

**HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE held at 7.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 21 MARCH 2000**

Present:- Councillor R W L Stone - Chairman
Councillors Mrs C A Bayley, Mrs M A Caton, R C Dean, R D Green, A J Ketteridge, Mrs C M Little, A R Row and G Sell.

Tenant Panel Representatives:- Mr Smith and Mrs Bolvig-Hansen.

Officers in attendance:- R Chamberlain, Mrs M Cox, D Demery,
Mrs A Dellow, Ms H Frost and P J Snow.

I. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R A E Clifford, M A Hibbs and R A Merrion.

I. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2000 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

I. TENANT PANEL MEETING

The Minutes of the Joint Tenant Panel Tenant Compact Meeting held on 28 February 2000 were received.

Mrs Bolvig-Hansen read a statement on behalf of the South Uttlesford Tenants Panel. She relayed the Panel's deep concern at the recent publicity about the possible disposal of the Council's housing stock. The Panel members had felt that they had developed a good working relationship with the Council over the past six years, but now felt very mistrustful of Council Members, and one member of the Panel had resigned.

The Sub-Committee expressed concern that this situation had arisen. However, it was pointed out that the disposal of the Council's housing stock was only one of the options currently being explored to address the Council's budget deficit that would result from the loss of the negative housing subsidy. In any event, the decision would ultimately be taken by the tenants themselves in the form of a ballot.

I. THE TENANT COMPACT

The Sub-Committee was advised that it was a requirement of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) that all Councils, which had a landlord function should have in place a tenant compact by 1 April 2000. The Compact was an agreement between the Council and its tenants about the way tenants should be consulted about, and involved in, the housing services they received. Once approved, arrangements would be made to hold a Tenant Compact signing ceremony by Easter 2000 and a copy of the Compact would be enclosed in the next newsletter to tenants.

RESOLVED that the Tenant Compact be adopted and come into force on 1 April 2000.

I. VULNERABLE TENANT SUPPORT

The Sub-Committee was advised of a proposal to introduce a "Floating Support Scheme" within the District, in partnership with Essex County Council Social Services and an approved Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The scheme was aimed at assisting single people who were vulnerable and homeless to acquire skills necessary to maintain a successful tenancy. The support would be given by staff of the selected RSL who would provide intensive housing management training tailor-made to the needs of the individual tenant. The support would gradually be withdrawn as the individual became more independent. The scheme could be introduced at no extra cost to the Council and the Council would continue to have 100% nomination rights to the leased units made available to the RSL. Once support was withdrawn the tenancy would transfer back to the Council. The funding available would

initially allow six tenancies consisting of one bedroom accommodation. The success of the scheme would be monitored on a yearly basis.

RESOLVED that, subject to further discussions with Essex County Council Social Services and the selected RSL, the Council enter into a Floating Support Scheme as soon as possible.

I. BAA COMPENSATION

Members recalled that the District Council had received compensation from BAA for the loss of value of its Council housing as a result of the expansion of Stansted Airport. The Council had resolved to use this money to fund noise insulation work to Council houses within the compensation boundary and also exceptionally for some properties on the compensation boundary edge which were affected by the noise from engine testing.

Some tenants had not wanted the work to be carried out to their properties and this had left an outstanding balance of £49,646.40. Members were asked to consider how this balance should be utilised. It was noted that the compensation payment was a capital receipt and would be expected to be used for capital expenditure purposes. Officers had looked at possible ways of using the money and suggested environmental improvement work at the Mountfitchet Estate and St Edmunds Lane, Great Dunmow.

Councillor Mrs Caton asked that some of the balance be retained for noise insulation works to the outstanding properties when the tenancies of these properties changed. The Property Services Manager said that there were approximately 40 properties that had not had the insulation work and the cost was approximately £1,200 per property. Councillor Row said it could be many years before the tenancies on those houses changed, and he felt that the surplus should be used now for works that would further benefit the properties inside the boundary for which the compensation had been intended.

Councillor Mrs Caton proposed and it was duly seconded that

- "1 £15,000 be retained within the noise insulation budget for future work to the outstanding properties.
- 2 The remaining sum be allocated for improvements to houses within the compensation boundary that could be identified by officers."

Councillor Row then put an amendment that "the whole of the surplus used for improvements to houses within the compensation boundary that could be identified by officers."

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried and it was

RESOLVED that the balance of £49,646.40 be used to fund improvement work to houses within the compensation boundary that could be identified by officers.

I. VISIT TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CONTROL CENTRE

Members were advised that arrangements had been made for a visit to the North Hertfordshire District Council Control Centre in Hitchin on Tuesday 2 May 2000 at 7.00 pm. The Centre monitored all the Council's sheltered housing sites and lifeline subscribers.

I. HOMELESSNESS REPORT

Members received details of the homelessness situation for the period 1 April 1999 to 1 March 2000.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 1999/2000 AND THE PROPOSED PROGRAMMES FOR 2000/2001

The Sub-Committee was updated on the progress of the Development Programme for 1999/2000 as at 1 March 2000 and the Development Programme for 2000/2001. It was noted that the scheme, in partnership with the St Matthew Society, at Bromfield, Saffron Walden had slipped into the programme for 2000/01. A revised planning application would be submitted for a smaller single storey addition.

I. 1999/2000 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Members received the third budgetary control report for the Sub-Committee for 1999/2000.

I. 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 7 and 8 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

I. OAKROYD HOUSE GREAT DUNMOW

The Sub-Committee was advised of the difficulties of allocating vacancies at Oakroyd House, Great Dunmow.

RESOLVED that officers consider the options for the future of Oakroyd House as outlined in the report and that a report be submitted to the September meeting of the Sub-Committee.

I. FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS - WRITE OFFS

Members were given details of a number of former tenant rent debts to the Council in excess of £700.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to write off the former tenant rent arrears.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm