

**HOUSING STRATEGY WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.30 pm on 1 MARCH 2006**

Present:- Councillor M A Hibbs – Chairman.
Councillors C A Bayley and E J Godwin.

Tenant Forum Representatives:- Mr G Chesham and Mrs D Cornell.

Officers in attendance:- R Chamberlain, S Clarke, W Cockerell, R Goodey,
J Mitchell, P Snow and S Walker.

HSWG6 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2005 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

HSWG7 **HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT – ACTION LIST**

Members received and considered an update of the Housing Strategy Action Plan. It was noted that the final version of the action plan would be submitted to GO-EAST by the required date.

It was noted that Members would decide, by the end of next year, whether to commission a further Housing Needs Survey. In this connection it was reported that a further survey of under occupation in a small number of selected parishes would be arranged in due course.

The Executive Manager (Housing Services) said that previous surveys had concluded that no financial incentives were needed to resolve problems of under occupation in the District. Mrs Cornell said that the feedback she had received as a tenant representative was slightly different and it was clear to her that some tenants were in need of financial assistance. This would need to be kept under review.

It was proposed to select at least two parishes where new developments were proposed to take place to make a further assessment of the need for the provision of social housing accommodation. This could result in a range of tenures and types of accommodation.

The Chairman asked about the role of development briefs in monitoring the need for affordable housing. The Executive Manager (Development Services) said that the only development brief in the pipeline was in relation to the proposed development at the Friends' School in Saffron Walden. The Chairman felt that future Section 106 Agreements must be able to substantiate the need for a housing mix incorporating social housing provision and this must be documented within the Council's own audit trail. Councillor Godwin referred to the poor design of some recent housing schemes that had been considered by the Development Control Committee. The Executive Manager (Development Services) expressed his confidence that the present

system worked well in identifying different requirements of housing need in the District.

Reference was made to the target of trying to establish a private sector landlord forum. The Principal Environmental Health Officer said that only two questionnaires had been received back as part of the recent survey, but that further options were being pursued in collaboration with Chelmsford Borough Council.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the officers would check carefully all of the tasks identified in the action plan update in relation to current actions to ensure complete accuracy. The Executive Manager (Housing Services) said that he would arrange for this to be done and for the document to be circulated to members of the Working Group as at the end of March this year before submitting the final document to GO-EAST.

HSWG8

GARAGE SITES REVIEW

Following consideration of this matter at the previous meeting, letters of consultation regarding each of the garage sites identified had been sent to relevant parish councils and ward members. The results of this exercise were summarised in the report and Members gave consideration to the future use of each of the sites listed. It was noted that housing officers had undertaken site visits to monitor levels of activity on a weekday evening and on a weekend afternoon.

Consultation had also been carried out with planning officers on the development potential of each site. The Chairman argued that this consultative process amounted to a preliminary design brief in relation to the sites in question, and it was agreed that this should be noted as part of the Housing Strategy Action Plan discussed earlier in the meeting.

Detailed consideration was then given to each of the sites identified in the report where informal parking arrangements had been made by tenants.

RECOMMENDED that

(a) proposals be prepared for the provision of affordable housing or for the sale of the site to generate a capital receipt in the following cases:-

- Newton Grove, Great Dunmow
- Rosemary Crescent, Great Dunmow
- Waldgrooms, Great Dunmow
- Woodview Road, Great Dunmow
- Burnstie Road, Felsted
- Broadfield, High Roding
- Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding (to be considered as part of the overall redevelopment of the sheltered housing site)
- Broomfields, Hatfield Heath
- Birchwood, Birchamstead (sites 1 and 2)

- Coney Acre, Rickling
- Frambury Lane, Newport (site 2)
- Manor Road, Stansted

It was agreed that the Chairman would be authorised to meet with representatives of High Roding Parish Council to discuss possible options for the development of the site at Broadfield, High Roding.

- (b) In the case of the site at Pinkneys, Chrishall, discussions take place with the Parish Council about the possibility of redevelopment of the site incorporating the provision of a shop/post office.
- (c) That the site at The Leys, Wimbish be excluded from this exercise for the time being, but that discussions take place with the Parish Council about the possibility of providing joint access arrangements to assist with future redevelopment of the village hall.
- (d) No further action be taken at the present time to pursue the development of the following sites which would continue to be designated in the foreseeable future for parking use. (In the majority of these cases, it was recognised that development would be unlikely to be a viable option):-
 - Church Lane, Little Canfield
 - The Moors, Little Dunmow
 - Chaffix, Felsted
 - Watts Close, Barnston
 - The Gossetts, Margaret Roding
 - St Martin's Close, White Roding
 - Birchwood, Birchanger (sites 3 and 4)
 - Globe Crescent, Farnham
 - Highfields, Debden
 - Frambury Lane, Newport (site 1)
 - Meadow Road, Great Chesterford

In all of the above cases, new leases would be offered on an annual review basis and environmental improvements would be considered.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm.