of the monitoring. The information included response times to incoming telephone calls in comparison with other departments.

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