

***Subject to Approval***  
**A MEETING OF THE VOID PROPERTIES SUB-BOARD**

**WAS HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2007**

The Mayor (Councillor Gill) (ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully) (ex-officio), Councillors Ms Ballard (P), Burgess (P) and Mrs Wright (P).

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of The Mayor (Councillor Gill) and the Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully).

**2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Wright be appointed as Chairman of the Sub-Board for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2007-08.

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4 DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**PART II**

**6 VOID COSTS, TRENDS AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Sub-Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'A') briefing Members of the Sub-Board on issues around void costs and management. Officers explained the background regarding the history, trends and costs associated with void properties and invited questions from Members.

In response to Members' questions, the background to properties becoming substantially run down was explained in that there was sometimes an inability for officers to gain access to properties with long standing tenants. Housing Stock Condition Surveys were normally carried out every five years but officers had no right of access to properties so they were therefore unable, in some cases, to assess a property's condition for many years during which time it could have substantially deteriorated. It was suggested by Members that regular access might normally be gained to carry out gas inspections and Housing Officers observing properties could also report early signs of property deterioration.

Members were in favour of commencing renovation work on two specific properties as soon as possible and they were also invited to make site visits if they so wished. It was proposed and seconded that 15 San Diego Road and 52 Queens Road, Gosport both be renovated in the current financial year and it was suggested that funding for the work

should be made available through Prudential Borrowing.

Members suggested including a budget provision for Housing Board in the Capital Programme for the renovation of void properties each financial year and a figure of £250,000 for the 2008/09 financial year was mentioned. Officers explained that there could be budget implications regarding an allocation of a specified amount in future years because of other priorities, including the need to deliver the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and the potential for an incremental increase in void properties needing substantial work year on year.

Following concern from a Member regarding borrowing, it was confirmed that it was possible for the two void properties to be refurbished in this financial year by prioritising this additional work within the Programme. It is proposed to increase the current year's capital expenditure to allow for this additional work to be completed without any reduction in other expenditure areas through the use of prudential borrowing. This proposal will be included in the revised Housing Repairs and Improvement budget for consideration by the relevant Boards and Full Council in February 2007. A provision of £250,000 for repairs to void properties will be incorporated in the Capital Programme for the 2008/09 financial year. A variable void property renovation budget provision could be made available in future financial years which would be subject to the normal yearly budgetary procedures.

Members noted the existence of Temporary Social Housing Grants available through the Housing Corporation and, although not suitable for the two properties in question, might be worthy of investigation in the future.

RESOLVED: That -

- (a) 15 San Diego Road and 52 Queens Road, Gosport be renovated during the financial year 2007/08;
- (b) the revised Housing Repairs and Improvement budget submitted for consideration by the relevant Boards and Full Council in February 2007 be increased to accommodate the additional expenditure resulting from (a);
- (c) £250,000 be included in the Housing Board Capital Programme 2008/09 for the renovation of void properties; and
- (d) provision be made in the Capital Programme for void properties in future financial years.

The meeting commenced at 5.57pm and concluded at 6.28pm.

CHAIRMAN