
Minutes of the meeting of the **Housing Management Sub-Committee** held on **7 November 2001** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs J Hall – Chairman

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr V H Leach
Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr C R Morgan
Cllr Mrs L I V Phillips
Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, C C Langlands, R A Pearson.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr R A Amner

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Clarkson	Head of Revenue and Housing Management
A Coulson	Housing Client & Strategy Officer
Mrs M Martin	Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

W Norfolk Adviser from Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association

141 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2001 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Members noted that an additional meeting of this Sub-Committee would be held on 4 December 2001.

142 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2002/3

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which asked Members to consider the proposed Housing Capital Programme for 2002/3 and to determine priorities.

Members noted that there are indications that around £1 million would be available for next year, which would permit an ambitious programme. Items had been categorised into the usual divisions of “essential”, “necessary” and “desirable”.

Appended to the report were a list of proposals. During discussion, the following additional points were noted:-

- Sheltered Housing Upgrades – no detailed figures were yet available.
- Smoke Alarms – Members queried the high cost of £50 each. The Head of Service confirmed that high quality alarms would be fitted per unit, but agreed to clarify the amount. The Fire Prevention Officer should be able to recommend the most suitable type of fire alarm to install in elderly persons' units.
- Central Heating Upgrades – some of these would involve upgrades from solid fuel heating.
- Replacement Scheme Boilers – these figures are high as the boilers serve the whole complex.
- Rochford Garden Way – Members were pleased to note the work planned for this scheme, which included resurfacing of the concrete stair wells.
- Replacement External Doors – this had been the most popular request from tenants.
- 4 Bedroom Programme – this would involve the extension to the side and/or rear of currently held large semi-detached properties. These properties would then be available for a number of very large families, currently in 3 bedroom properties.
- Warden Accommodation – the Link Radio Project was a one-off cost. This would be dependent on the outcome of the following Agenda item.

Recommended

That the Capital Programme, as appended to the report, be agreed. (HRHM)

143 SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES – LINK RADIO PROJECT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which outlined a locally run project which would link sheltered housing schemes with a community radio station. The Members and Adviser to this Sub-Committee commended this as an excellent scheme.

The Head of Service confirmed that:-

- the signal is received through the user's own television set and the facility permits the Scheme Manager or Warden to provide "in-house" on screen information relevant to individual Schemes.
- the system is simple to operate.

Recommended

That an item of expenditure of £25,600 be included in the 2002/3 Capital Programme for the Link Radio Project. (HRHM)

144 CCTV IN SHELTERED SCHEMES

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which provided Members with an update on the progress of

preparing a scheme for installing CCTV in the foyers of Sheltered Housing Schemes.

A sum of £30,000 had been included in the Capital Programme for 2001/2002, but Members were pleased to note that the final cost would only be £20,500.

145 RACIAL HARASSMENT POLICY IN SOCIAL HOUSING

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which considered the adoption of the amended Racial Harassment Policy. This incorporated the comments from the previous meeting of the Sub-Committee and had been appended to the Report.

Members were pleased to note the incorporated amendments, but considered that 6.16 should be strengthened.

Resolved

- (1) That point 6.16 should be amended to read:-
“Racial graffiti must be removed as soon as possible, but in any case within 72 hours of notification.”
- (2) That the Racial Harassment Policy for Social Housing, as appended to the report and including the amendment above be adopted. (HRHM)

146 TENANT PARTICIPATION COMPACT REVIEW

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which related to the Tenant Participation Compact Action Plan. This had been reviewed in August at a Tenant Liaison Meeting and had been appended to the report.

Members noted that the final column, in the table listed the latest position. The emerging picture from the Plan had been that lack of resources prevented many of the initiatives being achieved on time.

The Head of Service confirmed that a full complement of staff now existed in the Housing Management Division and this would enable some of the deferred work to progress without deterioration of the core services. Members noted that the next review would take place in Summer 2002.

Tenant representation comes principally from the Western part of the District and wholly from those occupying sheltered housing or linked bungalows. This equates with 72% of tenants being unrepresented.

During discussion, the following points were noted:-

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- The StAR project in the Rochford wards of St Andrews and Roche had achieved four projects within the community. This could provide a group of people who could be encouraged to become involved in tenant participation, particularly as the Rochford area is not currently represented.
 - The Council does not have a Tenant Participation Officer. However, there is a sum of £20,000 available from the Government for tenant participation which could be spent on employing a dedicated person.
 - It would be useful to gain information from those Authorities who enjoy a high level of tenant participation.
 - The Link Radio project, addressed earlier in the meeting, would provide a useful medium for inviting sheltered housing scheme tenants to become more involved.
 - The name 'Tenants Association' could be updated, as long as the focus of the group was still inherent in the title.
 - A Tenancy Information pack would shortly be produced and this would include details about Tenants Associations.
 - The Tenant Involvement Steering Group would be addressing the above issues.
 - The Remuneration Panel would be addressing the issue of whether tenant representatives should receive a payment.

Resolved

- (1) That the Tenant Involvement Steering Group consider the appointment of a Tenant Participation Officer. (HRHM)

147 MEDICAL GRADINGS FOR HOUSING

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which proposed extending the number of grading categories for medical and disability factors for those people on the Council's Housing Register and tenants wishing to transfer.

Members noted that currently four categories existed; the first three attract additional points on the housing register and the fourth indicates that there is no need to consider rehousing on medical grounds. The independent medical adviser has indicated that there is insufficient scope within the current grading structure to distinguish fairly between varying degrees of medical problems and had requested that an additional grade be inserted.

Resolved

That the number of medical gradings for tenants wishing to transfer and applicants on the Housing Register be as set on the Appendix. (HRHM)

148 LAND AT FRANCIS WALK, RAYLEIGH

The Sub-Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management which sought Member agreement to the valuation and subsequent disposal of an area in Francis Walk, Rayleigh.

Resolved

That this item be referred to the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee for consideration. (HRHM)

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Chairman

Date