

## Extraordinary Council – 26 January 2006

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Minutes of the meeting of **Extraordinary Council** held on **26 January 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P F A Webster  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr R A Amner	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr C I Black	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr Mrs R Brown	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr P R Robinson
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr P K Savill
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs S A Harper	Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr A J Humphries	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr C A Hungate	Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr Mrs L Hungate	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr T Livings	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, R G S Choppen, Mrs H L A Glynn, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley and J Thomass.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)
R J Honey	- Corporate Director (Law, Planning and Administration)
J Pritchard	- Housing Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

### **19 HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER – SELECTION OF PARTNER HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Council considered the joint report of the Head of Revenue and Housing Management and the Chairman of the Joint Transfer Steering Group (JTSG) on the recommendations of the JTSG on the preferred partner housing association to help set up the Rochford Housing Association.

The Chairman of the Joint Transfer Steering Group stressed that the selection of a preferred partner housing association was a critical decision for this Council. The Joint Transfer Steering Group had particularly welcomed the opportunity of visiting all of the shortlisted candidate associations and to talk to tenants in those areas. It was further emphasised that the decision made by the Joint Steering Group with respect to the preferred partner was a

unanimous one.

The Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) drew particular attention to the future requirement of nominating four people to represent the Council on the Rochford Housing Association Shadow Board. It was noted that these could be either Members or nominated representatives of the Council, who should be able to commit themselves to the Board for a period of two years in order to see through the transfer of housing stock to the newly established Rochford Housing Association and to monitor the operation of the new housing association during its first year.

The Leader of the Council endorsed the recommendation made by the Joint Transfer Steering Group, which had come at the end of much hard work. The Steering Group's preferred partner housing association had clearly stood out as the strongest candidate.

Responding to Member questions, officers advised that:-

- the Council could, as part of the transfer process, make a series of conditions designed to protect tenants' rights, which the Housing Association would be required to accept legally.
- The rent equalisation process currently being steered by the Government would bring Local Authority rents in line with those of the housing association sector. It was anticipated that Local Authority rents could rise by around 5% on average. The Government had responsibility for setting the level of Local Authority housing rents; the rent equalisation process, as such, had nothing to do with the stock transfer process. It was anticipated that by 2011 housing authority and Local Authority rents would be set and would progress at the same level.
- Existing Council tenants would retain their option to right to buy after the transfer of housing stock. New tenants, however, would exercise different rights according to the Housing Association rules.
- Rochford Housing Association Shadow Board would initially comprise of 8 members, 4 nominated by this Council, and 4 tenants/leaseholders. These 8 members would advertise for 4 community representatives, each of whom should ideally bring different professional expertise to the Board. Each of these 12 members would have equal voting rights.
- The Council did not have any alternative plans for its housing stock in the event of the autumn ballot of tenants failing to ratify the transfer of housing stock to the Rochford Housing Association. It was, however, evident that the Council had insufficient funds to achieve the Decent Homes Standard. During the consultation process to date with tenants it had been made clear that the stock option transfer offered the only realistic opportunity of attaining that Standard.

**Resolved**

That it be agreed that Hereward Housing Association is the preferred partner to establish Rochford Housing Association. (HRHM)

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

**20 RECRUITING ISSUE – HEAD OF FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Council considered the exempt report of the Chief Executive seeking Members' consent to the approval of a market supplement.

Members concurred that, in light of the crucial nature of this post to the Council, the approach outlined in the officer's report should be endorsed.

**Resolved**

That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive at his discretion to apply a market supplement to the post of Head of Finance, Audit and Process Management, as outlined in the report. (CE)

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and closed at 7.35 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....