

**A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD
WAS HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2011**

The Mayor (Councillor Allen) (ex-officio) (P), Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P), Councillors CK Carter (P), Mrs Cully (P), Dickson, Edwards (P), 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 Geddes and Councillor Beavis had been nominated to replace Councillor Dickson for this meeting.

27. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Geddes and Councillor Dickson.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2010

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

30. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

31. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART I

32. COUNCIL DWELLING RENTS 2011/12

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager and Housing Services Manager which sought approval for the revised 2010/11 budget and the 2011/12 budget for the Housing Revenue Account and rent levels.

The Board were advised by the Housing Services Manager of three amendments to the report:

- i) the first line on paragraph 2.1 should read: 'The HRA revised Council house maintenance budget for 2010/2011 is £2,680,340, an increase of £148,000 on the original budget.'
- ii) the last line on paragraph 5.2 should read: 'A review of those costs has been undertaken and with a view to moving closer to the objective of recovering all the Council's costs, Barclay House rent increase would be set at £30.00 per

- property per week for the financial year 2011/12.’
- iii) amendment to the date on the fourth column of the second table on pages 7/8 and 7/9 to ‘2011-12’.

Members questioned why there was a greater increase in rent for one bed properties compared to 2 or 3 bedroom properties. The Housing Services Manager explained that each property had to reach a target rate by 2015/16. One bed properties had to increase more than others to reach this rate by 2015/16.

RECOMMENDED: That, as from 4 April 2011:

- a) the average weekly Council dwelling rents to increase by 7.1%;
- b) Garage rents to increase by 7.1%; and
- c) Barclay House rent increases for 2011/12 are noted by Members.

PART II

33. PROPOSED SALE OF LAND ADJACENT TO 18 GREGSON CLOSE, GOSPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager which sought approval for the sale of the land adjacent to 18 Gregson Close, Gosport.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommend to the Policy and Organisation Board meeting on 1st February 2011, that the sale of the land adjacent to 18 Gregson Close, Gosport be approved.

34. HOUSING GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2011/12

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Financial Services Manager and Housing Services Manager which sought approval for the Boards revised 2010/11 budget, the 2010/12 budget and capital programme.

The Board was advised of an amendment to the title of Appendix 1. The title should read: ‘Review Of The Use Of Private Rented Accommodation For Those Customers Threatened With Homelessness Or Who Are Homeless’

Members questioned whether there were a sufficient number of properties for the RAPS scheme. The Housing Services Manager assured the Board that the proposed changes in service delivery would maximise the Council’s chances of securing sufficient private sector rented accommodation.

Members questioned whether there was sufficient capacity in B&B’s. The Housing Services Manager advised the Board that Officers tried to avoid using B&B’s and focused on the use of hostels for temporary accommodation. The retention of the hostel stock had provided the Council with a good level of assurance.

A Member enquired what the waiting list for Council houses currently is. The Housing Services Manager informed the Board that at the beginning of January 2011 there were 3,700 on the waiting list. This had fluctuated between 3,600 and 3,800. The Board was

advised that there had been a surge in demand for council properties at the end of 2010.

Members questioned how the Council could increase the money it received from tenants regarding damage to properties. Members were advised that through the RAPS scheme there were more inspections and a thorough inventory which assisted in reclaiming costs for damage to properties.

Members enquired whether there had been any updates on policies for Housing from the Coalition Government. The Housing Services Manager informed the Board that there had been no update. Ending of lifetime tenancies is currently out for consultation. After the consultation period Officers would bring a report to the Housing Board outlining the proposals and the implications for Gosport.

Members thanked Housing Officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Board recommend to the Policy and Organisation Board its requirements for the:
 - i) Revenue Budget (revised 2010/11 and estimate 2011/12)
 - ii) Fees and Charges for 2011/12
 - iii) Capital Programme 2010/11 to 2014/15
- b) the Board approve the homelessness grants to external bodies as follows:
 - i) Gosport Citizen Advice Bureau, debt service: £31,640 of which £3,200 to be paid from Housing Revenue Account;
 - ii) Accommodation Resource Centre or other agency determined through the Hampshire tender exercise £8,626; and
 - iii) The family intervention project operated by the Roberts Centre. Total funding required is £39,957, although Housing Revenue Budgets would meet the first £26,217; and
- c) the Board approve the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 of the report, relating to a change in use of the private rented sector for homeless households/ those threatened with homelessness.

35. ANY OTHER ITEMS

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 6.29p.m.

CHAIRMAN