

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD**  
**WAS HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2007**

The Mayor (Councillor Gill)(ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully)(ex-officio) (P), Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Burgess (P), Champion (P), Mrs Cully (Vice Chairman) (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Mrs Mudie (P), Rigg (P) and Mrs Wright (Chairman) (P).

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter

**14 APOLOGY**

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was submitted on behalf of The Mayor (Councillor Gill).

**15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**16 MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

**17 DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**PART II**

**19 HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 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') which sought approval of the grants set out in the report from Government Homelessness Grants and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). No funding would be required from the General Fund to meet these grants.

RESOLVED: That the following grants be approved and funded by government homelessness grant (unless otherwise stated):

- (i) Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau, debt service: £11,911.74 of which £3,335 to be funded from the HRA;
- (ii) Housing Aid Centre, Rowner outreach service: £2,353.05;

- (iii) Accommodation Resource Centre (Mediation and homeless education service): £7,092;
- (iv) £20,000 to an agency for the supported lodgings scheme, subject to Service Level Agreement approved by the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman and Group spokespersons. The agency to be determined through the Hampshire Supporting People tendering exercise;
- (v) A budget of £1,558 for Fareham and Gosport Family Aid to act as agent for this Council in installing and removing domestic violence alarms; and
- (vi) A budget of £420 for domestic violence alarms monitoring by Hermitage Care.

## **20 REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE LEISURE**

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'B') giving an outline of the progress that had been made in relation to the redevelopment of The Leisure at Cunningham Drive, Bridgemary, Gosport. The report touched on the consultations that had taken place with a number of parties regarding a new scheme for the site. The report sought a decision to transfer the land to Hermitage Housing Association who would carry out the redevelopment of The Leisure.

The Chairman drew attention to the Housing Board Minutes of 13 June 2007 and the first part of the resolution for the Best Value Sheltered Housing Review stating that redevelopment plans for The Leisure would include management options by the Housing Association Partner. Reference to management options was not included in the report before Members.

The Borough Solicitor advised that Members could approve the report in a general sense, at this stage, but there was uncertainty as to whether Housing Corporation approval would be possible because the final detail of the management arrangements had not been negotiated with Hermitage Housing Association. An alternative option was to defer making a decision until the full facts were available for Members' consideration. When these facts were available an Extraordinary Housing Board meeting could be arranged before the disposal of the land and within the required timescale for Housing Corporation bids.

The Board acknowledged the involvement of the Best Value Sheltered Housing Working Group and commended officers on their work so far on the proposed arrangements for the land. The Chairman advised officers that they must comply with Board decisions. Failure to do so would mean such items being referred back to ensure compliance, as with this decision to refer back the item on The Leisure.

Members expressed a preference to defer this matter until the full details of the management options for The Leisure were available. It was accepted that an Extraordinary Housing Board meeting might be necessary to keep within the timescale for the Housing Corporation's bidding round.

RESOLVED: That -

- (i) the redevelopment proposals for The Leisure be deferred pending the receipt of management option information; and
- (ii) If necessary, an Extraordinary Housing Board meeting be arranged to reconsider redevelopment proposals, including management options for The Leisure, within the timescale of the Housing Corporation bidding process.

## **21 PROCESSING DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'C') which sought to formally permit average costs to be accepted by the Private Sector Housing Team when assessing private sector (non-Gosport Borough Council tenants) Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant applications; in cases where the client would prefer a more expensive option to meet their needs.

Members were informed that disabled facilities grants were funded from the Private Sector Housing account and considered accepting average costs to be a common sense solution.

RESOLVED: That the Private Sector Housing Team be given permission to accept average costs when assessing private sector housing Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant applications in cases where the client would prefer a more expensive option to meet their needs.

## **22 INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES**

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'D') regarding the possible adoption of introductory tenancies for Gosport Borough Council stock.

Members supported the proposal for 12 month probationary tenancies for a number of reasons including that of ongoing difficulties in dealing with persistent anti-social behaviour and that it might ease numbers on the waiting list for Council properties.

The Borough Solicitor advised that eviction of tenants on introductory tenancies was possible as long as the appropriate procedures were followed.

The implementation date of the Introductory Tenancies scheme was changed to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, rather than by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, as stated in the report.

RESOLVED: That -

- (i) introductory tenancies be adopted for Gosport Borough Council stock;
- (ii) a comprehensive policy for introductory tenancies be developed for implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008; and

- (iii) an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be submitted to full Council for approval.

## **23 EXCHANGE OF LAND TRINITY GREEN AREA: THE COUNCIL AND KELSEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

By reason of special circumstances, the Chairman determined that this item be considered at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that it had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1985.

The special circumstances were created by the matter having been outstanding for sometime and it becoming critical for the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) regulations regarding use of the land; making it inappropriate to wait until the next Housing Board meeting.

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'E') which sought Housing Board approval for the exchange of land between the Council and Kelsey Housing Association.

An amendment to the report was made in that the number of tower blocks mentioned in the report should also refer to Garland Court, bringing the total to five.

Members fully supported the proposal and the Vice-Chairman, who was a member of the Kelsey Housing Association Board, considered that landscaping of the land was necessary and would enhance the areas.

RESOLVED: That -

- (i) the exchange of land between the Council and Kelsey Housing Association as detailed in the report be approved;
- (ii) the Borough Solicitor be authorised to enter into such legal documentation as necessary to effect the above decision; and
- (iii) the Policy and Organisation Board be recommended to approve the transfer of land as detailed in the Housing Services Manager's report.

## **24 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chairman advised the Board of a forthcoming report regarding the Housing Revenue Account.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.34pm

CHAIRMAN