

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD  
WAS HELD ON 7 MARCH 2007**

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Cully)(ex-officio), Councillors Allen (P), Burgess (P), Cully (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Gill (P), Mrs Mudie, Philpott, Rigg (P) and Mrs Wright (P).

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillors Carter and Ms Ballard would replace Councillors Philpott and Mrs Mudie for this meeting.

**43 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Mudie and Philpott.

**44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**45 MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 24 January 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

**46 DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**47 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**PART II**

**48 HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2007/08**

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'A') setting out the proposed 2007/08 Housing Repairs Programme and seeking the Board's approval for the programme.

Members' attention was drawn to the proposed changes following on from last year's Housing Repairs Programme and the key priority for investment to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. Members were pleased with the plans to raise the standard of tenants' homes.

RESOLVED: That the proposed 2007/08 Housing Repairs Programme be approved and that officers follow the principles approved at the Housing Board meeting of March 2005 as detailed below:

- (i) Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the Housing Repairs Programme where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme cannot take place;
- (ii) Where urgent works are identified after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme for which there is no identified provision, officers in consultation with the Chair of the Housing Board be permitted to vary the programme for works up to £60,000;
- (iii) Where urgent works are identified after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme for which there is no identified provision, officers in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons be permitted to vary the programme for works between £60,000 and £100,000;
- (iv) Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the approved Housing Repairs Programme where urgent works are identified after approval of the programme, for which there is no identified provision and the value of these works exceeds £100,000;
- (v) Officers be required to seek Board approval where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme is going to under or over spend by more than £100,000; and
- (vi) Members be informed of significant variations to the Programme, as outlined in (i) to (v) above, which are relevant to their Ward.

#### **49 HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2007/08**

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'B') advising Members that a formally adopted Housing Renewal Policy was required in order to implement changes to the home improvement grant system. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 required that the Authority review the Housing Renewal Policy at intervals of not more than twelve months. The Housing Renewal Policy was last approved by the Housing Board on 8 March 2006 and subsequently endorsed by the March 2006 Policy and Organisation Board.

In response to a Member's question the criteria for and relationship between Disabled Facilities grants (DFG) and Warm Front scheme grants were explained.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the new draft Housing Renewal Policy for 2007/08 be approved; and
- (ii) the Policy and Organisation Board at its meeting on 14 March 2007 be recommended to formally adopt the Housing Renewal Policy for 2007/08.

## **50 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'C') advising Members of (i) the detail of the change back to a points based system as agreed at the previous meeting of the Housing Board, (ii) to inform Members of a revised points system as discussed at the last meeting of the Housing Board and (iii) the financial and resource implications thereof.

Following Members' questions, officers explained the circumstances surrounding the need for more resources to support the implementation of the new points system in that there had been an increase in applications to register on the waiting list which required detailed responses. The additional financial resources required to effect the changeover from the existing banding system to a points based system, had been minimised by transferring staff from other areas of the Council so that only one post was likely to be needed for the system lead-in time. In conclusion, the Housing Services Manager, reported that following the recent publication of draft guidance the Government had confirmed that it was for the local housing authority to decide whether to operate a banding or points system.

Members were in favour of implementing a new points based system.

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the recommended scheme for a points based system as detailed in Appendix A of the Housing Services Manager's report and its September 2007 introduction date be approved to allow the revised system to settle in and not to make any further changes for a twelve month period from its inception;
- (ii) the resources (in relation to cost and additional staffing) within Housing Services budgets be approved; and
- (iii) the Council's Housing Association Partners and relevant statutory and voluntary agencies be advised of the changes outlined in (i) above in accordance with Section 167(7) of the Housing Act 1996.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.16pm

CHAIRMAN