



FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

CIVIC OFFICES CIVIC WAY FAREHAM HAMPSHIRE

Minutes of the Housing Overview Panel

*Minutes of a meeting held on 22 May 2003
at the Civic Offices, Fareham*

PRESENT:

Councillor M F Godrich
(Chairman)

Councillor Mrs M R Nadolski
(Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs M E Ellerton, Miss C S Hester, D C S Swanbrow and Mrs K K Trott

Also present: Councillors E A Crouch (minutes 5, 7, 8 and 10) and H W L Pritchard (minutes 5, 7 and 10)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D J Norris and M A Prior.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment of minute 12(e) to read “.....and a presentation to members from partner organisations at a future Panel meeting.”, the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview Panel held on 13 March 2003 be confirmed and signed as a correct record. ([ho-030313-m](#)).

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made announcements on the Panel Work Programme (see also minute 13 below) and the Head of Housing Strategy and Review's meeting with private landlords.

4. APPOINTMENTS FOR 2003/2004

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on appointments to be made for 2003/04 and those made in 2002/03 that would not be required for 2003/04 (copy of report [ho-030522-r04-cbe](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

Members were reminded that the Social Housing Best Value Service Review Team had been superseded by the Balanced Housing Markets Best Value Service Review Team. This would include two representatives from the Housing Overview Panel and two from the Planning and Transportation Overview Panel.

It was AGREED:-

- (a) that the Chairman (Councillor M Godrich) and Councillor Mrs K Trott be appointed to represent the Housing Overview Panel on the Balanced Housing Markets Best Value Service Review Team;
- (b) that Councillors M Godrich and Mrs K Trott be re-appointed to serve on the Housing Strategy Co-ordination Group for 2003/04; and
- (c) that Councillors Mrs M Nadolski and Miss K Hester be re-appointed to serve on the Housing Allocation Scheme Working Party for 2003/04.

5. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

The Panel considered a report by the Chief Health and Regulatory Services Officer on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy that it is proposed to adopt as a requirement of The Regulatory Reforms (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 (copy of report [ho-030522-r05-vth](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Pritchard and Crouch addressed the Panel during the consideration of this item.

It was AGREED:-

- (a) that the Executive be advised that the Panel generally agrees with the Private Sector Housing Strategy as detailed in the report;
- (b) that the Executive be advised that the Panel feels that where grants of up to £5,000 are made for Home Repairs and Conversions (conditions apply), there should be a pay back clause if the property is sold within five years;

5. Contd.

- (c) that the Executive be requested to confirm that any form of loan or equity release is not subject to Council provision but that alternative options be explored; and
- (d) that the Executive be advised that the Panel feels that the Council's officers should not be giving financial advice.

6. HOUSING STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Panel was informed that the Government Office for the South-East (GOSE) recently wrote to the council advising that there is no requirement to submit a housing strategy and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan in July this year – the timing of submission of revised strategies will in future be a matter for agreement between GOSE and the Council. A meeting has been arranged with GOSE for 30 June 2003 to discuss how the Council might improve its housing strategy to meet the Government's "fit for purpose" assessment criteria and to agree a timetable for its submission.

Members were reminded that five Topic Groups were established to examine specific themes and prepare draft action plans to be considered during the process of preparing a new strategy. These Topic Groups had completed their task and the facilitators were currently finalising their action plans. These action plans would form the basis of wider consultation with residents, tenants, stakeholders and members at the Housing Strategy Consultation day planned for 6 June. Officers would report these action plans, the results of the Housing Strategy Consultation day and the agreed timetable for submission of a new strategy to GOSE to a future meeting of the Housing Overview Panel.

It was AGREED that it be noted that there was no longer a requirement to submit a Business Plan by July 2003 and that a revised date for submission would be agreed in the future between the Council and GOSE.

7. ABOLITION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT (LASHG)

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing on reforms to local authority housing finance (copy of report [ho-030522-r02-mge](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Crouch and Pritchard addressed the Panel during the consideration of this item.

It was AGREED:-

- (a) that the implications of abolishing LASHG be noted and the impact on providing affordable housing, especially for key workers, be particularly noted;
- (b) that if the Council were to make grants to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) it would impact upon the General Fund, so no new financial commitments could be made pending a review; and

7. Contd.

- (c) that the Panel awaits the Regional Housing Board decisions on funding arrangements and how it will impact on Fareham and, subsequent to that, the Executive's decision with reference to the Council's enabling and Social Housing Grants to RSLs.

8. HOUSING BILL – CONSULTATION ON DRAFT LEGISLATION

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing on a draft housing bill for consultation published by the Government on 31 March 2003 (copy of report [ho-030522-r03-ata](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Crouch addressed the Panel during the consideration of this item.

It was AGREED that the Executive be advised:-

- (a) that, with reference to paragraph 15 of the report, the Panel recommends that the initial qualification period for the Right to Buy should be raised to 10 years (with conditions);
- (b) that the Panel concurs with the proposed extension of the after sale repayment period for Right to Buy from 3 to 5 years;
- (c) that discount for the Right to Buy should be set at a level in keeping with authorities on the periphery of London (with conditions);
- (d) that the Panel concurs with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System as detailed in paragraphs 4-7 of the report, particularly with respect to the most vulnerable i.e. the very young and elderly;
- (e) that the Panel concurs with the proposed licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation as detailed in paragraphs 8-10 of the report;
- (f) that the Panel feels that the proposed Home Information Pack as detailed in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report is unnecessary; and
- (g) that the Panel supports the proposal to give Councils the flexibility to extend introductory tenancies by up to six months (paragraph 3).

9. HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME WORKING PARTY

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing on the Housing Allocation Scheme Working Party (copy of report [ho-030522-r07-ata](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

It was AGREED that the Working Party's proposal that it investigates the feasibility of introducing a banded scheme in addition to its review of the proposed changes to the existing points-based scheme be endorsed.

10. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing on a draft homelessness strategy (copy of report [ho-030522-r09-ata](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Pritchard and Crouch addressed the Panel during the consideration of this item.

It was AGREED that the Executive be advised:-

- (a) that the officers be requested to try again to persuade schools to accept visitors to provide advice and information about homelessness, possibly as part of the citizenship area of the curriculum, so that going into schools can be included in Objective One, task 2 of the draft implementation plan;
- (b) that document scanning be added to Objective One, task 9 of the draft implementation plan;
- (c) that the officers be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Panel on tasks 10 and 11 of Objective One of the draft implementation plan;
- (d) that the officers be requested to include in the draft implementation plan an explanation of the acronyms used in the agency(ies) responsible column;
- (e) that under Objective Three, task 4, the officers be requested to identify the sheltered accommodation that is available in a report to a future meeting of the Panel;
- (f) that the Panel in general supports the Strategy Document together with the Implementation Plan;
- (g) that the five key objectives be noted and the need for the training of members of staff at the earliest opportunity be stressed;
- (h) that the Panel approves the use of Credit Referencing Agencies and Document Scanning facilities;
- (i) that the Panel supports the creation of a new post of visiting officer to assist with prevention of homelessness work;
- (j) that the Panel supports the investigation into the feasibility of the provision of a short-term 'crash pad' for young people; and
- (k) that it be noted that the visit and presentation by the Specialist Adviser to the Homelessness Directorate of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister may generate subsequent revisions or additions to the Strategy Document.

11. REVIEW OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing on a review of affordable housing (copy of report [ho-030522-r10-mst](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

It was AGREED:-

- (a) that the officers be requested to report on the progress of the review on a regular basis;
- (b) that the Panel notes the report and that the ending of Local Authority Social Housing Grant will have a significant impact on the Council's enabling programme;
- (c) that the Panel notes that many of the potential projects identified would require funding from the "Single Pot" to be administered by the Regional Housing Board and will be subject to competition for resources; and
- (d) that the various initiatives together with windfall sites and long-term prospects be noted.

12. PERFORMANCE MONITORING INFORMATION

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Housing containing the information relating to performance monitoring requested by the Panel (copy of report [ho-030522-r08-scl](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

It was AGREED that the Director of Housing be requested to report to a future meeting of the Panel on the feasibility of introducing a rent holiday for tenants.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Finance and Resources on the Work Programme for 2003/04 (copy of report [ho-030522-r06-cbe](#) circulated with agenda and appended to signed minutes).

It was AGREED:-

- (a) that the decision to include the following items in the programme for 22 May 2003 be endorsed:

Appointments for 2003/04

Private Sector Housing Strategy

Abolition of Local Authority Social Housing Grant

Housing Bill – Consultation on Draft Legislation

13. (a) Contd.

Housing Allocation Scheme Working Party

Homelessness Strategy

Review of Affordable Housing;

(b) that the following items be included in the programme as shown:

Housing Allocation Scheme 17 July 2003

Review of Tenant Consultation 17 July 2003

Draft Housing Strategy 6 November 2003

HRA Business Plan 6 November 2003

Housing Equalities Action Plan 8 January 2004

Review of Introductory Tenancy Scheme 4 March 2004; and

(c) that the Council be informed accordingly.

(copy of the revised programme attached as an Appendix to the Minutes)

(The meeting started at 6:00pm
and ended at 9:07pm)

HOUSING OVERVIEW PANEL

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2003/04

Provisional Date	Subject	Type of Item	Training
22 May 2003	• Initial endorsement of the Annual Work Programme for 2003/04	Programming	CPA
	• Review of Affordable Housing Programme	Monitoring	
	• Strategy Development	Consultation	
	• Appointments for 2003/04	Consultation	
	• Private Sector Housing Strategy	Consultation	
	• Abolition of Local Authority Social Housing Grant	Consultation	
	• Housing Bill – Consultation on Draft Legislation	Consultation	
	• Housing Allocation Scheme Working Party	Consultation	
	• Homelessness Strategy	Consultation	
	• Performance Monitoring	Monitoring	
17 July 2003	• Ongoing review of the Work Programme	Monitoring	Strategic issues
	• Housing Investment Programme 2003	Consultation	
	• Strategy Development	Consultation	
	• Housing Allocation Scheme	Consultation	
	• Review of Tenant Consultation	Consultation	
	• Performance Monitoring	Monitoring	
11 Sept 2003	• On going review of the Work Programme	Monitoring	Allocations
	• Performance Indicators – review of 2002/03 financial year	Monitoring	
	• Performance Monitoring	Monitoring	
6 Nov 2003	• Ongoing review of the Work Programme	Monitoring	Homeless-ness
	• Bids for Social Housing Grants	Consultation	
	• Draft Housing Strategy	Consultation	
	• HRA Business Plan	Consultation	
	• Performance Monitoring	Monitoring	

Provisional Date	Subject	Type of Item	Training
8 Dec 2003	RESTRICTED AGENDA		Finance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing General Fund Revenue Budget and Service Plans 2004/05 	Consultation	
8 Jan 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary review of the Annual Work Programme 	Review	Enabling
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Indicators – review of first 6 months of 2003/04 financial year 	Monitoring	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Revenue Account Budget and Service Plans 2004/05 	Consultation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital Programme 2004/05 	Consultation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Equalities Action Plan 	Monitoring	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Monitoring 	Monitoring	
4 March 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Review of the Annual Work Programme and Draft for 2004/05 	Monitoring	Building Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Introductory Tenancy Scheme 	Consultation	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Monitoring 	Monitoring	

Other possible reports:

- Best Value: Reports to be provided as consultation proceeds
- Enabling Opportunities
- Allocation Scheme
- Tenant Consultation Arrangements
- Partner Agencies dealing with drug and alcohol issues