

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING**

NOTES OF THE DECISIONS taken by Councillor Hugh Mason at his meeting held on Thursday 15 November (rescheduled from 13 November) 2007 at 9 am in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mike Park and from Councillor Gwen Blackett of Havant Borough Council. Councillor Mason opened the meeting by apologising for the need to reschedule the meeting due to an extra Council Meeting taking place on the original date of 13 November. He also intended to vary the order of business as there were so many present for agenda item 5 regarding mobile homes.

### **13 Declaration of Members' Interests in Accordance with Standing Order No 14 (AI 1)**

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

### **14 Voluntary Accreditation Scheme for Private Rented Properties (AI 2)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING)

Alan Cufley, the Head of Community Housing, presented the report which explained the developmental stage of the scheme and there would be a further report which would outline in more detail the accreditation scheme for Portsmouth and consider the legal possibilities of an administrative cost being levied for the scheme and whether this charge should be made.

#### **DECISIONS:**

##### **The Executive Member for Housing –**

- (1) Agreed to the development and implementation of a voluntary accreditation scheme;**
- (2) Delegated authority to the Head of Community Housing to form partnerships with other local bodies and local authorities as part of the accreditation scheme development and implementation for the benefit of local landlords and tenants.**

### **15 Homelessness Strategy (AI 3)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING OPTIONS MANAGER)

Alan Cufley, the Head of Community Housing, presented the report and reported on the positive discussions with the Government Office and Homelessness Directorate and work with other agencies led by the Homelessness Focus Group. A further report would be brought back to the Executive Member in February 2008. Councillor Mason asked that the outcomes of the consultation meeting on 6 November be made available to him.

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**DECISION:**

**The Executive Member for Housing endorsed the approach described in the report for the review of the Homelessness Strategy.**

**16 Housing Allocations Policy (AI 4)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING OPTIONS MANAGER)

Alan Cufley, the Head of Community Housing, presented the report which looked to simplify the policy by use of a four band system which is more clearly defined than the existing policy. There would be a further report to the Executive Member in February 2008 after the period of consultation. Councillor Mason welcomed the clearer, more succinct and workable policy.

**DECISIONS:**

**The Executive Member for Housing –**

- (1) Endorsed the key principles of the revised allocation policy as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, incorporating the four band system of priority as described in Appendix 1;**
- (2) Authorised the Head of Community Housing to undertake further consultation with interested parties, including elected members on the final detail of the allocation scheme.**

**17 Mobile Home Sites (AI 5)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

The following deputations were made –

- (i) Mr Ian Bates from Henderson Park opposing the reintroduction of the commission charge representing residents there who were distressed by the proposals,
- (ii) Mrs June Hutchins of Clifdale Gardens reported on raising this matter with Lord Graham in the House of Lords and the Local Members of Parliament,
- (iii) Mr Francis also of Clifdale Gardens felt there were more questions raised regarding land ownership and the ability to charge the commission with above inflation increases on rents,
- (iv) Mr Mark Austin felt that the residents of the mobile home parks were being penalised for the Council's mismanagement of other projects within the city.

There were then deputations made by three Ward Councillors, Councillor Terry Hall, Councillor Henderson and Councillor Stubbs all opposing the reintroduction of the commission charge questioning the officers' reports, the financial benefits, feeling that there should be a further option of the status quo asking that investment be made to the sites rather than income taken away from them, believing the options to be neither legal nor proportionate.

Councillor Mason then read out two written letters of representation, firstly one received from Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Leader of the Council dated 14 November which requested that a decision was not taken on the consultation of the mobile home owners and that a decision be deferred to the Full Executive of the City Council to look at all options. Secondly from Councillor Mike Hancock MP CBE of 15 November requesting that the commission charges were not implemented as he believed these to be unfair and things should be left as they were. Councillor Mason also had additional information himself on a site run in Dorset (and Councillor Stubbs had referred to a site in Ringwood in the New Forest) which he felt would be relevant to the issue and he also considered the points raised by the deputations. He wished to record his gratitude to the officers for their accurate and competent report and felt that there was additional material that could be added such as the current deliberation by the House of Lords on the issue of mobile homes. Questions had been raised on the lawfulness of the assumptions, the issues of the financing and the ownership of the sites. He felt that had he taken a decision that day it would be called-in by other members under the scrutiny process. He therefore felt it inappropriate to proceed but asked that a formal report be produced, incorporating the issues raised.

**DECISION:**

**That a decision be deferred on this item as new information had been raised that needed further investigation, so a further report would be brought to the appropriate decision making body for formal decision.**

**18 Housing Executive – Cash Limit Budgets and Monitoring Report 2007/08 (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR HEALTH, HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE).

Councillor Mason was grateful to officers that there was an on-target position.

**DECISION:**

**That the report be noted.**

**19 Foyer Board of Directors – Appointment of Vacancy (AI 7)**

**DECISION:**

**That Councillor David Fuller be appointed to serve on the Foyer Board of Directors as the annual appointee.**

The meeting concluded at 10.10 am

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Councillor Hugh Mason  
Executive Member for Housing