

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING**

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Steve Wylie, at his meeting held on Tuesday 17 March 2009 at 4.00 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

Also in Attendance was Councillor Jim Patey as Opposition Spokesperson and apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mike Park, Opposition Spokesperson.

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

There were no declarations of members' interests.

### **9 Supporting People Programme Update (AI 2)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY SUPPORTING PEOPLE MANAGER)

Alan Cufley reported that there had still not been an announcement on this year's or the following year's funding.

#### **DECISIONS:**

##### **The Cabinet 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;**
- (3) supported further communication with Communities and Local Government on the potential detrimental effect on services to vulnerable residents as a result of reducing financial support.**

### **10 Introduction of a Handyperson Scheme (AI 3)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING RENEWALS MANAGER)

Councillor Wylie reported there had been a lot of interest and positive feedback with regard to the introduction of this scheme. Roy Scanlon the report author reported there had been a confirmation letter received from the CLG for the two year funding, so there was a need to prove the value of the service during these 2 years.

#### **DECISIONS:**

##### **The Cabinet Member for Housing**

- (1) supported the expression of interest submitted by the Supporting People Commissioning Body;**
- (2) approved the introduction of a City Council Handyperson Service.**

**11 Financial Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing – Amendment 2009 (Home Energy Assistance Grant) (AI 4)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING RENEWALS MANAGER)

Councillors Wylie and Patey welcomed the report that gave more security and was in response to the difficult circumstances the residents found themselves in.

**DECISIONS:**

**The Cabinet Member agreed**

- (1) that the eligibility criteria for a Home Energy Assistance Grant in the council's Financial Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing be amended to remove the existing criteria and be replaced by the new eligibility criteria as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report;**
- (2) that the requirement for 20% of free equity, after the council's loan is registered, be relaxed in exceptional circumstances;**
- (3) that authority to approve such relaxation be delegated to the Head of Community Housing.**

**12 Disabled Facilities Grants – Change to Test of Resources (AI 5)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HOUSING RENEWALS MANAGER)

Roy Scanlon produced his report and predicted a larger take up of these grants. Alan Cufley reported that there would be a reflection of the take up of the grants within the Housing Investment Programme reports in July and February.

**DECISIONS:**

**The Cabinet Member for Housing**

- (1) noted the content of the report;**
- (2) noted the likelihood of budget pressures being evident for 2009/10 and 2010/11 onwards.**

**13 Council Housing Maintenance and Improvement and Housing IT Business Software 2009/2010 (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING)

Councillor Patey asked questions regarding disabled facilities and the adaptation to properties, which were left within properties when people moved. Owen Buckwell confirmed that where there are adaptations there is an effort to search the waiting list for suitable persons where they can, but usually adaptations are specific to the persons needs. Councillor Patey also asked regarding community centres being included and there is now approval for Southsea Community Centre and the Brook Club and there were future proposals for the appropriation of others. Councillor Wylie welcomed the report, which he believed offered flexibility.

**14 Exclusion of Press and Public (AI 7)**

**RECOMMENDED (1) that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business because it is likely that if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of "exempt information" within paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972;**

**(2) that in the event of the recommendations or resolutions of the Cabinet Member in relation to the following item of business being considered by any other Committee or by the City Council, they be recommended to exclude the public during such consideration because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of "exempt information" within paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.**

**15 Eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grants (AI 8)**

(TAKE IN EXEMPT REPORT BY HOUSING RENEWALS MANAGER)

**DECISIONS:**

**The Cabinet Member**

- (1) noted the legal opinion that the applicant is not eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant and refused the application;**
- (2) requested that alternative options are investigated by officers to assist the applicant in this instance.**

**16 Department for Community Local Government (DCLG) Announcement regarding Housing Subsidy Payment 2009/10 (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Peter Pennekett reported on the Housing Minister's announcement of 6 March which would have significant effects on the Council Housing rents, charges and budgets in 2009/10 and future years. However, he reported that there was not the facility to hold back the rent increase that had already been notified to residents at this stage. Councillor Wylie was encouraged that the joint campaign by other authorities and with residents had had some success, but stressed that there was a need for this to be taken further. The information item was noted and a further report on the implications would need to be brought formally to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing.

The meeting concluded at 5.00 pm.

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Councillor Steve Wylie  
Cabinet Member for Housing