

**HOLLOWAY CRESCENT TASK GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 10am on 19 APRIL 2010**

Present: Councillors S Barker, R H Chamberlain, E J Godwin,  
J E Hudson and J A Redfern.

Officers in attendance: A Hurrell (Surveyor), R Millership (Head of  
Housing Services), R Procter (Democratic Services Officer) and  
J Snares (Housing Options/Homelessness Manager).

**HC6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Suzanna Wood.

**HC7 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2010 were received and signed  
by the Chairman as a correct record.

**HC8 HOLLOWAY CRESCENT NEW BUILD BUNGALOWS**

The Head of Housing Services gave an update. Work on site was due to start  
next week, dependent on the conclusion of a thorough assessment of the  
contract by the Council's legal officers. The reason for this was the contract  
was of a type which the Council had not used before, and references were  
being sought from two neighbouring authorities, Broxbourne and East  
Thames. However, officers had kept the HCA informed, and anticipated no  
difficulty with proceeding with the contract.

**HC9 UPDATE ON PARKING PROVISION**

The Head of Housing Services said the issue of parking had continued to be  
contentious with local residents. Officers had met residents last week, to  
explain, and offer reassurance on, the proposed parking arrangements, and a  
letter had been sent to all residents.

Members considered the parking arrangements as shown on the plan, and  
asked a number of questions. The Surveyor confirmed 18 parking spaces  
would be created. Members asked about the possibility of allocating parking  
bays. The Surveyor replied this was not usual Council policy in other areas of  
the district, and was not proposed in this location. Works should be finished  
in two weeks, and he hoped residents would view the parking area more  
positively once completed.

The Head of Housing Services said officers had undertaken consultation with  
affected residents, the majority of whom were happy about the proposals for  
parking. It was only a minority who remained concerned.

The Chairman thanked officers for their report, and said she was pleased the  
Council was building some affordable housing.

HC10        **VALUATION OF LAND – PHASE 2**

The valuation was not yet available from the District Valuer, and officers agreed to email members of the Task Group with the information. The land was being valued on the basis of private, social and a mixture of private and social housing.

Councillor Barker said it would be of interest to assess how the HCA regarded funding for these different types of project.

The Head of Housing Services said future funding would depend partly on the outcome of the general election. She said officers had instructed a CIH consultant to assess housing finance figures following the proposed cessation of the housing subsidy system. The finances were very complicated, and it was essential to know the full position before responding to the consultation..

The Chairman said it was disappointing that the complexity of the system necessitated a consultant's advice.

HC11        **PROPOSAL FOR PHASE 2**

The Chairman noted that without the valuation, no proposals could be put forward. The Head of Housing Services said that details for Phase 2 had been sent to a number of housing associations, but only one response had been received. The response indicated the housing association would only be interested in development if 100% affordable housing were to be provided.

Members discussed various points, including the importance of obtaining outline planning permission; the type of accommodation most in demand; and the capacity of the local school. Members considered three-bed semis were most popular, whilst officers advised two-bed semis were in demand for those on the housing waiting list. It was noted that Swan Housing had conducted a report on the Leaden Roding school, although this was likely to be out of date by now. Their methodology used by County to assess demand for school places was briefly discussed.

It was agreed no immediate decisions could be made until the housing policy of any new government was known, and whether any further housing money would be made available.

HC12        **FUTURE PROJECTS IN THE DISTRICT**

The Head of Housing Services said the following were projects which the Council itself could undertake:

- Reynolds Court, Newport – fairly straightforward conversion from bedsits to one- or two-bed properties, to remain a sheltered housing scheme, at a cost of approximately £850K
- The Close, Hatfield Heath – installation of a lift and some upgrading work, cost approximately £450K

The Head of Housing Services said there was a further potential project at Mead Court, Stansted. The Council had applied for Department of Health funding for an extra care facility in the district, and had been successful in the first bidding round. Officers were awaiting confirmation as to the requirements of the bid , and would keep Members of the group informed.

Councillor Chamberlain advised sensitive handling of publicity, including consultation with residents, for any new projects. He said an embargo on new lettings should be considered. The Chairman said any proposals following an award of funding would be submitted to the Community and Housing Committee.

The Head of Housing Services said the annual repairs programme took up the major repairs allowance, and there was no additional money over and above this amount. Another source of income was the sale of parcels of land from any Council properties which became vacant, if it was possible to do so.

Members agreed with this approach, and suggested recruiting a dedicated officer to undertake this task comprehensively. The Head of Housing Services said recruitment for the post of Development Officer would shortly be underway, and that this post could perhaps encompass such a role.

HC13

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed the Lead Officer should call the next meeting once further information was available.

The meeting ended at 5.05pm.