

Minutes

Environment and Housing Management Committee Wednesday, 17th June, 2015

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Mrs Henwood
Cllr Poppy (Vice-chair)	Cllr Mrs Hubbard
Cllr Mrs Coe	Cllr Sleep
Cllr Mrs Davies	Cllr Mrs Squirrell

Apologies

Cllr Ms Rowlands

Substitute Present

Cllr Barrell (substituting for Cllr Ms Rowlands)

Also Present

Cllr Barrett

Officers Present

David Carter	Environmental Health Manager
Angela Williams	Principal Officer (Housing Needs)
Claire Hayden	Governance and Members Support Officer
Helen Gregory	Acting Head of Housing
Roy Ormsby	Head of Street Scene
Maureen Montgomery	Tenants Talkback Representative
Jackie Elliot	Tenants Talkback Representative

29. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absences were received by Cllr Ms Rowlands, Cllr Barrell substituted.

30. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Housing and Health Committee held on 11th March 2015 and the Environment Committee held on 18th March 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

31. Verbal update from the Chair

Recycling Centres

A report was approved at the Environment Committee on 12th November 2014, which gave delegated authority to the Head of Street Scene and the Chair of the Environment Committee to close any sites that are felt to be causing a nuisance to local residents and Parish Councils.

To date the following sites have been closed; Crown Corner, William Hunter Way, Mountnessing and Blackmore. There are now discussions with West Horndon PC, who feel that their site is causing issues through abuse.

After discussions with the Parish Council it was agreed to ask users why they still use the site. It was felt appropriate to do this at all sites, and although this is just a snap shot of users, it does provide some information, which has not been available in the past.

What is clear, is that they are continually being abused, and although advertised as recycling centres, they are seen as general waste sites, and it is estimated that over 40% of the material taken is not recycling. This does however cause a greater problem, as this contaminates the recyclate and then a majority will still be taken to land fill.

Waste Strategy

It was agreed at the Environment Committee in January to develop a waste strategy for the Borough. However, to date there has only been one meeting. Members need to decide if this is still required, and if so appoint representative from cross party groups.

It was agreed, that the meetings continue and that members nominated will be Cllrs Barrett, Hossack, Poppy, Sleep and Mrs Squirrell.

32. Co-option of Tenants Representatives

The report sets out a proposal to co-opt representatives of Tenants Talkback into the Environment & Housing Management Committee for housing related items only, in accordance with the Council constitution and with the previously approved Tenant Participation Compact.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to received the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to:

- 1. Invite Tenant Talkback to send two representatives to each meeting of the Environment and Housing Management Committee where housing items are to be discussed.**
- 2. The representatives of Tenants Talkback be co-opted onto the committee for the duration of the consideration of these items, and have the right to speak, but not vote.**
- 3. The Acting Head of Housing Services be requested to arrange appropriate training of the representatives.**

Maureen Montgomery and Jackie Elliot were nominated as co-opted members of the Environment & Housing Management Committee.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Tenants talkback play an integral role in the decision making process; tenants talkback is consulted and able to influence on all new policies and improvements within the housing service before implemented, as part of their scrutiny role.

33. Performance Report

The report updates the Members on the regular performance.

The report records Q4 2014/15 performance information. Officers were pleased to report the overall performance has steadily improved throughout the year, with both the rent collection KPI's achieving top quartile performance.

Mrs H Gregory gave a short presentation on the performance information for Q4. A member expressed concerns relating to some of the performance indicators relating to Repairs service satisfaction regarding its independence

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to received the recommendations set out in the report.

During the debate, an additional recommendation was accepted by the Chair.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to:-

1. That the performance achieved in Quarter 4 for 2014/15 be noted.
2. That the Acting Head of Housing will review with Officers the current arrangements for completing repairs satisfaction surveys in consultation with Tenants Talkback.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To keep members informed of the key performance levels within the Housing service to enable Members to monitor our performance.

(Cllr Squirrell declared a non pecuniary interest under the Council Code of Conduct by virtue of her interest as a Council tenant. Guidance note to be provided by the Monitoring Officer, on items she can participate in).

34. "Get our House in Order" Modernisation Programme

The Housing & Health Committee on the 7th January 2015 approved the implementation of a modernisation programme of the Housing department. The programme is scheduled to take place over the next 12/18 months. The modernisation programme named the 'Getting our house in order' will be extensive and involve an improvement plan for each service area. Staff attended briefings in December 2014 to discuss the programme.

The Housing department has prioritised performance improvement since July 2014; notably with the introduction of the KPI workshops held with Staff and Managers. This is beginning to produce improvements in performance.

A motion was MOVED by Cllr Hossack and SECONDED by Cllr Poppy to receive the recommendation set out in the report.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to:

1. That the establishment of a restructured post of Housing Manager (Estates and Repairs) on a grade J (£43,553 - £47,600) be agreed and that the recruitment process be undertaken.
2. That the direction of travel of the 'Getting our House in Order' modernisation programme be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

The service improvements proposed in the 'Getting our House in Order initiative' will improve service and value for money for residents and stakeholders.

35. Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Update

The Council agreed and adopted the Private Sector Renewal Policy at the meeting of Environment, Health and Housing Board on 8th June 2011.

The report contained various measures to deal with Private Sector Housing, including various Grants and Loans in Chapter 6 of the Policy.

The report sought authority to consult on the revision of the current scheme of Grants and Loans offered under the Policy to better target resources.

A Motion was MOVED by Cllr Hossack and SECONDED by Cllr Poppy to receive the recommendation set out in the report.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to:-

- 1. Instruct officers to report back to the next Environment and Housing Management Committee on 9th September 2015 following consultation with relevant stakeholders for a decision to adopt the proposed Policy.**

REASON FOR DECISION

To better target Council financial resources to provide housing assistance to those most in need.

36. Right to Buy Capital Receipts Commitments and Garage Site Redevelopment Proposal

In connection with the Garage Site Redevelopment Proposals the Housing & Health Committee of the 5th November 2014 (Minute 250) it was approved:

- *Seek outline planning approval for development of three homes at Magdalen Gardens CM13 1RL*
- *Seek outline planning approval for development of six homes of Fawters Close CM13 2SY*
- *Seek outline planning approval for development of three homes at Fielding Way CM13 1JN*
- *Incur fees up to £120,000 funded from this year's HRA capital budget to prepare outline planning application for three sites.*
- *Incur additional fees up to £90,000 to develop detailed designs and tender documentation if outline planning is granted.*
- *To undertake procurement to appoint a suitable developer/partner to deliver each scheme.*

It was envisaged that the development of the garage sites would be start on site in June 2015 and that the available Right to Buy Capital Receipts would enable one scheme to be progressed with additional funding from the HRA Investment Fund and prudential borrowing.

Progress with the developments has not been as quick as originally assumed as a consequence of the surveys required to accompanying the planning applications and the actual planning approval process.

There is a requirement that the Right to Buy Capital Receipts are expended by certain dates and as a consequence of the delay the first date of September for all the investment to be made is likely to be missed.

This report sets the current position with the development of the garage sites provides recommendations as to the actions taken to address these issues.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to receive the recommendation set out in the report.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to:

- 1. That a development manager be engaged to produce a detailed business case of Options 1 and 2 in paragraph 3.4 of this report to inform the procurement options.**
- 2. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Paid Service to consider the procurement options produced and to commence the procurement process in consultation with the Chair of the**

Committee for a developer or registered provider to construct the schemes at Magdalen Gardens, Fawters Close and Fielding Way.

- 3. That the Head of Paid Service be delegated authority to acquire such residential units that meet current General Needs requirements to ensure that Right to Buy Capital Receipts are fully expended by March 2016 subject to consultation taking place with the Leader of the Council and the Section 151 Officer before the exercise of such authority.**

REASON FOR DECISION

Members are asked to approve the recommendations to ensure that the development of the garage sites is achieved and that the Right to Buy Capital Receipts are expended fully within the time frame set by the DCLG.

37. Street Inspector

At Ordinary Council on 10th June 2015 a revised budget was approved, which included the addition of a Street Inspector for the Borough. The additional funding shows a clear intention to make the street scene across the Borough a priority for the Administration.

The Street Inspector will work with Members, and have a clear remit to use the resources of the Neighbourhood Action Team, and when appropriate the Highway Rangers. This will provide the resources to identify issues and ensure that they are addressed.

The Inspector will play a community engagement role for the Council, and work with residents and businesses to identify ways of improving the public realm. This will mean liaising with key partners, and working with them to identify ways of enhancing the environment.

The Inspector will play a proactive role in keeping our streets clean and well maintained, and will liaise with Officers across the Council to improve the public realm around the Borough.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Hossack and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to receive the recommendation set out in the report.

- 1. That Members agree to the appointment of a Street Inspector for the Borough.**

REASON FOR DECISION

To enable the Head of Street Scene to commence the recruitment process.

Termination of Meeting

During the preceding item, in accordance with Rule28 of Part 4.1 – Council Procedure Rules, the business of the meeting not having concluded by two hours after its start, Members voted to agree to continue with the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

38. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The Meeting ended at 21.04.