

MINUTES

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 MAY 2012

Present:

Councillors:

Adeleke	Mahmood
Adshead	Marshall (Chairman)
Bassadone	McLean
Conway	N Hollinghurst
Flint	Organ
Hearn	Sutton (Vice-Chairman)

Co-Opted Members:

S Parker

Officers:

Rita McGinley	Group Manager, Regulatory Services
Julie Still	Group Manager, Resident Services
Andy Vincent	Group Manager, Tenants & Leaseholders
Fiona Williamson	Group Manager, Property & Place
Dharini Chandarana	Supported Housing Team Leader
Jack Burnham	Team Leader, Strategy & Development
Trudi Coston	Member Support Officer, Democratic Services (Minutes)

The meeting began at 7:32pm.

The Chairman advised Members that the meeting would be recorded to facilitate minute taking.

OS/99/12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2012 were agreed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

OS/100/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing, and Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Regulatory Services.

OS/101/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Flint declared an interest under Item 6 as she was a Chair of the Committee for Gadebridge Youth Club.

OS/102/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

OS/103/12 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO A CALL-IN

None

OS/104/12 QUARTER FOUR PERFORMANCE REPORT - RESIDENT SERVICES

Julie Still, Group Manager of Resident Services, introduced the report. She explained that on page 7 there had been a slight error under the Diamond Jubilee heading; the date should read 4th June 2012 instead of 3rd June 2012. She also said that on page 4 at the end of the last paragraph, the words 'once the order was served' should have been added to the end.

J Still referred to page 9 which related to the Dacorum Community Safety Partnership report, and sought clarification from the Committee if they would like to receive quarterly update reports, and if there were any specific areas or topics that any Members would like to be reported to them. She said it was in light of changes to come this year with the Police and Crime Commissioners Election in November, and believed the Scrutiny process should be part of the partnership processes and Members input was greatly appreciated.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Hearn asked if the Family Intervention Officer would be a long term post.

J Still replied the post is currently funded by Hertfordshire County Council, but the Community Safety Partnership, and Dacorum Borough Council's Housing service also contributed. She said the post was a fixed term contract until the end of March next year, but they hoped to seek further funding to keep the post ongoing.

Councillor Hearn referred to page 6 and asked if there were minutes available from the two meetings of the Youth Forum and the four meetings of Berkhamsted Youth Town Council as she was very interested in what had been discussed at those meetings.

J Still said she would speak to Claire Lynch, Active Communities Lead officer, to gain access to the minutes and would forward the information on to Councillor Hearn.

Councillor Sutton referred to the figures on page 6 of the report regarding the Old Town Hall, and expressed his thanks to all involved. He felt once the bar area improvements had taken place the figures would continue to increase.

Councillor Flint declared her interest in the item before informing the Committee of 7 new volunteers at Gadebridge Youth Centre, of which they now had a senior clerk and a junior clerk. She said the project had taken approximately 2-3 years to get off the ground. They currently meet fortnightly but hoped to change to weekly meetings after an increase of volunteers.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 4 under the item of Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety. It referred to an application being made without the perpetrator's knowledge, and she questioned the right of perpetrator to defend himself.

J Still replied the injunction concerned was made in exceptional circumstances, where there was a fear or threat of violence or intimidation from the perpetrator. There would have to be evidence of that to go to Court without the perpetrators notice. She said the order would be made by the Courts if they felt there was a need, and if there was evidence showing this. She said it is only an interim order and there would be a return hearing when the documentation would be served on the individuals concerned so they had an opportunity to defend themselves.

Referring to the incorrect date for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Gadebridge Park, Councillor Marshall informed J Still that the Diamond Jubilee date was also incorrect in the Tenants News and Views.

Councillor Marshall thanked J Still for bringing the DCSP report to the Members attention

and suggested that the fact that it had not been done so previously was an oversight. She asked if the information on Neighbourhood Watch was also in progress.

J Still replied there was a restructure last year within the police and all the information is in their hands. She said they had been reminded on numerous occasions to provide the information. There is a new Community Safety Co-ordinator David Moore who has good links with the police and is pushing for the information from them.

Councillor Adeleke referred to the Olympics preparation item on page 7, and thanked J Still for all the preparation work so far. He said he had not come across any information on security for the events and asked what arrangements would be in place.

J Still replied as part of the preparations they would be working with LOCOG (The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games), Metropolitan Police, Hertfordshire Police and Bedfordshire Police. She said the progress of the Torch throughout Hemel Hempstead was the responsibility of LOCOG and Metropolitan Police. She said there would be a table top exercise on 10 May in Peterborough, there are gold, silver and bronze commands concerning the police. With Dacorum's CCTV unit, there will be 9 zones which would be managed by team leaders and there would be a range of stewards on the day. She said there had been many meetings concerning the multi agency support we had from the local police helping with public order. She added emergency planning and Rita McGinley's teams had also been involved and preparations had been extensive.

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/105/12 QUARTER FOUR PERFORMANCE REPORT – REGULATORY SERVICES

Rita McGinley, Group Manager of Regulatory Services introduced the report and explained that all their targets had been met for the fourth quarter. She announced that Licensing had transferred to the Legal Governance team, which fell under Mark Brookes, Group Manager of Legal Governance. She said Licensing and Environmental Health's work are likely to continue to overlap in future but it spread management better. She informed the Committee that the new Team Leader for Licensing had been recruited and is due to start in four weeks time. She said the vacant Licensing officer post had also been filled so the team were fully resourced.

R McGinley explained that the computer terminal servers in her department had been down for the past few weeks. She said they had started to catch up and work through the backlog but targets are likely to be an issue when the quarter one performance report is presented. She said they hope to be back on target by the quarter two performance report.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Adeleke referred to the item relating to Licensing Audit recommendations on page 22, and asked what the duration of a timely inspection is.

R McGinley responded that every premise is given a risk rating in accordance with how compliant they are, and the least compliant would receive regular inspections and would require more attention from the team. She said that there had been an issue with Licensing when she took it on around 18 months ago because the scoring had not been updated as it should have been. She said they were required to re-score any problematic premises to ensure they are given much more attention. That had now been completed, all premises had been given a rating, and the officers visit the problematic premises more often.

Councillor Marshall referred to the quarterly performance figures under reference REG02 and asked how it was possible to achieve 100% as there had been recommendations from Audit regarding the inspections.

R McGinley replied REG02 was specifically for food premises and was in line with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) requirement to ensure that all categories A and B, which are high risk premises, are all inspected on time. She said the next inspection date for those categories would be automatically generated on the system and would have to be inspected within 28 days.

Councillor Marshall asked the relevance of references LG04 to the report.

R McGinley informed the Committee that this was an error and was not relevant to the report.

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/106/12 QUARTER FOUR PERFORMANCE REPORT – HOUSING LANDLORD

Fiona Williamson, Group Manager for Property and Place, informed the Committee that Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director of Housing Landlord was on annual leave so she would cover any part of the report relating to Property and Place, and Andy Vincent would areas relating to Housing Landlord and Tenancy & Leaseholders.

F Williamson said overall there had been positive performance throughout the year. She said they had been working closely with MITIE to try and improve performance around void re-let times and in terms of their repair turnaround times.

Andy Vincent, Group Manager of Tenant & Leaseholders, said there were two indicators that had not achieved target which were rent collection and rent arrears. He said they had set themselves very challenging targets for rent collection in particular, as their aspiration this year was to reduce rent arrears overall by the end of the financial year. He said that it had been difficult during the current economic climate but they were pleased with the 99.82% that they had achieved. Unfortunately as a result of not achieving 100%, the rent arrears overall had slightly increased.

A Vincent added he hoped the Committee were pleased to see the community alarm response service had achieved the targets that were set.

Councillor Organ said the quarter four report figures were excellent. He then asked about PP10 - percentage of urgent repairs completed within government time limit, and queried what the implications were if repairs were not completed within the government time limit.

F Williamson replied there are various right to repair categories set out under the government time limit. They are based on the type of repair and the level of inconvenience or damage that may be caused as a result of the repair. She said under the right to repair scheme, compensation can be payable if repairs are not completed within the target time limit. She explained it was not a huge level of compensation but it is something the contractor should be mindful of because we would pass on any costs to them if they failed to keep to the repair targets.

Councillor McLean asked if there was a simpler system for the performance indicators instead of using the arrows as he felt they were confusing.

Councillor Organ suggested the arrows were used as a direction of travel since the prior quarter.

F Williamson confirmed that Councillor Organ's suggestion was correct, and added that the performance indicators are taken from the CorVu software so she was not sure it would be possible to change the system.

Councillor Adshead referred to indicator TL02 – Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed including current arrears brought forward, and asked how the target could be over 100%. A Vincent said that this year the performance indicator is reported slightly differently. He explained that if we had collected all the rent, the indicator would equal 100%, but if we reduced the rent arrears it would equal over 100% as we would have collected more rent overall. He said that they did not manage to collect all the rent that was due so unfortunately the rent arrears had increased. He added when the new financial year starts, the rent increases slightly and therefore the rent arrears go up.

Councillor Conway referred to indicators PP10 – percentage of urgent repairs completed within government time limits, and PP11 – average time taken to complete non urgent repairs, and explained that she knows of a tenant that had been waiting longer than the stated time for the contractor to come and finish fitting a new bathroom.

F Williamson replied the indicators relate to the repairs contract. She explained the planned maintenance contractor initially do a survey which sets out how many days it would take to do the repairs, and explained it should not normally take longer than a week for a kitchen or a bathroom. She said that would have been carried out under the Apollo contract which is not recorded within this indicator. She said she would look in to the case if Councillor Conway gave her the details.

Councillor Conway agreed.

Councillor Adeleke asked what the targets were for 2012/13 for the percentage of Community Alarm calls answered within one minute.

A Vincent said they were aiming for the same target of 97.5% which was set by the industry.

Councillor Sutton referred to PP16 – average time to re-let a council property (disabled and elderly) and PP17 – average time to re-let all properties, and asked how the new policy differed from the old system, and how much time do they expect it would save.

F Williamson said that they had undertaken a full review of the voids policy. They had looked at the whole process to see what worked well, what did not, and found the best solution. She explained that over the past couple of years there had been more asbestos legislation and they have had to carry out testing where they may disturb asbestos in a building. They have also introduced asbestos surveys as part of the voids process which unfortunately gave an extra two days on top of the targets. She said they had looked at whether they can access properties prior to tenants returning the keys to see if there is any work or testing that can be undertaken. She said they are looking at providing tenants who are transferring to another property or had given a notice to quit with information on the standard they are expected to leave the property in to reduce clearance time. Unfortunately clearance time can be difficult in circumstances of abandonment or death. They have also looked at the Choice Based Lettings policy to see if it can be extended to adapted properties and sheltered schemes. She explained that currently they try to retain properties with extensive adaptations for people that need them.

Councillor Marshall asked if sheltered and adapted properties are currently being advertised.

A Vincent replied sheltered properties are advertised through 'Moving with Dacorum' but adapted properties aren't. He explained that they are looking to change that to enable people requiring adaptations to express their choice.

Councillor Marshall asked the officers to remind the Committee how 'Moving with Dacorum' was advertised.

A Vincent explained 'Moving with Dacorum' was a website where all void properties are advertised so applicants on the housing waiting list can express their interest in a property that suited their need.

J Burnham said he was going to a conference on 10 May with the I.T provider for 'Moving with Dacorum' to look at how the software works and how to make best use of the system.

Councillor Marshall asked if there was any feedback to see how elderly applicants cope with

the online system.

J Burnham said that last time they had checked 99% of bids were made through the internet site rather than via telephone or in person. He explained there was a list of vulnerable applicants that have a paper copy of the advert posted to them each week which people are welcome to request to be on. The adverts are also available in the Customer Service Unit and the Customer Service team are currently undertaking further training to enable them to provide customers with additional assistance.

Councillor Hearn asked if applicants that received a paper copy of the advert were disadvantaged to people using the online system.

J Burnham replied the bidding opened every Thursday and closes the following Monday. Applicants can apply for properties any time between those days and there would be no disadvantages as the list is prioritised in order of points.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 36 regarding the development of Local Offers and asked when it would be reviewed and via what mechanism.

A Vincent replied Local Offers were introduced in April 2011 as a government requirement. He said they were satisfied that the current Local Offers that existed were still the priorities of tenants which were the repairs and maintenance service, parking, litter picking, and involving young people.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 37 and asked if the funding for Age Concern was in addition to the annual grant.

A Vincent confirmed it was.

Councillor Mahmood queried what would happen if one party did not deliver a service for any reason and if there would be an alternative option.

A Vincent replied each year they undertake a review of each service to see what they are getting for their money. If they are satisfied they would continue, but if not, they would look to withdraw funding and consider alternative arrangements.

Councillor Bassadone referred to page 40 under reference 6.2 and sought clarification on the word "behaviours".

A Vincent explained it related to the behaviour of employees and what is expected of all staff in a working environment.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 38 under reference 4.4 and suggested the content was checked by housing before being uploaded on to the website.

Councillor Bassadone noted various split infinitives throughout the report.

A Vincent said they did have the objectives for 2012/13 checked by the Plain English Campaign.

Councillor Sutton referred to page 43 and sought clarification for the meaning of GIS mapping.

F Williamson replied it stood for Geographical Information System.

Councillor Marshall asked when the Strategic Tenancy Policy was going for consultation.

J Burnham said it was currently being re-worded and re-designed into the corporate format and it will then be checked by the consultation officer within the Communications department. He said they are hoping it will go out approximately mid-late June, and they would give people around 8-10 weeks to respond.

S Parker referred to page 26 regarding the percentage of tenants satisfied with the level of repair, and requested to know the volume of the respondents.

F Williamson replied they undertake 200 satisfaction call surveys each month in total, which is split in half between DBC and MITIE to give an overall picture.

S Parker asked how many repairs there were in each quarter.

F Williamson replied it was calculated on a monthly basis and the number of repairs varies between 1,800 and 2,300.

S Parker referred back to page 26 regarding the percentage of repair completed right first time and asked how it would be logged on the system if a fault reoccurred, as he believed a new repair would be logged each time instead of re-opening the existing repair log.

F Williamson said in that incidence it would be classed as a re-call and MITIE would pass the details on to DBC. She explained that re-calls were given a different code so they can be tracked separately.

Councillor Adshead asked how they decided on which 200 tenants to select for the call surveys.

F Williamson explained that they select 200 randomly and MITIE are sent by DBC a spreadsheet of tenants to call so there was no influence on who is called. It also means people are not contacted twice.

Councillor N Hollinghurst queried if using an independent organisation had been considered or 'mystery shoppers' to do the survey calls as he felt the satisfaction figures were amazingly high and caused scepticism.

F Williamson replied they had looked in to having an independent panel of tenant representatives who would provide the scrutiny to either undertake the surveys or scrutinise the results when they are presented.

Councillor Organ asked who logged the repairs as re-calls.

F Williamson replied the Customer Service Unit log all the repairs from the free-phone number and they make the determination whether it was a new or existing repair.

Councillor Flint sought clarification on planned repairs for boilers. She explained she had been informed of a change over of a back boiler to a gas boiler fitted in the airing cupboard of an elderly tenants' bungalow which was serviced approximately 3-4 weeks ago and was condemned. She said she had concerns that it could happen with other surrounding properties.

F Williamson said they use a separate contractor to do the installation. She agreed to take the details from Councillor Flint and look in to it.

Councillor Marshall asked F Williamson to email the Committee and advise whether it was a one off issue or if it was an issue that could effect other properties.

Councillor N Hollinghurst said that if the statistics that had been reported were correct, then there should be no problem.

S Parker asked how many people had been lost from the housing waiting list after the re-registration process as it had not been noted in the report.

A Vincent said the reason it was not included in the report was because it does not relate to the housing landlord service. .

J Burnham replied there had been just over 6,000 applications in the last 7 months, of which approximately 5,200 were active. He said they were going to prepare a strategic housing update for this meeting but unfortunately Julia Hedger, Group Manager for Strategic Housing, had been out of the office for 6 weeks so she was not able to prepare the update but he said it will be presented at the next meeting.

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/107/12 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN

Fiona Williamson introduced the report on behalf of Elliott Brooks. She explained Elliott had

drafted the business plan which under self financing gave an opportunity to look more strategically at the way we invest in our stock. It also gave some scope to look at the estates and the potential for development of new housing. She explained that the report outlined the Council's visions and priorities, including the provision of affordable housing, and ensuring we had a high quality, well maintained and sustainable housing stock.

She explained that within the body of report there was a large element focused on the stock and asset management strategy and from the external factors and government policies, which are likely to influence the way we manage our stock over the next 30 year period.

She said it included a wider view of estates and environmental improvements, looking at the quality of sheltered schemes, provision of accommodation, demand for the accommodation, and energy efficiency.

F Williamson explained the second part of the report focused on the loan portfolio and how they are going to finance the debt during the 30 year period. It provided details about the loan portfolio, including some borrowing from the General Fund which will be paid back over the first five years of the business plan.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Bassadone noted various grammatical errors throughout the draft business plan. She then referred to appendix A and sought clarification under the heading bad debt provision as it was not clear whether it should be state years 14 & 15 of the 30 year plan, or year 2014/15.

F Williamson replied it should read 2014/15 and confirmed she would amend it.

Councillor Adshead referred to the content page of the business plan and asked why there were no page numbers.

F Williamson replied it was awaiting the final page numbering once all the appendices and tables were formatted within the report.

S Parker referred to page 57 and asked for clarification as he believed the STAR survey was circulated after the decision for self financing was made.

A Vincent said they had asked tenants through the STAR survey what their priorities were in relation to improvements to their homes.

S Parker said the TLC did not agree to the self financing and the report implies that, following the STAR survey, the TLC did.

Councillor Marshall agreed the wording was wrong and requested it to be amended.

Councillor N Hollinghurst referred to page 63 regarding Right to Buy and asked if we had a method of tracking the properties because the Council has the right to claw back on the discount if the Right to Buy property is sold on quickly.

A Vincent said legal services dealt with sales through Right to Buy and he did not have any information regarding the tracking of sales, but agreed he would speak to the legal department and circulate the answer to the Committee.

Councillor Flint said she was looking for information on increased repairs, planned repairs etc through the report as it was a priority for tenants. She said there appeared to be very little information with regards to the future of planned repairs within the report.

F Williamson said the plan provided an overview in terms of areas for investment. She said in terms of the programmes of work, until the asset management system is fully loaded with all the data, they were not able to produce the reports which would show the 30 year programme. She said it was work in progress so it was currently unavailable.

Councillor Flint asked if it would be a matter of years until the system was in place.

F Williamson said the asset management system was currently in its test phase and the stock condition information had been loaded but they are currently loading the information

they had from the gas servicing contract. She said appendix B showed the Dacorum Standard's level of investment over the 30 year period.
Councillor Flint asked if it was correct that we only had six 5 bedroom houses.
F Williamson confirmed that was correct.

Councillor Marshall asked if they could provide a schedule of planned maintenance in the next six months.

F Williamson replied the information should be loaded on to the system and should go live after testing at the end of June. She said they should be able to start generating reports in July/August .

Councillor Marshall suggested a report in autumn.

F Williamson agreed.

Councillor N Hollinghurst referred to the information relating to un-adopted roads. He said if we had an area of rented housing which is subject to Right to Buy, it could become a problem as some are owner occupiers and some are not. He said it could become difficult to get the agreement of the owner occupier regarding the upkeep of the road. He was pleased to see it in the plan but queried how many un-adopted roads there were, and if there was an active programme to try and reduce that number to avoid a problematic future.

F Williamson responded part of the work being done around GIS mapping is the identification of un-adopted roads as recently there had been disputes with Hertfordshire County Council.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 58 regarding the increase of non-decent homes, and asked for an approximate figure.

F Williamson suggested an early indication of approximately 3-5%.

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/108/12 SAFETY MEASURES & SUPPORT FOR TENANTS IN SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

Andy Vincent, Housing Landlord Group Manager, introduced the report and explained they were requested to cover the following areas throughout the report: fire safety in sheltered schemes, the process of tenants moving in to a sheltered property, support available to tenants living in sheltered accommodation, and the security of the accommodation.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Marshall thanked the officers for a very good and detailed report and explained that the Committee is looking to be assured that proper processes are currently in place.

Councillor Bassadone referred to appendix 1 of the report and suggested that if the list would be available to the public, each sentence should start with a capital letter as some started with lower case letters.

Councillor Conway referred to page 78 and asked what the password was as she was not aware there was a password.

D Chandarana said she could not inform the Committee of the password but explained each block had a password system and each visitor entering the block would need to provide Eldercare with the password. She said the password would be given to officers and carers, but they remain very careful of who is given the password.

Councillor Marshall asked how the emergency services would get gain entry to the block.

D Chandarana replied they would be let in by Eldercare as Eldercare would be informed of any emergency.

Councillor Flint asked if there had been any incidents where the stay-put policy in the event of a fire had been used.

D Chandarana replied she would expect it to be used in every incidence unless the fire is in the location of the resident. She added the stay-put policy is being reviewed with the Fire Service which is why it is currently in draft.

Councillor Flint said in her experience the tenants seem to cope well with the stay-put policy but felt relations, carers or friends who visit are not as well informed.

D Chandarana replied they were looking at developing an information pack or leaflet for relatives, friends and carers which will give information about how the stay-put policy works.

A Vincent added the stay-put policy had always been successful so far.

Councillor Sutton noted that there had been no reference to contacting Eldercare in the draft stay-put policy. He suggested that tenants could contact Eldercare if they had the facility to do so as their response time had been considerably better than contacting 999.

Councillor Marshall asked how the Fire Service would know who was in the block if there was a fire in the building.

D Chandarana said they recently discussed that with the Fire Service and informed them that they can gain access to details of every tenant living within each block. She said they are working with them further regarding the transfer of the information to them so they can have information about each individual scheme and be aware of the layout.

A Vincent reiterated that the Fire Service had access to detailed information regarding every tenant in every scheme.

Councillor Marshall asked if it included fire crews from stations outside the area.

A Vincent confirmed all officers within the Fire Service can have access to the information.

Councillor Marshall said the list under reference 2.3 was very helpful. She asked if there was a paper checklist for the first visit which was signed by the Supported Housing officer and the tenant.

D Chandarana confirmed that there is a checklist signed by both the supporting housing officer and the tenant.

Councillor Marshall asked if the community alarm system was demonstrated and tested on day one.

D Chandarana said tenants are given a physical demonstration and the alarm is tested as part of the demonstration as it is a live system.

Councillor Adshead queried what would happen if the emergency services knocked on a tenant's door and there was no response, and if there was a way to tell who was inside block.

D Chandarana replied tenants are not expected to log in and out of the block as it is independent living. She said tenants are usually vigilant and are very aware of the fire evacuation system. She said the Fire Brigade may need to knock down doors in the event of a fire.

Councillor Flint added some elderly tenants have key safes which could be useful.

Councillor Adeleke asked at what point do they receive an incident report and in what format.

A Vincent replied a housing landlord management reporting form is filled in after any major incident so they can evaluate what had happened and what action had been taken. The reports are completed by the officers involved and are passed to senior management the next working day.

Councillor Marshall referred to item 4.4 regarding the checking of Category Two properties and asked what happened with checks for Category One properties.

D Chandarana said she believed Category One properties had smoke detectors in them which are checked by the Supported Housing team on a monthly basis.

Councillor Flint asked if would be possible to have information on general need flats as the information presented only covered sheltered properties.

A Vincent agreed they would prepare a report if required.

F Williamson said they had been working with the Fire Brigade looking at all blocks of flats. She said they do have fire risk assessments undertaken on an annual basis so that they carry out any work required to maintain the blocks of flats. She said the Fire Brigade recommended they adopt a similar stay-put policy.

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/109/12 UPDATE ON COUNCIL NEW BUILD PROGRAMME

Jack Burnham, Team Leader of Strategy & Development, introduced the report and explained that the new build business plan, which was a Part 2 item presented at Cabinet in March, and was agreed. The Cabinet report contained details on the development of 45 new Council homes and a 33 bed hostel. He said they had researched and had been looking at a range of sites with potential to build on.

J Burnham explained they had recently met with the Group Manager of Procurement, and had signed up with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Development Partner Protocol which is a pre-procured panel of contractors. He said they can use the panel to procure the contractor which cuts the procurement time down to approximately 12-15 weeks. They had been in contact with the HCA to arrange to sign contracts and arrange the grant funding, however they had experienced difficulties to set up the meeting so Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director of Housing & Regeneration, had been in touch with the head of the HCA for the East and South East region to find out what the problem was.

J Burnham sought clarification from the Committee as to when they would like to receive updates on the progression of the programme. He said they were obliged to meet with the HCA every quarter and suggested the Committee may want to do the same.

Key points of discussion

Councillor Marshall asked what eco standard the Council were proposing to build to.

J Burnham replied the minimum standard code for sustainable homes was level 3 and that was required to get the funding from the HCA.

Councillor Marshall asked how they select RSL's to work with, and how often they review the selection. She said that information on this had been requested to be incorporated in this report.

J Burnham apologised as he was not aware of what was requested to be reported on as Julia Hedger had been out of the office and had not been able to brief him. He explained since Mike Evans had been working through the garage programme, he felt registered providers should purchase the site rather than have the site transferred at nil value. He said in relation to choosing registered providers to work with, all schemes are currently developed by Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association. He said they had been working very closely with Affinity Sutton, and North Herts homes had also expressed interest in working with them. He said Hastoe Housing Association had also expressed an interest to work with the Council in the rural areas. He said any Housing Association that expressed an

interest in working with them would be invited in for a meeting.
Councillor Flint requested to see a report solely on the providers we work with.
J Burnham agreed he could prepare the report and bring it to the next Committee meeting.

Councillor Marshall said the response to the question regarding the eco standard was different to the requirement in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document. She said there seemed to be two standards but suggested it could be picked up in the next agenda item.

Outcome

The Committee agreed they would require regular updates.

The report was noted.

OS/110/12 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT & HOUSING NEEDS STUDY UPDATE

Jack Burnham, Team Leader for Strategy & Development, introduced the report and explained that the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document was a statutory obligation that the Council had to produce under the National Planning Policy Framework and the Town and County Planning Act. He explained the last Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in 2011 and set a requirement of 35% affordable housing as a target for certain developments. The new Supplementary Planning Document is to operate with the emerging Core Strategy and sets out slightly different targets. The Council has commissioned a new Housing Market and Needs assessment to update to the 2003 survey. He said there is a move away from the Strategic Housing Market assessment which was finished in 2008 as it was on a sub-regional basis. He said there were appendices on the Consultation questions.

He drew the Committee's attention to the project plan timeline and explained the report would go to the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June, and would also be going to Cabinet in June. He said he would take any comments about the report to those Committees.

J Burnham referred to section three of the report regarding housing needs and explained the table under item 3.2 highlighted that 653 affordable homes were required per annum, but since it was produced, the housing market needs assessment has been further scrutinised and the Council has been given a figure of 750 affordable homes required to be delivered per annum.

Key points of discussion

Councillor N Hollinghurst said he was very pleased to see a clear definition of Affordable Housing as he had been researching the definitions for some time. He referred to page 98 and raised some areas of concern. Councillor N Hollinghurst referred to the retention of the discount of "affordable housing" homes in perpetuity for future purchasers and he was concerned that this covenant was being disregarded in subsequent sales. He also said Hastoe Housing Association seemed well organised and had very nice properties but felt they do not concentrate enough on Hertfordshire and suggested it was ensured that their interest was genuine in wanting to provide a service to rural areas. He suggested the team work very closely and carefully with colleagues in the planning department. He also felt that as we are going down through the housing self financing route, we must ensure we track everything to maintain the capital that we have to finance future developments.

J Burnham replied he had personal experience in working with Hastoe Housing Association and said they are on the list of Registered Providers for developing new homes. He said they had been at regular meetings with them and were keeping track of their progress.

Councillor Adeleke referred to page 103 and asked what our financial contributions are to the joint district wide Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Viability Assessment.

J Burnham replied it was being commissioned separately through planning. He said it had been paid for by 9 out of 10 of Hertfordshire's Local Authorities based on the CIL.

Councillor Adeleke referred to page 108 relating to housing need, and expressed his concern that the power to decide is with only one person, which is stated as the housing manager.

J Burnham replied he would look in to changing the wording to state the Housing Allocations Policy instead of the housing manager to avoid confusion.

Councillor Marshall referred to the bottom of page 99, and asked what the figures were for the 2001 strategy.

J Burnham replied the 2001 strategy was set nationally which was 14 dwellings or under.

Councillor Marshall asked if it was either 33% or 35%.

J Burnham responded 35%.

Councillor Bassadone referred to page 109 and asked what the italic numbering down the left hand side referred to.

J Burnham said it was a slight error but it related to part of the section 106 agreement.

Councillor Bassadone suggested the reasoning was stated so it was made clearer.

J Burnham agreed he would amend.

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/111/12 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE, WORKING WITH REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS & AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEFINITIONS

Outcome

The report was noted.

OS/112/12 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme and made the following additions:

July

1. STAR Survey Presentation – Elliott Brooks/ Carolyn Leech
2. Tenant Involvement Strategy – Carolyn Leech

October

3. Sports Centre Trust Annual Report including Little Hay & XC – David Gill

It was moved by Councillor Marshall and seconded by Councillor Mrs Bassadone to move to Part II of the meeting and to exclude the public.

OS/113/12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the item in Part II of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view

of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to: Item 15 That the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, paragraph 3.

OS/114/12 PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING

Full details can be found in the Part II minutes.

Outcome

The report was noted.

The meeting ended at 9:56 pm.