

## HOUSING CABINET

RECORD OF THE DECISIONS taken by Councillor Steve Wylie, as Cabinet Member for Housing, on Friday 18 July 2008 at 11.00 am in the Guildhall, Portsmouth (meeting originally scheduled for 17 July). Also present was Councillor Jim Patey, Group Spokesperson and Councillor Mike Park had apologised for being unable to attend.

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

There were no declarations of members' interests.

### **2 Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 2008/09 to 2014/2015 (AI 2)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING,  
HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC DIRECTOR  
RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION)

Councillor Wylie joined Peter Pennekett in registering their gratitude to residents for their involvement again this year and he hoped that resident participation could be extended even further. Peter Pennekett reported that this was being addressed at the next residents' conference on Saturday 4th October at the Dame Judith Professional Centre where one of the aims is to attract more resident participation.

#### **DECISIONS:**

#### **RECOMMENDED to Council that:**

- (1) that the revised 2008/09 programme set out in Appendix 4 and the associated capital financing set out in Appendix 3 be approved in the sum of £27.6 million;**
- (2) that the programmes of £26.2 million, £21.7 million, £23.4 million, £24.1 million, £25.9 million and £25.9 million for the six financial years 2009/10 to 2014/15 be approved for use in providing information to the Government as required;**
- (3) that the Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix 6 and the Budget Principles shown at Appendix 2 be approved;**
- (4) 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 2008/09 and 2009/10. 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;**

- (5) that the Head of Community Housing be given delegated authority in consultation with the Strategic Director responsible for financial administration (S.151 Local Government Act 1972) to approve arrangements for the joint City Council and Housing Corporation Programme for 2008/09 to 2010/11;
- (6) that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director responsible for financial administration (S.151 Local Government Act 1972) to alter the mix of capital funding sources used to finance the HIP to maximise the resources available to the Council.

### **3 Supporting People Programme Update (AI 3)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY SUPPORTING PEOPLE MANAGER)

Alan Cufley the Head of Community Housing and Dominic Dew, the report author, presented the report. He reported that there would be a presentation to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) the following week regarding the future management of the funding. It was stressed that the programme was wide ranging preventative work of which many people were not always aware. Councillor Wylie congratulated Dominic Dew and his team for the work they undertake.

#### **DECISIONS:**

##### **That the Cabinet Member for Housing**

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

### **4 Community Housing Sustainable Communities Programme Update (AI 4)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY CORPORATE INITIATIVES MANAGER)

Alan Cufley presented Hazel Hine's report as she apologised that she was unable to attend. He stressed that the report set out the wide-ranging work that had a housing focus within the Sustainable Communities agenda, of which the John Pounds development had been an exemplar project as a model of community regeneration. Councillor Wylie was pleased at having had earlier involvement as the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel C looking at sustainable communities, to now see how the initiatives had progressed and were being delivered through partnership working. Councillor Wylie thanked Hazel Hine and her team for all their progressive work in this area.

## **DECISIONS:**

**That**

- (1) The work undertaken so far on the development and implementation of the Housing Sustainable Communities Programme be noted and supported;**
- (2) A further report will be brought forward on resource implications and progress at a future date;**
- (3) A report will be brought forward on the achievements of the John Pounds development later in the year.**

### **5 Empty Homes Campaign (AI 5)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING)

Alan Cufley presented the report which outlined the strength of the campaign that could be further improved through making use of the budget allocation for compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) where this was needed in a last resort of dealing with owners of empty properties. Roy Scanlon stressed that CPO action had been taken in the past and this could be lengthy, leading to full inquiries, but Councillor Wylie felt it was a tool that the Council should be prepared to use to provide decent homes to Portsmouth residents. Councillor Patey was also supportive of the report and action taken to make use of empty properties, some of which had been repossessed and needed to be brought back on to the housing market. Alan Cufley reported that he would be in a position to report back to the November or January decision meeting, which would include a review of the management of the scheme.

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## **DECISION:**

**Where the Cabinet Member for Housing considers that the only viable means of ensuring an empty home is brought back into use the Cabinet Member shall make that recommendation to Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration & Economic Development to enable a Compulsory Purchase Order on the property to be authorised.**

### **6 Application for Home Repair Assistance (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING RENEWALS MANAGER)

Roy Scanlon presented his report and the individual circumstances of this case for which EAGA and WarmFront had shown inflexibility in assisting the resident in question. Councillor Patey reported that the lady had come to his advice centre and explained her position for which she felt penalised and he hoped that there could be an exception made in this case (favouring Option C). He further requested that this be brought to the attention of the two local members of parliament to lobby for residents to be treated the same. The officers explained the implications of the options and the recommendation for an interest free loan to be secured on the property. Councillor Wylie stressed that this had been difficult to decide but felt that the

council should offer assistance to the lady that had been disadvantaged and therefore would like to offer the assistance whilst also pursuing the recovery of the grant from EAGA/WarmFront and make representations to the government.

**DECISIONS:**

- (1) The eligibility criteria in the policy will remain unchanged;**
- (2) That an exception be made in this case to relax the council tax band restriction, to offer a home repair assistance grant conditional upon -**
  - (a) recovery of the payment if the appeal to WarmFront/EAGA is successful;**
  - (b) the applicant's case being brought to the attention of the two local MPs to make representations to WarmFront and EAGA, requesting them to review their inflexibility in this case and in shaping future policy.**

**With authority being delegated to the Head of Community Housing to take this action.**

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.

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Councillor Steve Wylie  
Cabinet Member for Housing.