

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD
WAS HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Smith)(ex-officio), Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Beavis (P), Bradley (P), Mrs Cully (P), Edwards (P), Geddes (P), Gill (Chairman) (P), Mrs Mudie and Philpott (P).

Also in attendance: Deputy Tenant Representative – Mrs Jan Carter

12 APOLOGIES

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

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

15 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

17 HOUSING FINANCE/SUBSIDY PRESENTATION

Councillors Mrs Forder, Hicks and Mrs Salter attended for the presentation only.

The Head of Housing Finance gave a presentation on Housing Finance and answered Members' questions.

18 PROPOSED PLANS FOR ROGERS HOUSE, LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'A') which outlined the progress made in relation to the redevelopment of Rogers House, on the progress of re-housing tenants within these properties and to outline a likely timetable for this redevelopment.

It was confirmed that all the residents had vacated Rogers House with the exception of the resident Warden. It was also confirmed that consultation had taken place with residents

and Ward Councillors on the proposed redevelopment scheme.

Members confirmed that the feedback they had received from residents who had been moved to Cockerell House was that they were delighted with their new accommodation. Officers advised that there were lifts and level access showers in this building and a Warden on call.

In answer to Members' questions concerning the proposed scheme to replace Rogers House, officers advised that the footprint of the new building would be larger than the present one but it would be positioned to make better use of the site, including giving the rooms a sunny aspect and improved landscaping. It was recognised that many residents enjoyed the benefits of gardening and consultation had taken place with the gardening charity 'Thrive' to assist with the design of both communal gardens areas and areas where residents could create their own garden plots.

In answer to a Member's question as to whether a warden would be resident in the new building, it was confirmed that, due to financial restrictions, there would be a mobile warden responsible for the new scheme. Following discussion, it was recognised that elderly residents could need help in understanding the process for summoning help should they get into difficulties and officers gave an assurance that every effort would be made to ensure residents were given sufficient assistance in understanding the call out procedure.

In answer to a question from the Tenant Representative, Members were in agreement that a representative from the Tenant Forum should be involved in the process to choose a partner for the new development and that they should have an input into the design process.

RESOLVED: That the Housing Board:

- (a) Authorise the Housing Services Manager, together with a representative of the Housing Forum, to work up proposals for new affordable housing for the site of Rogers House with Partner Registered Social Landlord's; with a view to bringing detailed proposals to Housing Board for approval once plans are sufficiently advanced; and
- (b) Authorise the continuation of the re-housing and redevelopment proposals, noting the proposed timetable and the expectation that a further report will be presented to Housing Board on this matter in January 2009.

19 GARAGE REVIEW

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'B') which provided a further overview to Housing Board on the condition of Housing Services' owned garages and proposed a Working Group be set up to discuss the formulation of a strategy and make recommendations to Housing Board.

Members considered a review of Housing Services' owned garages to be a necessary and important area of work as they were in a poor state of repair and would require considerable investment to reinstate. It was therefore important to ascertain which garages required retaining for residents and which blocks could be demolished so that the land could be put to other uses. Members also expressed concern that some run down

garage areas were giving rise to anti social behaviour with youths gathering and causing disturbance.

The Borough Solicitor explained to Members the Corporate Risk Assessment Matrix on which the information contained in Paragraph 3 of the report was based.

Some Members expressed the view that the formation of a Working Group would create an unnecessary layer of consultation which could delay the process of the review. They considered that consultation between officers, residents and Ward Councillors was the most appropriate way forward. Officers could then bring a further report to the Housing Board with recommendations for a garage strategy and action plan based on the results of the consultation.

The Chairman put the recommendations contained in the report to Members and, following a vote, recommendations 2), 3) and 4) of the report were not agreed.

RESOLVED: That Housing Board note the contents of the report.

20 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – LEE ROAD, GOSPORT

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'C') which was seeking a decision to recommend to the Policy and Organisation Board that Gosport Borough Council lease an area of land at Lee Road to Portsmouth Housing Association who would carry out the redevelopment of that area of land to provide social rented housing.

Members were in favour of building a home that would cater for the needs of a family with a disabled member. Officers confirmed that the design would contain generic features appropriate for a disabled child or adult. However, a problem could be created if the design was too specific to one family in that, should that family no longer require the property, it could be difficult to let.

RECOMMENDED: That this report be forwarded to the Policy and Organisation Board with the recommendation that a long lease of the land be granted to Portsmouth Housing Association at nil cost in lieu of grant and nomination rights.

21 AMENDMENTS TO THE HOUSING FORUM CONSTITUTION

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'D') which sought approval for the changes to the Housing Forum constitution and permission for the formal recognition of the Members and Co-opted Members as part of the Council's Tenant and Leaseholder Consultation Framework.

Members were advised that the draft Housing Forum Constitution, contained in the report at Appendix A, showed amendments in red for ease of reference. Officers confirmed that the Constitution had been amended in line with best practice consultations with other Councils.

Members commended officers for their work in creating a constitution that enabled the Forum to have a membership that fairly represented all Council Residents' groups.

The Tenant Representative requested that two members of the Housing Forum be allowed to attend future meetings of the Housing Board. Officers confirmed that, following approval of the new Constitution, this could be given consideration at the next review.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to the amendments to the Housing Forum Constitution.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 7.23pm.

CHAIRMAN