

**SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSITION & HOUSING/HOUSING
SUB COMMITTEE - JOINT MEETING
4 FEBRUARY 1998**

Present: Councillor Angell (Chairman), Councillors Bayle, Egan, Harrison,
Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Mrs Hirst, Jones, McCormack, Mrs Pile,
Mrs Shillcock, Simonds, Mrs Sutcliffe, Ward and Worrall

Apologies for Absence were submitted on behalf of:
Councillors Grayson and Ryan and County Councillor Mrs Williams

484. Sheltered Housing Service - Rent Review (Item 2)

The Director of Social Services and Housing submitted a detailed report requesting Members to consider the rent levels, including service charges for the Council's 12 sheltered housing schemes for the coming year.

Recent audits of the costs of the sheltered housing service had highlighted the fact that the rent levels charged to sheltered tenants did not reflect the real cost of the service, resulting in the sheltered housing service was being subsidised by the rest of the Borough's tenants to a significant level. Accordingly, it was proposed to address this issue by identifying a suitable shift to the service costs over an agreed period to ensure that tenants in sheltered housing schemes paid a more equitable proportion of the real cost to the service than was currently the case.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) in addition to any other rent adjustment for 1998/99, all rents of sheltered dwellings be increased by an additional £5.00 per week (calculated over 52 weeks) with effect from 1 April 1998, as a first step to receiving a more equitable proportion of the costs of providing the sheltered housing service; and
- (ii) a more detailed analysis of the costs of providing the sheltered housing service be carried out in the coming year, taking into account service improvements in recent years to assist budget preparation for 1999/2000.

485. Housing Revenue Account Budget 1998/99 (Item 1)

In a joint report the Director of Social Services and Housing and Director of Corporate Services reported on the housing revenue account revised budget for 1997/98 and the budget for 1998/99.

The budget had been set within the framework set by the Strategy and Policy Committee on 17 December 1997 and was designed to balance the housing revenue account for the coming year.

RESOLVED that the housing revenue account budget, as reported, be approved, and in so doing the following also be approved:

- (i) an increase in the repairs and maintenance budget for garage areas and wall repairs and/or replacements by £45,000;
- (ii) an increase in the major repairs expenditure programme by £118,000;
- (iii) a provision for an improvement and refurbishment package of £1,700,000;
- (iv) the Director of Social Services and Housing contain inflation within the existing budgets and make a provision for a further saving of £50,000 in management and maintenance staffing costs;
- (v) the Strategy and Policy Committee be requested to approve and make the necessary arrangements to release surpluses arising in the direct service organisations for works undertaken in the housing revenue account of £150,000;
- (vi) garage rents, car ports and parking spaces charges be increased by 6% to:

garages	£0.30 per week
carports and parking spaces	£0.15 per week
- (viii) and the funding of the projected deficit for 1998/99 of £1,410,000, together with a working balance of £300,000, be funded from increased rents on dwellings requiring an average rent increase of £4.82 per week.

486. Schedule of Proposed Charges 1998/99 (Item 3)

Further to Minute 405 (6 January 1998) the Director of Social Services and Housing submitted the schedule of proposed charges for 1998/99 and answered Members' questions thereon.

RESOLVED that the schedule of charges, as reported, be approved for implementation from 1 April 1998.

487. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to employees of the Council

488. Forestcare - Control Centre (Item 4)

In an item containing exempt information, the Director of Social Services and Housing recommended adjustments to the salaries and pay structure of some of the posts at the Forestcare Control Centre in order to address problems staffing differentials and increased levels of responsibility.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the hourly rates of control staff on local conditions be increased as follows:
 - (a) Control Centre Operators £0.75
 - (b) Forestcare Visitors £0.75
 - (c) Night Wardens £1.00
 - (d) Drivers £1.00
- (ii) the part time Forestcare Visitors be paid at the same hourly rate as full time staff;
- (iii) a bar at SCP.26 be placed on the Forestcare Visitor post; and
- (iv) the above proposals be funded from the housing revenue account at a cost of approximately £20,000 with effect from 1 April 1998.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.00pm.

CHAIRMAN