

HOUSING CABINET

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by Councillor Steve Wylie as the Cabinet Member for Housing at his decision meeting held on Tuesday 10 July 2012 at 4pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

Also present were opposition spokespersons Councillor David Horne and Councillor Steve Wemyss (part).

11 Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Steve Wemyss declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as he had registered an environmentally friendly business idea (agenda item 4 - Green Deal).

12 Green Neighbours Project Update (AI 3)

(INFORMATION ITEM BY HEAD OF PLANNED MAINTENANCE)

Councillor Wylie noted the information report. Louise Ellison reported that this had been presented to the Paulsgrove Ward Councillors. The scheme would be targeted at areas of fuel poverty.

13 Energy Act 2011 – The Green Deal (AI 4)

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

The Head of Community Housing & Regeneration reported that the regulations were expected to be in place by the Autumn and it was requested that the Cabinet Member endorse Option 4 within the report which set out the partnership arrangements. Bruce Lomax the Housing Standards Manager reported that the key areas of concern to PCC had mainly been dealt with, however there was still concern with the withdrawal of guarantees for equipment such as boilers. Councillor Wylie was concerned that those using energy meters who were in a position of fuel poverty could be penalised and would not be attracted to the Green Deal.

Alan Cufley wished to stress that the city council would continue to offer independent advice to all homeowners and businesses regardless of which Green Deal provider they chose. It was noted that the Cabinet Member for Environment had endorsed recommendation 2.1 at her meeting on 4 July. There would be more information to follow regarding the GD code of conduct and the training of assessors. Councillor Wylie asked that both the Housing & Environment Portfolio Holders receive a briefing before the Green Deal launch anticipated in October from the Head of Community Housing Regeneration with further reports to the appropriate meetings as necessary.

It was also agreed that the report would be shared with other local authorities locally as it was a comprehensive piece of work and probably unique amongst the PUSH councils.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Housing

- (1) Confirmed that the Council officers should progress with talks with other authorities in Hampshire to ensure that city residents understand the benefits as well as the risks associated with Green Deal and that, if they go forward with the scheme, they may receive the most cost effective service and the most appropriate benefits available.
- (2) agreed that officers continue to work towards an effective business model that will enable local businesses to access the Green Deal funding.
- (3) confirmed that Portsmouth City Council should pursue Option 4, as described in the report to actively seek partners to install the cost saving measures in homes within the city and enable the partner to seek the finance to undertake these works.
- (4) approved the recruitment of a city council Green Deal assessor
- (5) approved the setting of an assessment figure at £150.00.

14 Financial Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing (AI 5)

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

Alan Cufley ,the Head of Community Housing & Regeneration, introduced the report and explained that further work would continue with Social Care and the Health Service to fully enable the benefits of the investment made in private housing stock . Bruce Lomax, the Housing Standards Manager confirmed that the Head of Adult Social Care would continue to support efforts to make the assistance available to the most vulnerable persons in the city. In addition, it was hoped that the innovative packages would help to rejuvenate the local housing market, help people stay in their homes longer or, if appropriate, provide the help for people to move into more suitable accommodation in the private market. In response to a question from Councillor Horne, Bruce Lomax reported that, as far as he was aware, this authority was trail-blazing in the offer of 'down-sizing' assistance. Councillor Wylie welcomed the approach being taken especially all the help being offered to most vulnerable and those most in need.

DECISION:

The Cabinet Member for Housing approved the financial assistance policy 2012, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, and that it be adopted with effect from 17 July 2012.

15 Redevelopment of 415-425 Eastern Road (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Jo Bennett, the Leasehold & Commercial Services Manager presented the report which included a cautious financial appraisal to cover the construction impact of the flood zoning on the construction design. Councillor Horne welcomed the development of this untidy site and it was reported that Councillor Wemyss (who was not present at this part of the meeting) had raised questions regarding the provision of landscaping and it was reported that this extended along the block. Maria Cole a member of the Residents' Consortium welcomed the report and the development taking place the addition to PCC's housing stock. Councillor Wylie welcomed the development and hoped that this would be open next year. It was noted that this was likely to be a timescale of demolition in the Autumn 2012 with construction taking place during 2013.

DECISIONS:

- (1) That approval was given to proceed with the scheme within the estimated sum of £1.18m;
- (2) That a scheme to build a new block of four, three bed maisonettes and landscape the surrounding blocks was approved;
- (3) The financial appraisal was approved.

16 Phase 1 Redevelopment of Grosvenor House 2013/14 (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Councillor Wylie stressed the importance of the talks with the leaseholders. Councillor Horne asked regarding fire assessment requirements for this scheme and all the Housing stock. It was confirmed that planned maintenance schemes do include fire risk assessments and will incorporate the fire upgrading works identified to improve the blocks of flats. Sprinklers will not be required as part of this scheme but work will include installing fire doors and emergency lighting. Councillor Wylie welcomed the report.

DECISION:

That approval was given to proceed with the scheme within the estimated sum of £771,391.

17 Purchase of Wells Terrace, former Beresford Public House, Stamshaw (AI 8)

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

Councillor Wylie thanked the officers for the opportunity to view the properties. Both Councillors Horne and Wemyss supported the recommendations. Councillor Wemyss' only concern was regarding the standards within the social housing being at a considerable cost which was also applicable regarding the redevelopment of 415 to 425 Eastern Road. Councillor Wylie felt that the city council had a duty of care; it was the government setting more generous minimum space standards for social housing and PCC tenants should be given the highest of standards.

DECISIONS:

- (1) approval was given to the purchase of the full development for the sum of £525,000.
- (2) authority was delegated to the Head of Housing Management and the Head of Asset Management to dispose of the two bedroom and one bedroom units on the open market following the completion of the purchase, and the resulting receipts earmarked for the future re-provision of housing.

The meeting concluded at 4.37 pm.

.....
Councillor Steve Wylie
Cabinet Member for Housing

h20120710m
JW/SEM
11 July 2012