

HOUSING MANAGEMENT BOARD8 January 2007
5.30pm – 8.05pm

Present: Councillors: James (Chair), Armstrong, Blencowe, Downham, Herbert, Kightley, J. Rosenstiel, Stebbings and Upstone.
Tenant Representatives: Tony Barnes (Vice-Chair), Diane Best, Brian Haywood, John Marais, Terry Sweeney and Anna Vinelott.

Also Present: Councillor Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

07/HMB/01 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 6 November 2006 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of minute 06/HMB/55 to replace the second instance of the word 'Services' in the second sentence in the first paragraph with the word 'Care', so that it read 'He wanted to know why City Services did not receive parking tickets while Apollo and City Care did'.

07/HMB/02 Apologies For Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

07/HMB/03 Declarations Of Interest

Councillor Stebbings declared a personal interest as a council tenant.

Terry Sweeney declared a personal interest, as a council tenant in sheltered accommodation.

Tony Barnes declared a personal interest as a Director of a Registered Social Landlord.

Councillor J Rosenstiel declared a personal interest as a tenant of a council garage.

07/HMB/04 Public Question Time

No questions were asked by the members of the public present.

07/HMB/05 Housing Revenue Account - Service Plan 2007/08 & Revenue and Capital budgets revised 2006/07 and draft 2007/08. Services Plan General Fund (HRA aspects only)

The officers had circulated an amended Appendix D, (revised revenue budget for 2006/07, proposed budget for 2007/08 and forecast for 2008/09), to this report and the Director of Finance's representative explained the difference which arose from additional funding available as a result of the Final Housing Subsidy Determination for 2007/08 received from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Director of Community Services said that any funding would be held in reserves until the officers had had time to work out proposals for its use. One of the alternatives to be considered would be the opportunity given to review the scheme for Mansel Court referred to later in the agenda.

Members asked

- about proposed changes in the repairs programme from a 5 to a 6 year cycle and whether it would cause any problem with the level of quality of maintenance. The officers said that as the amount of painting and other forms of maintenance had decreased because of the quality and type of materials being used, the need for frequent maintenance was reducing.
- Whether the funding for the Anti-Social Behaviour Investigator was solely within the HRA budget as some cost, if not the majority of it, would arise from non tenants. Officers explained that the total ASB budget was split as between the HRA and General Fund in line with the results of a revised exercise to apportion costs according to casework. It was agreed that a briefing note be circulated explaining this in more detail..
- The closure of the City Homes offices was of great concern to tenants and the progress of the Customer Access Strategy made it difficult for members and co-optees to track decisions made elsewhere in the authority that impinged on the operation of the Housing Department. Officers agreed to investigate how some form of Tenant representation could be incorporated in the Customer Access consultation process. The Chair confirmed that there were currently no proposals to close the offices.
- The introduction of bollards in the road outside Hobson House had rendered the Council offices more difficult to access for elderly and disabled, in view of the resisting of the bust stop and taxi bay. Officers said that this had arisen from a scheme agreed by the County Council administered Area Joint Committee. Members on that body would be asked to take up this issue with the County Council's officers. It was noted that there were no public speaking rights to the Area Joint Committee in the same way that there were to City Council meetings.
- The County Council's reduction in funding for the Supporting People programme had resulted in compensatory savings being made by the City. A large number of vulnerable would be left without adequate support.

Members asked that the following issues referred to above be pursued by the officers:

- 1) The introduction of bollards in the road outside Hobson House and the impact on ease of access to the offices by elderly and disabled.
- 2) The inclusion of some form of tenant representation in the Customer Access consultation process.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 11 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/06 Resident Involvement (RI) Report, incl. Annual Grant Application from Tenant Federation

The officers' report assessed the success of the 2005/6 *Widening Resident Involvement Strategy*, giving data on numbers reached and consulted, with comparators from 2004. It then proposed the next steps and presented the annual grant application from the Tenant Federation, with data reviewing Federation performance over the past year.

Members discussed the effectiveness of the relationship with the Tenants Federation and suggestions for improving liaison with tenants especially using Internet access.

The Committee approved the recommendation by 14 votes to 0.
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

07/HMB/07 Update On The Progress In The Procurement Process For The Provision of A 24 Hour Emergency Call Centre

Members noted the progress on this scheme and received reassurances that the staffing levels were adequate and on the length of the contract.

07/HMB/08 Record of Decision – Mansel Court: Revision of Scheme (1 December 2006)

Members noted the Decision made by the Executive Councillor for Housing.

The Director of Community Services introduced a report which updated members on the background to the decision on the revision of the Mansel Court scheme and explained that it had not been possible to take the Decision through the usual process because of the timescales involved.

Some members commented on the need to observe proper scrutiny of decisions and felt that any review of the decision made possible by the availability of additional funding should be made at a special meeting of the Board.

The Executive Councillor said that she acknowledged that all members wanted the best possible result for the scheme and that at the time of making the decision the additional funding had not been known to be available. In any event there were sufficient safeguards within the Constitution so that any change in the scheme would be subject to consultation and review by the officers. She undertook to agree a course of action with the Director of Community Services so that members were informed of progress and a report on the issue be prepared and, if appropriate a briefing be held.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm.

Chair