

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 14 MARCH 2011

The Mayor (Councillor Allen) (ex-officio), Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P), Councillors CK Carter (P), Mrs Cully (P), Dickson (P), Edwards, Geddes, Forder (P), Hylands (P), Jessop (P), Lane (P) and Philpott (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Hook had been nominated to replace Councillor Edwards for this meeting.

36. APOLOGIES

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Edwards.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD HELD ON 31st JANUARY 2011

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

39. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

40. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

41. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND LOCAL OFFERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager which sought approval for the changes on how tenants and leaseholders would be involved in the future.

The Board was advised that Housing Forums had suffered from a decrease in tenant participation, especially amongst younger people. It was hoped the new arrangements would bring wider tenant participation and therefore more transparency.

The Board was also informed that there would be an increase in editions of 'At Your Service' (AYS) newsletter to 4 a year. Councillors asked whether there were any staffing implications. The Housing Services Manager advised the Board that staffing levels were constantly under review, but current levels should suffice as officers' work and the AYS newsletter had become sharper and more focused.

A Councillor asked whether the consultation in December 2010 was to each tenant or

household. The Housing Services Manager confirmed that the consultation was sent to each household, with letters being addressed to both tenants in the case of joint tenancies.

Councillors enquired where the Customer Opinion Panel would be held. Officers informed the Board that this would depend on the level of attendance. Notifications of the meetings would be sent to tenants with a reply slip. The venue would be dependent on the number of reply slips received.

Councillors wondered whether lack of participation in forums reflected the good service that was provided by Gosport Borough Council. Officers advised the Board that the Council was in the top quartile for satisfaction ratings in customer surveys.

Councillors noted that estate walkabouts were a good method of customer engagement.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the proposed tenants and leaseholder involvement framework be approved; and
- b) Approval given to the Local Offers on resident involvement and repairs and maintenance and delegated responsibility for the development of Local Offers to be granted to the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair of Housing.

42. HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2011 – 12 AND ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager which sought approval of the proposed 2011 – 12 Housing Repairs Programme and associated Asset Management Strategy.

Councillors enquired whether there was a proposed increase in expenditure on capitalised voids. Officers explained that there had been more void properties than anticipated in 2010-11 and that this increase was expected to be repeated in the next financial year, budgets had been amended to reflect this change.

The Board was informed that replacement bathrooms were dealt with on a worse first basis.

The Board was also informed that (apart from 23 remaining properties requiring thermal insulation due to be completed April to June 2011) the Council had achieved its Decent Homes target.

The Chairman noted that the report clearly highlighted the Council's investment strategy in its Housing stock was effective and thanked Housing Officers continued hard work and expertise.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the proposed 2011-12 Housing Repairs Programme be approved and the impact on the Asset Management Strategy be noted; and
- b) the Housing Services Manager follow the principles as detailed below:

- i. the Housing Services Manager 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, the Housing Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman be permitted to vary the programme for works up to £100,000,
- iii. the Housing Services Manager 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
- iv. Members be informed of significant variations to the Programme as outlined in (i) to (iii) above, which are relevant to their Ward.

43. HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2011-2012

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager which sought to formally adopt the Housing Renewal Policy.

The Board was informed that Home Check was still fully funded.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) approval be given to the Housing Renewal Policy for 2011 – 2012; and
- b) authority be delegated to the Environmental Services Manager, subject to the Council's financial regulations, in consultation with the Chairman, to approve virements between capital programme budget headings in order to deal with demand.

44. ANY OTHER ITEMS

Councillor Forder thanked Housing Officers for their hard work over the last year. As a new Housing Board member he had always found Housing Officers to be approachable and willing to explain policies and the implications of decisions.

Councillor Hook thanked the Chairman for his work over the last municipal year.

The meeting ended at 6.45pm.

CHAIRMAN