

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

23rd April 2009

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Lemmon (Chairman), Councillor Grant (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Atkin, Bladen (substitute for Councillor Harrison), Hewlett, Murray, Mrs. Patten and Roberts.

Labour Group

Councillors Dunn, Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Lane, Rhind and Shepherd.

In Attendance

Councillors Mrs. Farrington (Conservative Group) and Richards (Labour Group).

APOLOGY

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Harrison (Conservative Group).

HCS/66. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2009 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

HCS/67. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Dunn and Shepherd declared prejudicial interests in Minute No. HCS/76, as Members of the Development Control Committee.

HCS/68. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 11, Councillor Bladen asked the following question:-

“Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.11, I would like to ask the Chairman if he attended the Council Housing Conference held at the House of Commons on 26th March 2009, and if he did, could this Committee be provided with a report outlining conference outcomes?”

Councillor Lemmon responded that he had attended this event along with the Head of Housing and Councillor Richards, in the Jubilee Rooms at the House of Commons. The event arose as a result of Margaret Beckett's Parliamentary announcement that the Government had plans to enable Councils to build council houses for the future. In summary, he found the information given was light on substance and very much in the early development stages. It was made clear that a Council would be required to have a detailed business plan, from which an application for a loan could then be submitted. Whether this would include the purchase of land and build costs was not made clear. However, it was understood that if

properties were built within this proposed scheme, and sold in the future, they would not be exempt from the existing percentage payback to Government. More detailed information would be provided by the Government when it became available. The afternoon session consisted of a number of workshops, devoted in the main to the issues relating to negative and positive subsidy Housing Revenue Account. Much was based on the current experience of councils, and all present were awaiting the outcome of the Governments review.

The Chairman advised Members that he had accepted an urgent exempt item “Staffing Arrangements – Swadlincote Woodlands And Grounds Maintenance Team”. The grounds for urgency were given.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/69. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A report was submitted informing Members of the new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures document. It was stated that anti-social behaviour was a key concern for residents of South Derbyshire and a priority for the Council. The policy showed the commitment of the Council in reducing and tackling such behaviour.

The new document contained information on how victims and witnesses were to be dealt with and supported, and a detailed section of tools and powers available to tackle anti-social behaviour had also been incorporated into the policy, in line with current legislation.

RESOLVED:

That the new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures be approved.

HCS/70. MANAGING DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS THAT ARISE FROM THE PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 17 (PPG17) STUDY

Members considered proposals to provide a transparent process for allocating section 106 contributions through the establishment of ‘area leisure development pots’.

A study in 2005, identified formulas for obtaining contributions from developers to meet shortfalls that existed in sports facilities and open space. It recommended the establishment of ‘area leisure development pots’ to allocate off-site contributions in an approved way, which satisfied all partners.

The report had identified the creation of 3 ‘leisure pots’ and the amount of money which was currently available for these pots. It was confirmed that if this report was approved, a further report would be brought to the Committee providing an update on the total amount of funds available, and a suggested programme of expenditure.

A key aspect was for the Council to be part of the Sport England Facilities Improvement Services, which meant that the District Council would receive consultancy support paid for by Sport England, to develop a sports and

recreation facility strategy that would identify facilities that were required in the District for the future.

With regard to the list of parishes included in the sub-areas, it was commented that Linton should be in the South area rather than Central.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the principle of ‘area leisure development pots’ for the management of capital allocated for off site provision on new developments be approved.***
- (2) That a report be brought back to the next meeting of the Housing and Community Services Committee, identifying a programme for spending the capital allocated to the ‘pots’.***
- (3) That the engagement of Sport England’s Facility Improvement Service to provide support in the updating of elements of the original PPG17 study be noted.***

HCS/71. **SUPPORTING PEOPLE CHARGES – SHELTERED HOUSING**

It was reported that since 2002, the support provided to the Council’s sheltered housing tenants was commissioned and part funded by the County-wide Supporting People programme. Tenants were currently charged a weekly support fee of £9.42 in addition to their weekly rent to cover costs associated with the provision of sheltered housing support. For those in receipt of benefits or on a low income, a financial assessment was carried out and Supporting People covered the charge for these tenants.

On 14th April, 2009, the Council was advised that it had been granted an inflationary increase of 2.5%, increasing the weekly charge to £9.66 per dwelling per week. This was applicable from 1st June 2009, allowing time for Members to consider this increase. The actual cost to the Housing Revenue Account to provide this service was £12.78 per property, per week. Therefore, Members approval was required in order to help bridge the gap between costs and income for sheltered housing support service provision.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed increase to the Supporting People charge for the provision of housing related support to sheltered housing tenants be referred to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.

HCS/72. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were asked to consider the updated work programme and review its content where appropriate.

RESOLVED:-

That the updated work programme be approved.

HCS/73. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2009 were received.

LAND AT CHURCH GRESLEY (Paragraph 3)

The Committee agreed to dispose of an area of land deemed surplus to Council requirements.

EXTRA CARE HOUSING PROJECT (Paragraph 3)

Members approved proposals to meet the costs associated with the Extra Care Housing Project.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS – SWADLINCOTE WOODLANDS AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE TEAM (Paragraph 4)

Members approved staffing arrangements for Swadlincote Woodlands and the Grounds Maintenance Team as detailed in the report.

J. LEMMON

CHAIRMAN