

Housing Best Value Sub-Committee – 14 February 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Housing Best Value Sub-Committee** held on **14 February 2005** when there were present:-

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)

Cllr T Livings
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs M S Vince

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
S Clarkson - Head of Revenue and Housing Management
S Neville - Residential Service Unit Manager
J Pritchard - Housing Manager
A Coulson - Housing, Client & Strategy Officer
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

N King - Housing and Support Partnership

27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 3 September 2004 (adjourned) and 8 September 2004 (reconvened) were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

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 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

28 HOUSING CARE AND SUPPORT STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Sub-Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on the draft Housing Care and Support Strategy for Older People that had been prepared by the Council's consultants.

Members noted the background to strategy development and received a detailed presentation from Mr King on behalf of the Council's consultants. During the presentation Mr King wished to emphasise that a significant statistical aspect was the high number of persons over 65 living within the District and the likely sizeable increase in this number over the next few years.

Responding to questions, officers/Mr King advised that:-

- Management experience associated with current sheltered schemes pointed to a need for increased levels of support. Scheme car parks were used by both carers and residents. The low level of the supporting people budget remained an issue.
- Implementation of the strategy would require both the shifting of resources and new resources.
- The costing that could be associated with item 'i' on page 18 of the exempt report totalled approximately £4m. The Council had previously decided to suspend further work on sheltered scheme refurbishment pending the outcome of the stock option appraisal process. Refurbishment activity had been the largest element of the Council's major repairs allowance.
- A number of "retirement villages" were under construction around the country. Such villages typically contained 200-300 dwellings and a comprehensive range of facilities. The consultant's experience was that such villages proved very popular. For an authority such as Rochford, the introduction of a village development could have consequences for sheltered housing provision in that it would provide an alternative for traditional applicants and existing residents. A key factor was affordability – developed by private companies, such villages are likely to offer accommodation that is predominately for sale.
- The Council's sheltered housing register included home owners. The demand for traditional sheltered housing was relatively low – "extra care" accommodation being more in demand.
- Levels of care management could be identified as an issue in that service providers did not always respond to the lifestyle/care needs of residents. Nationally, policies were moving towards more individual tailored services and this aspect was addressed within the strategy. Supporting People Assessments would lead to the driving-up of standards. The delivery of care was the statutory and financial responsibility of social services.
- Nationally there had been issues with regard to attracting appropriate care staff for a number of years. Wage cost was a factor behind a number of smaller care home proprietors leaving the industry. Social services departments had developed a range of strategies to address this issue, including the gradual increase of wages; the developing use of assisted technology; the review of building design and recruitment from abroad.
- The strategy touched on shared ownership. Varying forms of equity release were becoming more of a norm.

The Sub-Committee fully endorsed the consultant's report. The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that specific concerns around

the practical application of proposals could be addressed when detailed consideration is given to policies. It was agreed that, subject to Parent Committee endorsement, the Sub-Committee would be the appropriate forum for considering all issues that arise once the Council had reached agreement on the future option for housing.

Recommended to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- (1) That the Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board be advised of the consultant's conclusions.
- (2) That, following Council's agreement to the future option for housing, this Sub-Committee be tasked with considering the policies relating to the Council's sheltered housing stock that the Council would wish to see in any future agreement relating to the provision of housing and all other issues that arise from the agreement.
- (3) That the Council's future housing care and support strategy be finalised once the future direction for the local authority sheltered housing schemes is determined.

The meeting commenced at 2.30pm and closed at 4.10pm.

Chairman

Date