

**HOUSING SUB COMMITTEE  
19 May 1998**

Present: Councillors Angell, Flood, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hirst, Jones,  
Mrs Pile, Ryan, Mrs Shillcock and Worrall

Also Present: Councillor Ward

1. **Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Angell be elected as Chairman of the Sub Committee for the municipal year 1998/99.

**COUNCILLOR ANGELL IN THE CHAIR**

2. **Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Worrall be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Sub Committee for the municipal year 1998/99.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 4 March 1998 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. **123 Yorktown Road, Sandhurst (Item 2)**

The Director of Social Services & Housing submitted a report seeking the Sub Committee's further instructions further to minute 54 (4 March 1998) with regard to the occupation of Units at 123 Yorktown Road, Sandhurst exclusively by older residents.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the Council invites a developer to promote a shared ownership scheme for 8 flats at 123 Yorktown Road, Sandhurst;
- (ii) should the prepared scheme for the 8 be shown to be unviable as offering shared ownership opportunities, then the Housing Association be not supported with Local Authority Social Housing Grant on this occasion; and
- (iii) the amount of social housing grant be agreed by the Director of Social Services & Housing in consultation with the Chairman.

5. **Housing Major Repair & Improvement Programme (Item 1)**

The Sub Committee considered a report on progress on schemes included in the 1996/97 and 1997/98 programme which had not yet been reported as completed. Members were also asked to give consideration to proposals to meet the needs of the 1998/99 programme for the improvement of the Council's housing stock, which

had been reported to the Committee on 4 March and subsequently approved by the Strategy & Policy Committee at its meeting on 19 March 1998.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the progress of previously approved schemes be noted;
- (ii) the programme for further installation of central heating in houses and flats throughout the borough, where there are no existing systems, or they are inadequate or obsolete be approved and the Borough Surveyor, in consultation with the Chairman be authorised to accept the lowest tender;
- (iii) the scheme to replace windows in dwellings throughout the Borough be approved and the Borough Surveyor, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the lowest tender for each contract;
- (iv) the scheme to replace windows in four blocks of flats in Wordsworth be approved and the Director of Social Services & Housing, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the lowest tender;
- (v) the scheme for anti condensation work to 43-50 Naseby, Hanworth be approved;
- (vi) the scheme to improve flats in Culham House be approved and the Borough Surveyor, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the lowest tender;
- (vii) the scheme to provide a secondary means of escape staircase to Campion House be authorised and the Borough Surveyor, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept the lowest tender; and
- (viii) the continuing work to improve electrical installations in dwellings in Harmans Water be approved and SO67 that SO65, requiring competitive quotations, shall not apply providing the existing contractor carries out the work using unchanged rates or subject to an acceptable increase in rates.

**6. Items for Information**

The Sub Committee received and noted the following information items:

- Best Value and Compulsory Competitive Tendering in Housing Management (Item 3)
- Development Programme - Position Statement (Item 4)
- Housing Statistics (Item 5)
- Loan Initiative for Improvement in Energy Efficiency (Item 6)

**7. Exclusion of Public and Press**

**RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the

consideration of the following items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following categories of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- |      |   |                               |
|------|---|-------------------------------|
| (3)  | Information relating to occupiers or former occupiers of Council Property       | (Items 7, 8, 12, 14, 15 & 16) |
| (9)  | Terms proposed for a contract   | (Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13) |
| (14) | Information regarding the service of a notice by which improvements are imposed | (Item 14)                     |

**8. Difficult to Let Properties (Item 7)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing reported that there were properties which were specifically designated for older people which were generally not linked to the Forestcare emergency alarm system, although some had door entry check systems. It is these flats that were the most difficult to let. Accordingly, the Sub Committee was asked to give consideration to the problems in detail and to a number of proposed solutions, which included a pilot scheme to consult residents on the re-designation of certain first floor flats in the Borough.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) a pilot scheme to consult residents on the re-designation of flats, as reported, be implemented;
- (ii) the flats to be included be as detailed in the officers report; and
- (iii) the pilot scheme be evaluated in consultation with the Chairman and appropriate action a progress report be submitted to the next meeting of Sub Committee.

**9. PACT Bracknell (Item 8)**

In a report containing exempt information, and further to minute 42 (20 January 1998) the Director of Social Services & Housing reported on proposals put forward by Parents and children Together (PACT) to take over the existing project which aimed to meet needs of very young lone mothers with support requirements.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the project proposed by PACT be supported, subject to:
  - (a) suitable funding being available; and
  - (b) the arrangements be finalised by 30 June 1998.
- (ii) in the event of no agreement being concluded the property be returned to the allocations pool.

**10. Disposal of Property at Rectory Close (Item 9)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing updated Members on the current position regarding the proposal to dispose of a

specified property at Rectory Close to the East Berkshire NHS Trust and detailed the circumstances by which the Trust were now of the view that the property was not suitable to their needs.

Members were reminded that the property, which was a miscellaneous property, currently unoccupied, was in need of substantial works at a cost of approximately £50,000 for which there was no provision in the current housing repair or capital programme.

However, another NHS Trust provider, the West Berkshire Priority Care Service NHS Trust, was seeking a suitable site for a group of residents for whom they had responsibility for re-provision from Church Hill House and were interested in proceeding with the acquisition and redevelopment of the site.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Finance & Property Sub Committee be requested to approve the sale of the freehold of the property at Rectory Close, as detailed in the officers report, for a sum of £65,000 to the West Berkshire Priority Care Services NHS Trust to enable the re-development of the site as a group home for residents leaving Church Hill House.

**11. Development of Social Housing Scheme - Land at Downside, Wildridings Road, Bracknell (Item 10)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Sub Committee were reminded that at its meeting on 4 March 1997 the Sub Committee had approved an allocation of £185,000 to the Samuel Lewis Housing Trust to assist with the funding of the land acquisition costs to provide a further development of social housing. The Sub Committee was now asked to approve local authority social housing grant in the sum of £282,705 (+/- 10%) to assist with the development of the scheme for which the Housing Corporation had already issued grant confirmation.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) an allocation of £282,705 (+/- 10%) from the 1998/99 Local Authority Social Housing Grant budget be approved for the construction of a scheme giving 14 x 2 bed flats to the Samuel Lewis Housing Trust; and
- (ii) the Council enter into a Nomination Agreement giving 100% nomination rights on initial lets and 75% of subsequent lets for people on the Council's Housing Register or existing Council tenants.

**12. Pinefields Factory Site, Pinefields Close, Crowthorne (Item 11)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing sought approval of options for the possible redevelopment of the site of a former factory in Pinefields Close to provide an affordable housing scheme.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The views of the owners and tenants of the garage block be sought on the inclusion of the site of the garage block within any re-development scheme for the redundant factory site and the re-provision of new garages;

- (ii) In the event of the co-operation of all the garage owners and tenants, an outline planning application be prepared for a scheme which gives 7 dwellings in a mix of 2 and 3 bedroomed houses and the replacement of the same number of garages which are currently used;
- (iii) That the agreement of the tenants of 34, 36, 38 Church Street be sought to reduce the length of their back gardens by approximately 5 metres;
- (iv) In the event of the reluctance of any existing garage owners or tenants, an outline planning application be prepared for a scheme which gives 5 dwellings in a mix of 2 and 3 bedroomed houses within the confines of the factory site; and
- (v) officers prepare the necessary documentation to seek proposals from up to 4 Registered Social Landlords for the re-development from the site with schemes offering shared ownership opportunities.

**13. Redevelopment of Pondmoor Road Garages (Item 12)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing sought the Sub Committee's approval to the preparation of the necessary documentation to carry out any surveys and submit outline planning applications with a view to inviting proposals from Registered Social Landlords for the redevelopment of the former garage site in Pondmoor Road for an affordable housing scheme.

In giving consideration to this matter Members requested that a formal presentation from the Registered Social Landlords should be given at the appropriate time.

**RESOLVED** that in order to invite proposals from Registered Social Landlords, a site survey be carried out, outline planning applications be submitted and a brief of the Council's requirements be prepared with a progress report being submitted to the next meeting of the Sub Committee.

**14. The Future of Wroxton, London Road and Silver Springs, Bagshot Road, Bracknell (Item 13)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing updated Members on the current position with regard to the above two properties.

The Sub Committee noted that officers had been negotiating with Berkshire Health Authority providers to enable Wroxton to be used as a group home for residents leaving Church Hill House, however, the property had not met the necessary requirements. Silver Springs was also a detached property, but was in poor condition and would require expenditure in the order of £20/30,000 to bring it up to habitable standard for which there was no identified budget.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) subject to the consent of the Secretary of State, Wroxton be sold on the open market with the proceeds benefiting the general fund as a capital receipt; and

- (ii) subject to an investigation regarding development potential, a report to the Chairman by 31 May 1998 and the consent of the Secretary of State, Silver Springs be sold on the open market, the proceeds benefiting the general fund as a capital receipt.

**15. Public Safety Site Clearance - Garages 106 - 110 Victoria Road (Item 14)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing appraised Members of the issue of public safety which had recently arisen at the above site and sought authority for the demolition and clearance of the site, including the acquisition of a privately owned garage which would need the authority of the Finance & Property Sub Committee as it was outside of the Housing Revenue Account fund.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) the Finance & Property Sub Committee be requested to grant authority for the acquisition of the garage at 109 Victoria Road and the demolition and clearance of this site, in accordance with the terms described in the officers' report; and
- (ii) subject to (i) above the Director of Social Services & Housing undertake the works specified in the report.

**16. Tenants Debts - Request to be Written Off ( Item 15)**

In a report containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services & Housing sought the Sub Committee's permission to write off a number of debts as appropriate and, for a trial period, to refer past tenant debts to a 'Commission only' debt recovery agency prior to write off.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) that the debts detailed in the officer's report be written off; and
- (ii) for a trial period, past tenant debts be referred to a Commission only debt recovery agency before being written off and results reported to a future meeting of the Sub Committee.

**17. Possession Proceedings (Item 16)**

The Sub Committee received and noted a report on possession proceedings.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and  
concluded at 9.30pm.

**CHAIRMAN**