

LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER OF HOUSING STOCK**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Committee is invited to appoint four elected Member representatives together with substitutes to serve on the Joint Transfer Steering Group currently being set up to oversee the implementation of the Council's pre-ballot project plan for delivery of transfer of the Council's housing stock to a registered social landlord.
- 1.2 This is the first in a series of reports on actions the Council must take to see the process through to a successful conclusion. Advice and guidance is filtering through from the Council's appointed consultants, GMA Associates, and this will feature as a regular agenda item for Committee consideration.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 13 April 2005 the Council resolved that the option of large scale voluntary transfer of the whole Council housing stock to a local Rochford housing association (registered social landlord) in partnership with a parent group housing association be endorsed.
- 2.2 The Council also resolved that a steering group be set up by the Head of Revenue and Housing Management, whose purpose will be to pursue all necessary actions to achieve a smooth transfer in accordance with ODPM guidance and that the composition of the Group should be flexible to meet changing requirements, but initially should comprise 4 Council nominees, 3 tenant representatives, 1 leaseholder representative and a staff-side observer. The Group to be supported by appropriate Council staff, including a senior Council officer (who will be expected to remain with the Council after transfer and will be charged with the responsibility of securing best value for the Council) and in due course a representative of the partner housing association.
- 2.3 The Council instructed the Head of Revenue and Housing Management to take all necessary steps to prepare for the transfer and the related statutory ballot of tenants, reporting regularly to the Council on progress and in relation to key decisions.
- 2.4 On 15 June 2005 the Council received formal notification from the Government Office for the Eastern Region that the Council's decision taken on 13 April 2005 to pursue a whole stock transfer (LSVT) of its housing stock to a registered housing landlord (housing association) has been approved ('signed off.')
- 2.5 An imminent announcement is expected from the Government as to the date by which the Council will be expected to have advanced the next stage of the transfer process, namely pre-transfer consultation with its tenants.

- 2.6 In readiness for this (in accordance with guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) the Joint Transfer Steering Group (JTSG) is now being set up to oversee the process. It is expected that the JTSG will require to meet on average once per fortnight over the next eighteen months. It is intended that Elected Members nominated to serve on the JTSG should continue as the Council's representatives until the work of the JTSG is completed, regardless of the outcome of any local elections in the interim.
- 2.7 There would be some merit in retaining the political make-up of the original Rochford Housing Option Appraisal Board (RHOAB). This had two Conservative representatives, one Liberal Democrat Representative and one further representative from the other political groups. Additionally, the Head of Service is recommending consideration be given to including the Chairmen of Policy and Resources Committee and Community Services Committee in that number.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Provision has been made in the existing housing options appraisal budget.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To appoint four elected Members together with substitutes to serve as the council's representatives on the JTSG.

Steve Clarkson

Head of Revenue and Housing Management

Background Papers:-

None

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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 5 JULY 2005

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The Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management inviting Members to appoint four elected Member representatives, together with substitutes, to serve on the Joint Transfer Steering Group being set up to oversee the implementation of the Council's pre-ballot project plan for delivery of transfer of the Council's housing stock to a registered social landlord.

During debate there was a general consensus that it would be best to delay nomination of the non-Group Member in order to allow time for the 3 non-Group Members to discuss the matter in more detail.

It was, however, noted that the non-Group Members present considered that there would be merit in the Chief Executive meeting with them in order to facilitate the issue.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillors T G Cutmore, Mrs J R Lumley and S P Smith, together with one representative from non-Group Members, together with substitutes, be appointed to serve as the Council's representatives on the Joint Transfer Steering Group.
- (2) That appointment of the non-Group Member be deferred until all 3 non-Group Members could discuss the matter. (HRHM)

(Note: Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn and J R F Mason wished it to be recorded that they had voted against the second decision above).