

MINUTES OF HOUSING COMMITTEE HELD ON

17 January 2008

7.30pm – 8.20pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Mark Wilkinson (Chair)

Simon Carter

Joshua Jolles (arrived at 7.58pm)

Su Lawton

Gregory Peck

Lesley Rideout

APOLOGIES

Rob Eschle

Lee Dangerfield

CO-OPTEEES

Ms Hogan
(Leaseholder Rep)

Mr McKenzie
(Tenant Rep)

48. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

49. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2007 and the special meeting held on 3 December 2007 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

50. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

51. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

A list of questions and their responses are at Appendix A of these minutes.

52. **NON-CONTENTIOUS BUSINESS**

RESOLVED that the following items would be taken as non-contentious:

- Item 7 Committee Forward Work Plan
- Item 10 Update on the progress towards Strategic Housing Best Value Inspection Action Plan

53. **COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN**

RESOLVED that the Committee Forward Work Plan be noted.

54. **UPDATE ON THE GARAGE AND HARDSTAND STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The Committee received a report on the progress of the Garage and Hardstand Strategy.

The Committee welcomed the report and emphasised the importance of Councillors being notified, in advance, of any proposed works to garage and hardstand sites in their particular ward.

RESOLVED

- (a) to note the progress made on the delivery of the Garage and Hardstand Strategy;
- (b) to approve the amendments to the Garage Policy, as detailed in paragraph 19 of the report;
- (c) to approve the Improvement Plan detailed in Appendix 3 to the report;
- (d) that appropriate ward Councillors and the Chair/Vice Chair of the Housing Committee would be notified before any work in respect of garages/hardstands sites commenced in a specific ward.

55. **REVIEW OF TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The Committee received a report proposing changes to tenant and leaseholder engagement.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed changes to the model of engagement as outlined in paragraphs 14-17 and Appendix 1 of the report.

56. **UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC HOUSING BEST VALUE INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received a report providing an update on the progress made towards the Strategic Housing Best Value Inspection Action Plan.

RESOLVED to note the progress made to date and that any residual items would be transferred to the service planning process.

57. **HARLOW HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE**

The Committee received a report on the achievement of the Harlow Homelessness Prevention Partnership to date and outlining the work that will be carried out over the coming months.

RESOLVED to note the progress made to date and approve the actions that are to continue.

58. **PRIVATE SECTOR EMPTY HOMES BVPI64**

The Committee received a report on the measures that have been taken to address the issue of private sector empty homes.

The Committee welcomed the progress made to date and requested that a report on the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders, Interim Management Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders be received by no later than October 2008.

RESOLVED

- (a) to note the current progress and the improvements in dealing with private sector empty homes;
- (b) that a report on the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders, Interim Management Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders be considered by the Committee by October 2008.

59. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

60. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

APPENDIX A

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

PQ1 Question from Gary Roberts to the Chair of the Committee

Given that the Council has almost 10,000 tenanted properties in Harlow, how many tenants were consulted as part of the review on tenant and leaseholder engagement ?

Reply from the Chair of the Committee

The new model of tenant and leaseholder engagement has been in operation now for over a year. It was always intended for a review to be conducted in order to evaluate its effectiveness and to ensure that the original principals were being delivered in practice. Consultation on the review was carried out using a range of mechanisms :-

- a) A postal survey was sent out to a range of stakeholders in June 2007, which included approximately 100 randomly selected tenants.
- b) Presentation and workshop at a Tenant Forum in October 2007, which was open to all tenants to attend.
- c) A telephone survey with members of the Sounding Board during November 2007 which included tenants.
- d) Through the Service Improvement Teams in December 2007.
- e) Through two tenant representatives who formed part of the review group.

As stated on the report before the Committee tonight, a copy of the consultation report is available as a background paper.

PQ2 Question from Gary Roberts to the Chair of the Committee

What plans does the Committee have to involve tenants on the proposed Housing Forum and how will they be chosen?

Reply from the Chair of the Committee

As set out in the last bullet point in paragraph 14 on page 35 of this Committee's agenda papers, it is proposed that the Committee co-opted tenant and leaseholder representatives will be invited to attend the proposed Housing Policy and Standards Forum. In addition, as can be seen on the proposed model set out on page 38, the Housing Sounding Board will also provide a route for tenants involvement to the Forum.