

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING

NOTES OF THE DECISIONS made by the Executive Member for Housing, Councillor Hugh Mason, at his decision meeting held on Thursday 19 July 2007 at 4.00 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth. The meeting was also attended by opposition spokespersons Councillors Mike Park and Jim Patey, and Councillors Terry Henderson and Luke Stubbs as ward councillors.

1 Declaration of Members' Interests in accordance with Standing Order No 14 (AI 1)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

2 Choice Based Lettings (AI 2)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY ESTATE MANAGER FOR THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE)

Councillor Park suggested that it would be helpful if all applicants received a letter of confirmation; Councillor Mason agreed and asked that arrangements be made for this to be implemented.

DECISIONS

The Executive Member

- (1) approved the decision to revise and improve the City Council's own allocations scheme in light of the recent review of voids and withdraw from the South Hampshire Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme.**
- (2) approved reducing the register for Local Authority and Registered Social Landlords' homes in the City, whilst retaining information about other housing needs in the City.**

3 Mobile Homes: Commission Rates (AI 3)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Deputations were made in opposition to the proposals. Mr Stevenson of Henderson Park was unhappy that short notice had been given to the proposed changes which would change the tenancy conditions and he reiterated the repairs and maintenance costs were paid by the leaseholders. Ms Hutchins of Cliffdale Gardens also objected to the short notice and the changes in conditions that were already being implemented and asked that the commission rate not be re-introduced. Councillor Terry Henderson thought it would be disgraceful to re-introduce the commission rate and did not feel that the residents had been properly consulted and Councillor Stubbs also objected to the tariff that had not been implemented for many years and questioned the legality of this, which if passed, would be called in for scrutiny.

In response Owen Buckwell, the Head of Housing Management clarified that the charge had been abolished about ten years previously. Local authorities were entitled to take a commission and the current lease includes a provision for doing this. The recent review by DCLG concludes that commission should be charged and Councillor Stubbs was reassured that the practice is both legal and normal. He also apologised that the report was misleading on the issue of consultation. He stressed that money raised from the proposed change would be ploughed back in to the mobile home sites and this would be reflected within the budget statement. Councillor Park felt the report was ill-considered and did not feel it should proceed which was reiterated by Councillor Patey who felt this should be deferred by the Executive Member. Councillor Mason asked the officers what the consequences of a deferral would be and he felt it would be beneficial to defer a decision to allow further consultation and for the report to be amended to reflect the legal and financial implications more fully. A report would be brought back to a future meeting of his Executive.

DECISION

That a decision on the issue of commission rates for mobile homes be deferred for further consultation and with an updated report to be brought back to a future decision meeting of the Executive Member for Housing.

4 Sustainable Communities Programme (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY CORPORATE INITIATIVES MANAGER, FOR HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING)

Hazel Hine, the Corporate Initiatives Manager presented her report and outlined her work across the directorate, with other departments and her planned work with tenants. Margaret Geary, the Strategic Director for Health, Housing and Social Care said there was a need to ensure the tracking of benefits of the programme, including the savings, which would be helpful in recommending the actions to others. Councillor Patey suggested that some of the tenant training could take place in the north of the city to encourage attendance. Alan Cufley, the Head of Community Housing suggested that a further report be brought back taking on board these comments when further progress has been made.

DECISIONS

- (1) The report was noted and the actions taken as part of the Health, Housing and Social Care Directorate Sustainable Communities Programme be supported in principle;**
- (2) That the Health, Housing and Social Care budget principles be amended to reflect this work.**

5 Supporting People Programme Update (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE MANAGER, FOR THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING)

In response to questions, Alan Cufley, the Head of Community Housing reported that he hoped to have a full Supporting People Team in place by September. He thanked Dominic Dew and his team for their work and their management of the budget, and the diligence with which the budget had been managed in the last year.

DECISIONS

The Executive Member for Housing

- (1) noted progress made in implementing a range of improvements for the Supporting People Programme;**
- (2) noted the ongoing issues currently being resolved.**

6 Private Sector Housing - Stock Condition and Regional Housing Board Funding (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING RENEWALS MANAGER, FOR THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING)

Alan Cufley, the Head of Community Housing gave an update on the changes to the allocation of Regional Housing Board funding for private sector home improvement and renewal. He explained that bids for funding would now need to be undertaken collaboratively with other local authorities and he outlined the options available for Portsmouth to make a bid. These included partnering with some or all of the PUSH authorities or with South Coast Homes Loans Partnership which included councils such as Brighton. Both he and Roy Scanlon would be attending meetings the following week to discuss the implications of these partnerships. Roy Scanlon believed that the South Coast Money Line product was a key issue for Portsmouth to make available to the consortium partner(s). Alan Cufley stressed that Portsmouth's position had been reserved so that the best position possible for the authority could be secured in a partnership bid. Councillor Mason asked that he and the opposition spokespersons be kept fully briefed on the progress of this bid and negotiations with partners.

DECISIONS

The Executive Member

- (1) Approved the commissioning of a comprehensive Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and the use of the Building Research Establishment's Housing Stock Modelling Service;**
- (2) Approved the submission of a collaborative bid to the Regional Housing Board for future funding for Housing Renewal.**

- (3) Delegated authority to agree the final details of, and to submit that bid , was given to the Head of Community Housing after consulting with the Executive Member and Opposition Spokespersons.**

7 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 2007/08 to 2013/14 and Council Housing Repairs and Maintenance 2007/08 (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE AND THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CORPORATE RESOURCES AND SERVICES)

Peter Pennekett, the Directorate Finance Team Manager presented his report and revised Appendix 6 was circulated (revised figures within box 4). Councillor Mason agreed to Margaret Geary's additional recommendation to reflect her concern, which had also been raised by the Leader of the Council, regarding the potential loss to the budget caused by the delays whilst seeking clarification of legal advice before the submission to the Secretary of State regarding the appropriation of community facilities, despite the input of Housing Services

DECISIONS

Recommended to Council that

- I. The revised 2007/08 programme set out in appendix 4 and the associated capital financing set out in Appendix 3 be approved in the sum of £31.1 million.**
- II. The programmes of £27.5 million, £27 million, £23.5 million, £24 million, £24.6 million and £26.7 million for the six financial years 2008/09 to 2013/14 be approved for use in providing information to Government as required.**
- III. The Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 6 and the Budget Principles shown at Appendix 1 be approved.**
- IV. That for the purposes of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 the City Council resolve to spend £20 million on affordable housing in both 2007/08 and 2008/09. Furthermore that the capital receipts arising in each year from the disposal of surplus HRA assets be used 100% for the provision of affordable housing.**
- V. The Strategic Director for Health, Housing and Social Care be given delegated authority in consultation with the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and Services to approve arrangements for the joint City Council and Housing Corporation Programme for 2007/08 to 2009/10.**

- VI. Authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources and Services to alter the mix of capital funding sources used to finance the HIP to maximise the resources available to the Council.**
- VII. The following changes to 2007/08 Council Housing revenue budgets be approved:**
- Repairs and Maintenance of dwellings - increase by £1.9 million
 - Revenue transfer to capital reserve - reduce by £1.9 million
- VIII. The Executive Member wished to record his request that the appropriation of properties (community centres) proceeds as swiftly as possible.**

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm.

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Councillor Hugh Mason
Executive Member of Housing

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HOUSING MINUTES - 19.07.07

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