

**MINUTES OF HOUSING COMMITTEE HELD ON**

10 September 2009

7.30pm–8.29pm

**PRESENT**

**COUNCILLORS**

Lee Dangerfield (Chairman)

Shona Johnson (Vice Chairman)

Sarah Jane Dangerfield

Bob Davis

Lesley Rideout  
*(arrived 7.34pm)*

Clive Souter

John Strachan  
*(arrived 7.34pm)*

**ALSO PRESENT**

Simon Carter

**CO-OPTees**

Mrs M Mackenzie (Leaseholder)

Mr P Dobson (Tenant)  
*(substitute for Mr B McKenzie)*

**APOLOGIES**

Mr B McKenzie

12. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

13. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 2 July 2009 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. **MATTERS ARISING**

**Draft Housing Asset Management Strategy (Min 7(b))**

The Head of Housing Services reported that the draft Housing Asset Management Strategy was undergoing further consultation and would be reported to the Committee at its meeting in November 2009.

15. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

(i) *Written Questions from Members*

A copy of the written questions and the Chairman's responses is attached at Appendix A of these minutes.

(ii) *Petitions*

None.

16. **NON-CONTENTIOUS BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED** that agenda item 7, Committee Forward Work Plan, be taken as non-contentious business.

17. **COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN**

**RESOLVED** to note the Committee Forward Work Plan.

18. **TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INSPECTORS**

The Committee received an update on the Tenant and Leaseholder Inspector Scheme initiative.

The Committee welcomed the suggestion from Mr. Dobson, that a Coordinator, rather than a Lead Inspector, be appointed by the Inspectors to coordinate the Scheme.

**RESOLVED** to endorse the Tenant and Leaseholder Inspector Scheme, subject to the amendment detailed above.

19. **REVIEW OF SHELTERED HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on the progress made with implementing the review of the Sheltered Housing Service.

**RESOLVED** to

- (A) note the Sheltered Housing Review Implementation Plan, detailed in Appendix 1;
- (B) approve the policy amendments outlined in paragraph 24 of the report to tender the Careline call handling service for a 5 year period;

- (C) approve an amendment to the Allocations Policy increasing the age limit to re-designated schemes to 60years of age as outlined in paragraph 25 of the report.

20. **LONDON COMMUTER BELT SUB-REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2009-2011**

The Committee received the London Commuter Belt Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2009-2011.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the London Commuter Belt Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2009-2011 attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

21. **FORMER TENANT WRITE OFFS**

The Committee received a report on progress made with the collection of rent arrears and seeking approval to write off former Tenant arrears in line with Council Standing Orders.

The Committee noted the comments from Mr. Dobson regarding the wording of the rent arrears letter and the Head of Housing Services agreed to review the letter at a future Service Improvement Team (SIT) meeting.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Policy and Resources Committee that it writes off £19,136.62 of former Tenants' rent arrears.

22. **LEASEHOLDER WRITE OFFS**

The Committee received a report updating it on progress made with the collection of Leaseholder service charges and seeking approval to write off former Leaseholder arrears in line with Council Standing Orders.

**RECOMMENDED** to the Policy and Resources Committee that it writes off £5,006.56 of former Leaseholders' service charge arrears.

23. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

24. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

**Q1. Question from Cllr Lesley Rideout**

Can the Chair of Housing explain why he felt the need to use the Council's website to deny that Aylets Field, The Briars, Copshall Close will be demolished and why he is not aware of the ABC Residents Association when housing officers attend their meetings?

**Reply from the Chair of the Committee**

Information was required to be placed in the public domain for residents (including the Council's website) in response to a recent flyer sent to all residents of Aylets Field, Copshall Close and The Briars.

Whilst I understand the intentions behind the flyer, the Council had to correct the information contained in it regarding a proposed public meeting about the future of the estate which, if not corrected, could have caused distress or alarm to local residents.

Housing Officers attend a range of community meetings in order to engage with local residents and build capacity in the community.

I was aware that a new group was being considered, but I was not aware that it had actually been established or what it was called until the flyer had been circulated to residents who then brought it to my attention.

I understand the Group will be given support from Officers if it wishes and it will be provided with a copy of the Council's Residents' Association Starter Pack.

**Q2. Question from Cllr Lesley Rideout**

When will the Chair of Housing explain to the residents of these estates the Area Investment Renewal Framework and its impact on them?

**Reply from the Chair of the Committee**

The effects of the Area Investment and Renewal Framework and any subsequent policy decisions will be established in consultation with the residents of those estates.

The first round of consultation took place in August 2008. The Council will be starting further discussions with local people later in the year around options for these estates.

I would like to stress that future arrangements for these areas are, as yet, undecided and that the local community will be fully involved in any proposals that go forward for further consideration.