

**HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.30 pm on 9 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Present: Councillor M A Hibbs – Chairman.
Councillors C A Bayley, K J Clarke, S Flack, D W Gregory,
E W Hick, R M Lemon and A Marchant.

Officers in attendance:- R Chamberlain, M Cox, W Cockerell, H Frost,
R Millership and P O'Dell.

HH18 STATEMENT BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Prior to the meeting a statement was made by Mr Parry-Williams concerning parking at Rowntree Way, Saffron Walden. A copy of his comments is attached as an appendix to these Minutes.

HH19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor W F Bowker and from Mrs Bolvig-Hanson (Tenant Rep).

HH20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2004 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

HH21 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute HH4 – Rowntree Way, Saffron Walden – Parking

Councillor Bayley commented on the parking situation at Rowntree Way and said that she had some sympathy with the residents. The parking problems were not likely to go away and some solution had to be found. She considered that parking on the road was probably as dangerous as parking on the green. Other Members agreed that parking on the green might be acceptable if the area for parking was restricted to beyond the corner and was properly managed. The Committee asked that the matter continue to be pursued with Essex County Council Highways.

RESOLVED that the notices at Rowntree Way, Saffron Walden be removed and that a review of the position concerning parking be undertaken with Essex County Council Highways.

(ii) Minute HH4 – Housing Grant Assistance to Almshouses

It was noted that one application was currently being processed.

(iii) Minute HH5 – Welfare Services

It was reported that all tenants had now been visited regarding alternative payment methods and all problems had been resolved.

(iv) Minute HH6 – Intermediate Care Accommodation

It was reported that comments were now awaited from Essex County Council and the Health Authority.

HH22 STRATEGIC HOUSING ROLE OF COUNCIL

The Committee received a report, which asked Members to consider introducing an additional post to ensure that the Council had adequate resources to address the growing workload placed on the Strategic Housing Service. Currently all the work for this area fell on the Housing Policy and Enabling Officer and the workload was now unreasonable. The proposed post holder would deal with the more routine duties of the section enabling the current Housing Policy and Enabling Officer to continue more strategic duties. The report set out the job description and the financial implications. The extra cost to the Council in the current year would be approximately £7,000 that would be met from the Council's reserves.

RECOMMENDED that the Resources Committee approve the appointment of a Housing Enabling and Development Officer and the extra staffing costs involved.

HH23 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT

The Committee received the first Budgetary Control Report for 2004/05 based on data within the Council's Financial Management Systems for the period ending 31 July 2004.

HH24 STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL WORKING GROUP

The Committee was asked to appoint two Members to serve on the Stock Options Appraisal Working Group. The Working Group would be involved in the appointment of the Lead Stock Options Appraisal consultant. The Members would ensure that the interests of the Council were represented as well as the interests of the tenants.

RESOLVED that Councillors C A Bayley and R M Lemon be appointed to serve on the Stock Options Appraisal Working Group.

SALE OF LAND

At the meeting in May 2004, Members had been advised of two potential building plots adjacent to 5 and 6 Woodside, Quendon. The Council had now been granted planning permission for a detached three-bedroom house on each plot of land. Also, a strip of land adjacent to no 5 had been sold to the owners. Registered social landlords had advised that such small-scale plots would not be appropriate for them to develop because of high unit costs. Therefore, the maximum benefit would be achieved through generating a capital receipt on the sale of the plots.

Councillor Wilcock expressed concern at the way in which this site had been managed and the piecemeal manner in which the properties had been subdivided. He was now concerned that the current proposal would deprive no 6 of pedestrian access to their property. The Programme Officer explained that negotiations at this site had been complicated by Right to Buy applications for these properties. However, she was currently in discussion with interested parties for a solution to the access to no 6.

Councillor Clarke commented on what he saw as the piecemeal development of Council land. He asked whether there was a register to show all the land that the council owned in the district. The Committee was informed that work had started to put the relevant information on to the GIS system and officers would look to see if this work could be continued.

RESOLVED that the Committee agreed, in principle, to sell the two plots of land at Woodside, Quendon subject to

- (i) the agreement of the parties in relation to access for no 6 Woodside and
- (ii) a price specified by the District Valuer with appropriate terms and conditions recommended by the Executive Manager Corporate Governance.

FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN

An audit of the imported food survey had been carried out by the Food Standards Agency during September 2003. One of the findings was that the Environmental Services Service Plan for 2004/05 was not fully in accordance with the requirements of the Framework Agreement On Local Authority Food Law Enforcement published by the Agency in 2001. It had been recommended that a revised service plan be provided and that it be submitted for approval by Members. The Committee was given details of the revisions to the Plan.

RESOLVED that the adoption of the revised Service Plan be approved.

HH27 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

HH28 **TRANSFER TO LARGER ACCOMMODATION**

The Committee was asked to approve the provision of alternative accommodation for a larger family.

RESOLVED that the Committee agree to provide, in due course, alternative more suitable accommodation to the family in accordance with the report.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Statement by Mr John Parry Williams, 25 Rowntree Way, Saffron Walden

Mr Williams spoke to the Committee about problems of parking at Rowntree Way, Saffron Walden and the refusal of the Highways Authority to consider car parking on the green. He advised the Committee that he had been in contact with Sir Alan Haselhurst and the Local Government Ombudsman. He circulated photographs demonstrating the sight lines that were obstructed by cars parked on Fulfen Way. He then showed a photo showing a clear view across the green to support the argument there would be no traffic danger if car parking was allowed where the residents had asked for it. He then showed the Committee a form of ground reinforcement that the residents felt might be the answer to allowing cars on the green. It was simple eco- friendly easy to install, removable and reusable and cheaper than the budget that had been allowed for back garden car parking. He asked if the Council would look at this system.

The Executive Manager Housing Services outlined the Council's current position. The Council had been requested to look at unauthorised parking on the green and had put up "no parking" notices. A number of conversations had taken place with Essex County Council's Highways who had stressed it was not prepared under any circumstances to allow parking on the green due to problems with site displays and site lines. This Committee had looked at ways to overcome this problem and had allocated £10,000 in the budget. It had been suggested that the Council assist with the cost of providing parking on front gardens. A letter had been sent to all residents asking if they supported this option and no replies had been received. No further action had therefore been taken.