

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by Councillor Steve Wylie as the Cabinet Member for Housing at his decision meeting held on Tuesday 18 September 2012 at 4.00 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

Also present were opposition spokespersons Councillors David Horne and Steve Wemyss (from 4.15 pm). Councillor Phil Smith was also present.

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Wemyss had sent a message to apologise for his late arrival.

18 Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 1)

There were no declarations of members' interest for this meeting.

19 Introduction of a Comprehensive Licensing Programme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Portsmouth (AI 2)

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

Bruce Lomax introduced his report regarding additional licensing in certain areas of the city on top of the mandatory licensing requirements. This would be introduced where there is a high concentration of HMOs, where the authority is aware that premises are not up to standard or where tenants are causing anti-social behaviour. This would enable the local authority to take action by enforcing conditions on the owners. It was noted that the scheme would be self-financing with the employment of new staff to undertake this enforcement action within private sector housing. Councillor Wylie welcomed the scheme as whilst this would not solve every problem this would help tackle the worst cases in the city and he invited the involvement of the public and landlords in this process to help inform the council which properties should be targeted. It was reported that there would be a launch of the scheme on 17 October at the Queen's Hotel.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member

- (1) approved an 11 week public consultation on the proposals for a Portsmouth City Licensing Programme for Houses in Multiple Occupation;**
- (2) will review the outcome of the consultation and make the appropriate decision in relation to the possible implementation of the programme.**

20 Tenancy Strategy for Portsmouth (AI 3)

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

It was reported that this tenancy strategy would cover all social tenancies in the city and officers would be working with the social housing partners during the consultation. Nigel Baldwin reported that this would not be ready for publication until December and the strategy must be published by 15 January 2013. Alan Cufley explained in response to Cllr Horne's questions that whilst there was a framework the strategy this would be tailored to the local needs. Councillor Wylie welcomed the proposal.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Housing

- (1) endorsed the draft tenancy strategy;**
- (2) agreed to consultation with the relevant stakeholders as described below and in the appendix to the report;**
- (3) gave delegated responsibility for incorporating the responses as necessary from the consultation and publishing the Tenancy Strategy to the Head of Community Housing & Regeneration on consideration of a report which refers to the necessary matters to which regard must be had in adopting the strategy.**

21 Local Authority Housing Management (LAHM) Asset Management Strategy (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Steve Groves presented the report which sought approval to the strategy for the framework for managing the local authority's housing assets and repairs to its property. There would be further reports on how the key priorities were being met. Councillor Wylie was grateful for the work being undertaken and felt that more was known about the PCC housing stock than ever before. Councillor Wemyss asked a question regarding the lifespan of articles such as boilers at 15 years whereas modern condensing boilers do not always last this long. In response Mr Groves reported that these estimated lifespans are being constantly reviewed and are based on data available.

DECISION:

Approval was given to adopt the LAHM Asset Management Strategy.

22 Disposal of 82 Durrants Road, Rowlands Castle (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Jo Bennett presented her report and explained the history of this void property which represented poor social housing which had been identified as part of the review of assets as suitable for disposal. The question was raised

as to whether this should be marketed singly or jointly with the neighbouring property whose owner was a member of PCC staff. Councillor Wylie stressed that the process needed to be transparent and the best rate possible needed to be attained for the benefit of the city council. Ms Bennett reported that an increased receipt was likely for both the council and the member of staff if it was done jointly.

Councillor Wylie stressed that this would be subject to conditions and legal agreements to ensure that the best return was made for the local authority. If the member of staff was happy with the conditions he would with the joint marketing to go ahead but if this was not possible it should go ahead singly.

DECISIONS:

- (1) Approval was given to the purchase the adjoining strip of land belonging to Hampshire County Council together with the rights of way over the path to the western end of the land, to provide much needed vehicular access and parking area, therefore increasing the value of the property and its saleability.**
- (2) Authority was delegated to the Head of Housing Management and the Head of Asset Management to dispose of the property on the open market following the completion of the purchase of the adjoining land and right of access.**
- (3) Authority was delegated to the Head of Housing Management and the Head of Asset Management to agree the best method of disposal for the property.**

(This would be taking into consideration that the property is one half of a much larger building which was converted into two separate properties in the 1960's. The property could be sold as a single dwelling and achieve in the region of £260,000-£275,000 or marketed together with the adjoining property, 80 Durrants Road, already on the market. Market evidence suggests that this latter option would achieve a higher receipt and would benefit both interested parties, following the appointment of a third party agent.)

23 Somerstown Regeneration Phase 1 (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT)

Paul Ring introduced Kevin Hudson's report and gave an update on financing and outlined the slight changes in funding that had been made such as the proposals now to rent the units at Wellington Street. He reported that the PCT had now signed the lease and work had commenced on site. Jo Bennett further explained the problems in selling the existing retail units due to the size and lack of parking and Housing were therefore in liaison with the Planning department to find solutions to market this site. It was noted that there may need to be minor alterations to the existing building to encourage outside interest in these units.

Members asked questions regarding the work at the hub requiring closure of Winston Churchill Avenue and it was reported that a transport plan for the hub and the Head of Transport had agreed limited periods of closures at off-peak times. It was also asked regarding the provision for capital funding and selling of land and it was reported that work was taking place jointly with Havant BC to discuss sites in their area that are suitable for disposal.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Housing

- (1) Approved the changes contained in the revised financial appraisal shown in Appendix A;**
- (2) Delegated authority to the Head of Housing Management and Head of Asset Management to investigate an optimum solution for the future use of the existing vacant 3 retail units at Wellington Street and enter into any necessary lease(s) agreement(s);**
- (3) Approved the investigation of the implementation of additional environmental/energy saving improvements to be made to the Hub after the construction is complete. Any such proposal to be made in accordance with the corporate priorities and in tandem with other work the council is undertaking.**

The meeting concluded at 4.45 pm.

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Councillor Steve Wylie
Cabinet Member for Housing

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19 September 2012
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