

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

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

Also present:- Councillor R P Chambers.

Tenant Panel Representatives:- Mr Smith and Mr Reynolds.

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

HS24 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R A E Clifford.

HS25 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2000 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

HS26 BUSINESS ARISING

Oakroyd House Great Dunmow

Following the recommendation made at the last meeting, Officers had met with the residents of Oakroyd House and the views of the Sub-Committee had been relayed. The residents were pleased that it was intended that Oakroyd House should remain as a sheltered scheme. They had also agreed in principle that the Council should try to work with a Housing Association regarding the necessary work. Discussions had now opened with various Housing Associations. Members were assured that any scheme would be discussed in detail with the residents of Oakroyd House.

HS27 DRAFT SERVICE PLANS SUMMARY AND REVENUE ESTIMATES 2001/02

The Sub-Committee received the initial draft revised estimates of direct costs and income for 2000/01 and estimates for 2001/02 for the Sub-Committee budgets. The figures had been set in the context of the Council's difficult budget situation and Overall General Fund savings target of £250,000. Also the detailed figures did not include internal recharges. The Policy and Resources Committee had set a target that the 2001/02 budget for direct expenditure

should not exceed the 2000/01 total. The draft estimate showed an increase of £16,260. This mainly comprised unavoidable variations including inflation and reduced interest receipts.

Information on the Rate Support Grant (RSG) and the level of transitional assistance from the HRA to the General Fund was not yet available.

All Business Centre Managers had been asked to identify the impact of a 5% reduction in direct expenditure and present these findings to the Budget Strategy Group. With regard to the Housing Services budget, the Budget Strategy Group had considered that expenditure within the Housing General Fund was for the most part of a statutory nature and no reductions were recommended. The Leader of the Council added that other Sub-Committees had identified savings and that a corporate view on the overall General Fund Estimates would be taken by the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 December 2000.

Members asked a number of questions about the detailed figures.

RESOLVED that the Draft Revenue Estimates be agreed and forwarded to the Community Services and Policy and Resources Committees.

HS28

UTTLESFORD HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY

At the meeting of the Sub-Committee in December 1998, it had been resolved to support a bid for matched funding for an Uttlesford Home Improvement Agency run by the Springboard Housing Association, and to provide direct financial support of £15,000 per annum. The Government had now announced the extension of the period of matched funding for an additional two years. This meant that the present scheme would now terminate one year earlier at the end of this financial year and bids had been invited for the next three year period until 2003/2004.

The need for this service in the Uttlesford area had been established, and demand was expected to increase particularly with the elderly and the disabled being helped to remain in their homes. Members drew attention to the likely implications for the Agency as a result of the "Age Matters" policy currently being put forward by the County Council which was moving away from the provision of residential care.

RESOLVED that the Council make a bid for match funding at the current level of support for the three year period starting on 1 April 2001 and continue its direct financial support for a similar period.

HS29 CAR PARKS – COUNCIL ESTATES

Members were advised that there were a number of small car parks situated on Council Housing estates which were meant to be used by tenants and their guests. Recently there had been some problems at these sites with the car parks being used for vehicle repairs or for abandoned vehicles. Although housing staff tried to deter non-locals from using the facility and to ensure that only vehicles that were road worthy and taxed were parked in these areas, there was currently no formal policy in place. The report suggested a policy to govern the use of these car parks which would assist Officers when trying to resolve parking problems. The Tenant Panels supported the principles of the proposed policy.

RESOLVED that the Sub-Committee approves a policy which would only allow taxed vehicles to be parked in Council car parks and roads, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, as outlined in the report.

HS30 MINUTES OF THE TENANT PANEL MEETINGS

The Sub-Committee received the Minutes of the South Uttlesford Tenants' AGM and Panel Meeting held on 9 October 2000 and the North Uttlesford Tenants' AGM and Panel Meeting held on 16 October 2000, and the Joint Tenant Panel Meeting regarding the Stock Options Appraisal held on 18 September 2000.

HS31 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 12A of the Act.

HS32 STANDING APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTORS

Councillor M A Hibbs declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting.

Councillor A J Ketteridge declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

The Sub-Committee was asked to approve a new Approved List of Contractors for various categories of work.

RESOLVED that the new Standing Approved List be approved.

HS33 **FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS**

Members received details of two former tenants' rent debts to the Council.

RECOMMENDED that the Policy and Resources Committee be asked to write off the list of former tenant rent arrears.

HS34 **TENDERS**

Members noted Tenders which had been approved since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.