

Minutes of Health & Housing Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 11 November 2010 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chairman)

Councillors:

S Brunskill	M Robinson
M Fielding	C Ross
B Hilton	G Scott
K Hind (6.52pm)	J S Sutcliffe
J Holgate	D Taylor
E M H Ranson	J Waddington

In attendance: Chief Executive, Housing Strategy Officer, Financial Services Manager.

458 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor R Hargreaves.

459 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

460 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

461 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

462 REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive reported that there had been a reference from Overview and Scrutiny Committee asking that a Performance Clinic meet to consider whether the target for bringing vacant dwellings back into use was a realistic one as this was not being met. The Performance Clinic had met and had decided that it would be a more realistic target to focus on properties that had been vacant longer than three or four years plus and that a list of these would be drawn up and circulated to Councillors for their comments. The Housing Strategy Officer would submit a report to the next meeting of Committee.

463 AMENDMENT TO LOCAL CONNECTION REQUIREMENT

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of the need to further define a local connection within a Section 106 Agreement and to set out a

proposed local connection hierarchy for developments in rural villages. The Strategic Housing Officer reported that the existing standard definitions do not specify any time periods in terms of employment and do not give priority to households that have a next of kin living in the Parish. She felt that these would be useful when deciding on nominations for properties.

Several Councillors expressed concern that recent nominations at a new scheme appeared to have been two families without any village connections.

RESOLVED: That Committee

1. accept the need to introduce a hierarchy for local connection and an additional evidence of connection through next of kin and agree these will be used in any future Section 106 Agreements; and
2. a Part II report be presented to the next meeting of this Committee on the nominations to the new houses in Mellor.

464 PILOT SHARED HOUSING SCHEME AIMED AT UNDER 25 YEAR OLDS

The Chief Executive submitted a report informing Committee of a pilot scheme aimed at housing under 25 year olds to be delivered in partnership with Ribble Valley Homes. The Housing Strategy Officer reported that one of the housing needs section's most difficult client groups to find a property is the under 25 year old age range. The difficulty for this age group being affordability as they are often on low incomes and single. In order to address this issue Ribble Valley Homes have agreed to pilot a scheme of two working under 25 year olds sharing a property. All under 25 year olds on the waiting list will be contacted to see if they would consider a share along with those young people who are seen by the Housing Needs Officers. The scheme will provide young people with their first tenancy along with support with Calico who will assist them in setting up and maintaining the tenancy. Further assistance was proposed with a grant of a maximum of £350 per person to provide basic household furnishings. Committee discussed this proposal and welcomed the pilot scheme although it was pointed out that it wasn't just under 25s that needed help but often young people still living at home at 30 years old who are not able to afford their own property. This was acknowledged but it was felt that the scheme needed to start somewhere and, if it was successful, could perhaps be extended to other age groups.

RESOLVED: That

1. Committee accept the proposal to set up shared social rented units for under 25 year olds in partnership with Ribble Valley Homes;
2. Committee agree to provide a grant of up to a maximum of £350 per person for household essentials; and
3. a further report be submitted to Committee on the success or otherwise of the pilot scheme after 12 months.

465

AFFORDABLE HOUSING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – UPDATE ON STATUS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Committee on the current status of the Memorandum following the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy with a proposal to refresh the section with the Memorandum regarding the evidence base of affordable housing need. The Housing Strategy Officer reminded Committee that back in May 2010 a report was brought to Committee recommending amendments to the memorandum that was to be published for a consultation period of six weeks. Since that date the Regional Spatial Strategy had been abolished and this had implications on the proposed amendments as they were, in the main, being introduced to make a reference link to the development plan policies set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. However, it was felt that there also needed to be an improvement to the housing need evidence base by introducing a further analysis of the housing waiting list by an analysis of the waiting list data to provide details of households registered who have a local connection to the Parish.

It was also the intention that in order to meet the requirement of H21 in identifying who the accommodation will be expected to accommodate the introduction of local connection registration events. This would give households in the Parish in housing need the opportunity to see the type of properties being developed and if the proposed scheme meets their needs they could register as a potential household. This would provide evidence of demand for the units available rather than the general need in a Parish. Councillors discussed this aspect and felt that this may well cause huge pressure on the planning system if a registration event took place before an application had been considered by the Planning Committee and might even raise expectations from people in the Parish in a development that may well be subsequently refused for good reason. The Chief Executive reported that there were major changes imminent to the planning system that will alter the way developments are considered in the future and that at the moment we were operating between two systems that made it extremely difficult.

RESOLVED: That Committee defer these proposals for the time being and reconsider when more is known about the future of the planning system.

466

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Resources submitted a report seeking Committee's approval on proposals to increase the Council's fees and charges with effect from 4 January 2011 due to the increase in the rate of VAT from that date. The proposal also looks to implement inflationary increases to charges from 4 January 2011 which would otherwise have been implemented with effect from 1 April 2011. He reported that discussions had taken place between financial services, service managers and budget holders to produce a set of proposed fees and charges relevant to this Committee.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the charges as set out in the report for implementation on 4 January 2011 with the addition of increasing the flea market charges on the same basis as the others.

467 CAPITAL MONITORING 2010/11

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing Committee of the progress to date with the capital programme for this Committee for the first six months of the current financial year. The capital evaluation sheets were included in the report giving Committee an indication of progress with the schemes.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

468 REVENUE MONITORING 2010/11

The Director of Resources submitted a report on the progress of revenue expenditure and income for the period 1 April to 30 September 2010. A comparative table between actual expenditure and the original estimate for the period was shown for Committee's information with the main variations being highlighted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

469 HEALTH PROMOTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

Councillor Hilton gave a verbal update regarding the latest options the PCT were considering on Clitheroe Community Hospital. A public consultation would take place on the options being considered and she felt it would perhaps be appropriate to invite Steve Spoerry, Chief Executive of the PCT to a future meeting of this Committee.

She also gave a brief update on the NHS reforms with regard to commissioning and GP consortia, public health and community health services.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

470 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Doreen Taylor reported that she had recently attended a meeting of the Oral Health Committee and that there was to be a new health centre built in Blackburn that would include a dentistry department.

471 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following items of business be Exempt Information Under Category 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

472 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Chief Executive submitted a report updating Committee on the affordable housing schemes in progress and proposed in the Borough. The report also provided information on grant availability and the new procedures for accessing affordable housing grants. The Housing Strategy Officer informed Committee that this report would be updated and presented to them on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

473 GENERAL REPORT GRANTS

The Chief Executive submitted details of seven disabled facilities grants, one home improvement loan and two landlord tenant grants which had been approved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).

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OH/JS