

---

Minutes of the meeting of the **Housing Management Sub-Committee** held on **Wednesday 16 February 2000** when there were present:

Cllr Mrs M S Vince - Chairman

Cllr R S Allen  
Cllr D M Ford  
Cllr Mrs J Hall  
Cllr N Harris

Cllr C C Langlands  
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon  
Cllr Mrs W M Stevenson

Mr S Adger (Advisor representing Rayleigh and Rawreth Tenants Association)

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. P A Beckers and R A Pearson

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllrs J E Grey and V H Leach

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mr S Clarkson – Head of Revenues and Housing Management  
Mr D Deeks – Head of Financial Services  
Mr G Brazendale – Committee Administrator

## **92 MINUTES**

Councillor R S Allen pointed out that the non-pecuniary interest declared at the last Meeting, held on 16 December 1999 related to his mother-in-law's occupation of Council-owned accommodation, rather than his mother as stated in the Minutes.

Subject to this amendment, the Minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **Resolved**

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt

---

Information as defined in Paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**93 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2000/2001**

The Sub-Committee received a confidential presentation by the Heads of Financial Services and Revenue and Housing Management, concerning the Housing Capital Programme. A summary showing the current year's programme and estimates for 2000/01 to 2002/03 was circulated at the Meeting.

It was explained that, since these programmes had been prepared, it had become apparent during a risk assessment of the Council's sheltered housing stock that significant fire prevention works were required to the Authority's units if the current "stay put" policy was to be retained. As a first priority, it would be necessary to replace the existing letterboxes with an up to date fire-proof version, and to install an intumescent strip around doorframes to prevent smoke entry. The cost of these measures was likely to be £65,000. Thereafter, a programme of less essential work to other sheltered housing units (Priority 2) had been identified at a cost of £182,200, which could be implemented on a phased basis, taking into account other competing budgetary priorities.

A number of adjustments to the current and future Capital Programmes to enable the cost of this work to be met were considered, and Members agreed unanimously to those revisions which would allow the first priority work to be undertaken, since it was thought essential to retain the "stay put" policy.

Members were broadly supportive of the measures suggested in relation to funding work in the Priority 2 category, although concerns were expressed about the possible impact upon the gas heating installation programme in 2000/01. It was suggested that phasing of the upgrading measures contained within Priority 2 could be examined, to lessen the effect on other parts of the Programme.

The Head of Financial Services explained that the proposed adjustments to the Capital Programmes as outlined would be considered by Council at its Meeting on 22 February 2000.

In relation to Sheltered Housing generally, a report concerning the future of this type of accommodation and in particular Hardwick House would be brought to a forthcoming Meeting of the Sub-Committee.

---

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- (1) That the sum of £49,000 currently shown as unallocated in the 2000/2001 Capital Programme be authorised towards fire prevention works.
- (2) That a sum of £31,000 currently in the 1999/2000 estimates for the Local Authority Sheltered Housing Grant (LASHG) Bardfield Way be authorised towards fire prevention works.
- (3) That a sum of £30,000 be released for fire prevention works from the provision in 2000/01 of £150,000 for LASHG. (HFS)

It was further

**Resolved:**

That the Sub-Committee considers other adjustments affecting the Housing Revenue Account and current Housing Capital Programme at a later date. (HFS)

**RE-ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Resolved**

That the public and press be re-admitted for the remainder of the Meeting.

**94 REVIEW OF ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management, which sought approval to the adoption, for consultation purposes, of documentation setting out the Council's policy for the allocation of housing, and the Pointing System. A copy of the document was appended to the report.

Members noted that the draft policy had been the subject of an informal consultation between certain Councillors, Officers and Tenants' representatives, as a result of which a number of changes had been suggested. It would next be necessary to carry out statutory consultations, which would conclude on 30 April 2000, the outcome of which would be reported to this Sub-Committee in May before final ratification by Community Services Committee. Once approved, it was intended to include the policy within the Tenants' Handbook to be issued around Autumn 2000.

Members examined the draft policy in detail, during which the following main points arose:

- Types of applicant not admitted to the housing register. (paragraph 4.7)

It was noted that the existing policy debarred owner occupiers from inclusion on the register (with the exceptions as listed). It was suggested that this exclusion conflicted with advice contained within the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice, and the Sub-Committee was invited to consider deletion of this exclusion to achieve an open policy. A number of Members expressed the view that removing this criterion could raise unrealistically high expectations amongst applicants that they would receive Council accommodation and that, given the Authority's limited housing stock, satisfying such a policy would be difficult to achieve. The Head of Service indicated that the Council was statutorily required to inform applicants of their likelihood of being housed, and that arrangements were in place to issue annually to individuals their points score. It was concluded, therefore, that, in view of the practical difficulties of implementing an open policy, the Council's existing criteria for exclusion from the housing register should be retained.

- Shared accommodation with non-associated/associated persons (paragraph 4.10(c) and (d))

Members requested that the wording of these paragraphs should be clarified to emphasise the housing needs of young adults who had a wish to occupy a property with non-family members.

- Allocation of Council housing – “exceptional circumstances” (paragraph 6.4)

It was explained that these circumstances included requests for short term accommodation by external agencies (for example, for witness protection programmes), or where there was a need to move occupants quickly because of violence or harassment.

- Key Worker Policy. (paragraph 6.7(e)). It was agreed that the provision of temporary accommodation for newly appointed staff should be deleted from the policy, since it was now included within relocation packages offered by the Council.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That, subject to consultation, the Allocations Policy and Pointing System as amended by the Sub-Committee be adopted.

- 
- (2) That the Head of Revenues and Housing Management undertakes a comprehensive consultation exercise with all tenants, those on the Housing Register, local Housing Associations and Shelter.
  - (3) That operation of the policy be reviewed after twelve months' operation. (HRHM)

**95 RACIAL EQUALITY IN RENTED HOUSING**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management, which sought Members' approval to the adoption of the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in relation to Rented Housing. The Code of Practice was appended to the report.

Members noted a range of measures that it was proposed to introduce in order to monitor the effectiveness of the policy, and possible ways in which the results of the monitoring could be reported.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in Rented Housing be adopted.
- (2) That the Council abides by the Race Relations Act and implements the Code of Practice as far as practicable.
- (3) That tenants and prospective tenants be advised of the adoption of the policy by including information in the Tenants' Handbook.
- (4) That the Housing Manager be charged with responsibility for implementing the overall and component parts of the policy.
- (5) That progress be monitored by the inclusion of information in the Revenue and Housing Management Division's Quarterly Performance Report. (HRHM)

**96 BEST VALUE IN HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management which outlined current progress in achieving Best Value in Housing Management. Also outlined was a comparison of the main components of the consultation paper "Implementing Best Value" and the Department of the Environment Transport and the Region's (DETR) Circular 10/99 regarding Best Value.

---

The Head of Service circulated, in addition, copies of the booklet issued by the DETR entitled “Best Value in Housing – a guide for Tenants and Residents”, which it was agreed should be distributed to all tenants.

It was noted that DETR guidance regarding Best Value in Housing Management had been issued in January, and it was agreed that a programme for a review of housing management core services should be prepared, together with an analysis of the consequent staffing implications, which would be reported to Corporate Resources Sub-Committee.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the content of Circular 10/99 as it affects Housing Management issues be noted.
- (2) That, after analysis of the DETR Best Value Guide, the Head of Service reports any resource implications to the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee.
- (3) That a full report on establishing a Best Value Review Programme for Housing Management core services be presented to a future Meeting of this Sub-Committee.
- (4) That the DETR guidance “Best Value in Housing – a guide for Tenants and Residents” be distributed to all tenants. (HRHM)

**97 RENT COLLECTION METHOD**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management which gave details of the introduction of electronic swipe cards for rent collection, which would be completed by late March. It was noted that statutory consultations regarding this initiative had been completed, and that no significant objections or reservations had been received. The Head of Service informed Members that it was intended to brief Sheltered Housing Scheme Managers concerning the practicalities of the cards’ usage.

**Resolved:**

That the implementation of electronic swipe card methods of rent collection be noted, there being no substantial representation by tenants against the proposal. (HRHM).

---

**98 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Sub-Committee noted the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management, which gave details of expenditure from the responsive elements of the Housing Revenue Account Repairs and Maintenance Budget between 1 October and 31 December 1999.

Members were informed that figures for the percentage of responsive jobs completed on time compared very favourably with other Local Authorities. In reply to Member questions, the Head of Service indicated that the expenditure for plant replacement related to the large boilers within sheltered accommodation, and that adaptations for the disabled had been carried out at four or five properties.

**99. REVIEW OF TENANCY AGREEMENT**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management, which outlined proposed changes to the Tenancy Agreement, and sought approval of the final draft document. The draft Agreement was appended to the report.

Members noted that the statutory consultation process, including with tenants' representatives, had been carried out, and that various amendments suggested by the Head of Legal Services had been effected. These related principally to clauses 4.19(a) and 4.25(r), and were agreed by the Sub-Committee. In reply to a Member question concerning clause 4.28 (the erection of aerials/satellite dishes), the Head of Service confirmed that the need to obtain separate planning consent would be pointed out in any approval to such requests given by the Housing Department.

Clause 5.3, which related to Right of Succession was considered in more detail, in particular the suggestion that an amendment be made to prevent a single person legitimately under-occupying a multi-bedroom property more suitable to a family. It was, taking into account the views of the Tenants Associations, agreed that the clause could be endorsed with the wording "The Council reserves the right to move relatives succeeding to the tenancy of a property bigger than they need. Suitable alternative accommodation will be offered." Members considered that this wording would allow the Authority the opportunity to consider the sensitivity and merits of individual cases.

**Resolved:**

That the revised Tenancy Agreement (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes) be adopted subject to inclusion of the revised wording for Clause 5.3 as outlined above. (HRHM)

**100 LAND AT BOSTON AVENUE, RAYLEIGH**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management which sought Members' agreement to the valuation, and subsequent disposal, of a turfed area on the Salem Walk development in West Rayleigh, the location of which was shown on a plan attached to the report.

Members noted that a request had been received from the occupant of an adjoining property to purchase the area of land in question, for conversion to a parking area.

The Chairman reported that the Ward Members were opposed to disposal and, on a motion by Councillor Mrs W M Stevenson and seconded by Councillor D M Ford, it was

**RECOMMENDED**

That the request to purchase a plot of land on the Salem Walk development in West Rayleigh be refused, and that the site be retained in the Council's ownership. (HLS)

**101 LAND AT MEADOWSIDE, RAYLEIGH**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Revenues and Housing Management which sought Members' agreement to the valuation, and subsequent disposal, of an unused parcel of land on the Meadowside development in Rayleigh, the location of which was shown on a plan attached to the report.

It was noted that the site in question comprised a corner plot in the cul-de-sac of bungalows, and that, through lack of use, had become overgrown. The possibility of selling the land to an occupant of an adjoining property for garden purposes was examined but Members, in considering the views of the Ward Councillors, considered that the Council should retain ownership; a lease of the site for garden purposes was therefore preferred. If the applicant did not wish to pursue this proposal, Members requested that a further report on the future of the site be brought to the Sub-Committee's next meeting.

On a motion by Councillor Mrs S J Lemon and seconded by Councillor V H Leach it was

**RECOMMENDED**

- (1) That a lease for cultivation purposes of the plot of land at Meadowside, Rayleigh, be offered to the owner of a property in



---

Queens Road on terms and conditions to be agreed by the  
Head of Legal Services. (HLS)

- (2) That, should the resident not wish to pursue this proposal, a  
further report on the future of the site be brought back to the  
Sub-Committee's next meeting. (HRHM)

The meeting closed at 10.05pm

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_