

HOUSING CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by Councillor Steve Wylie as Cabinet Member for Housing at his decision meeting held on Tuesday 15 March 2011 at 4.00 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth. Also present were opposition spokespersons Councillors Mike Park and Jim Patey.

4 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 1)

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Portsmouth Housing Market – Summarising Latest Trends (AI 2)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING & REGENERATION)

Alan Cufley presented the report and drew members' attention to the concluding remarks regarding the rise in house prices last year which had not been maintained but that the private rented sector remained buoyant and people were still struggling to get onto the housing ladder.

DECISION:

The Cabinet Member noted the trends as the background for Portsmouth City Council's involvement with planning and providing housing and housing-related services in Portsmouth.

6 Financial Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing (AI 3)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING & REGENERATION)

It was noted that the report should be slightly amended as discussed with the Cabinet Member and opposition spokespersons at the briefing meeting to add a fourth recommendation to undertake a feasibility study. Alan Cufley and Bruce Lomax both spoke to the report which set out a new way of dealing with the loans and the better use of monies to help the more vulnerable residents. Councillor Wylie thanked them for their work on this.

DECISIONS:

- (1) that the 2011 financial assistance policy is agreed, and implemented from 1 April 2011 (as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report);**
- (2) that the recipients of loans provided prior to 1 April 2011 be offered the option of early repayment of their loan, by making either one-off payments or entering into an instalment arrangement;**

- (3) that the implementation and satisfaction with the take-up of the new assistance packages be reviewed after six months, and a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing.**
- (4) to undertake a feasibility study on the introduction of a long term financial programme for private sector housing renewals.**

7 Council Housing Maintenance and Improvements and Housing IT Business Software 2011/2012 (AI 4)

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

Meredydd Hughes and Peter Pennekett presented the report which set out the allocation of planned works within the capital programme. The budget book set out the types of works being undertaken in each of the housing office areas, not just those already on site but those being procured and being evaluated for the future. Alan Cufley pointed out that in Appendix C the delegation of powers related not only to the Head of Housing Management but also the Head of Community Housing giving both authority to spend within their own area of responsibility, so the recommendation would be amended to reflect this. Councillor Park asked questions regarding the moving of people to smaller accommodation to suit their needs; in response it was stressed that this was not compelled within this authority and would require national legislation to do so. Councillor Patey asked regarding asbestos removal for which it was confirmed there was an asbestos database available to contractors. Councillor Wylie was grateful for the comprehensive report which, he reiterated, allowed for a flexible programme.

DECISIONS:

- (1) that the area programmes and allocation of finance for the funding of the revenue budgets for repair and maintenance of dwellings be noted;**
- (2) that the capital budgets listed in Appendix B, Appendix C, Appendix D and Appendix E commencing in 2011/12 be approved and the Head of Local Authority Housing and the Head of Community Housing & Regeneration be authorised under financial rules, section B14 to proceed with schemes within the sums approved;**
- (3) that the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources and Services' financial appraisal be approved with the capital programme – global provision.**

8 Omission from the Forward Plan – Purchase of Pinnacle Properties (AI 5)

DECISION:

The Cabinet Member noted that the decisions were key decisions for the purpose of the forward plan but were not included in the forward plan for March.

9 Exclusion of the Press and Public (AI 6)

DECISION:

That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, the press and public be excluded for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that the report contain information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.

The public interest in maintaining the exemption must outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

Item	Paragraph No
10 Purchase of Pinnacle Properties (financial appraisal appendix only)	3

10 Purchase of Pinnacle Properties (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT WITH EXEMPT FINANCIAL APPRAISAL)

Councillor Wylie had agreed to the inclusion of this late supplementary item and he and the opposition spokespersons had been individually briefed by Jo Bennett regarding the content. Jo Bennett was accompanied by Roy Shipley of Adult Social Care at the meeting. Councillor Park asked questions regarding the separation of care from the landlord's role and Councillor Patey welcomed the report as a good way forward for long term investment in these people's future. A representation from Councillor Donna Jones as one of the ward councillors for Hilsea was reported by Councillor Wylie; she was supportive of the proposal and he stressed that his two ward colleagues in Charles Dickens were also supportive of the proposal. Councillor Park asked further questions regarding the impact on the Housing Revenue Account and Peter Pennekett confirmed that over 30 years it would have a positive financial impact, although there would be an initial outlay for the costs of borrowing for the purchase. Jo Bennett stressed that these properties were in a poor condition which would be immediately rectified and it would give the tenants security of tenure. Councillor Wylie was pleased that this was an example of the council leading the way in improving properties as the landlord and protecting vulnerable adults.

DECISIONS:

- (1) approval was given to purchase the seven properties known as 96 and 98 Queen Street, 89, 91, 93 and 96 Shadwell Road, and 51 Copnor Road (“the Properties”) within the sum set out in the attached exempt financial appraisal);**
- (2) authority be delegated to the Head of Local Authority Housing Management and Head of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer to conclude the purchase of these properties;**
- (3) authority was delegated to the Head of Legal Services and Head of Asset Management to conclude all legal and other agreements as required;**
- (4) the Head of Financial Services’ exempt financial appraisal was approved;**
- (5) that the Head of Housing Management apply to the government for approval to exempt these properties from the current Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and pooling of capital receipts from Right to Buy sales in accordance with the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, section 313.**

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm.

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Councillor Steve Wylie
Cabinet Member for Housing

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