



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

21st January 2015

PRESENT:-

Councillors D.R. Wright (Chairman) J. Illingworth (Vice Chairman), G. Bush, P. Chandler, M. R. Graham, S. Lumley, J.B. Rhodes, M. Twitney, P. Posnett,

Observer

Councillor J. Douglas

Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Strategic Director (KA) Central Services Manager, Welfare, Housing and Revenues Manager, Community Policy Officer, Strategic Housing Officer, Administrative Assistant for Communities and Neighbourhoods.

C41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received for this committee.

C42. MINUTES

The public and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2014 were authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

C43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Rhodes & Posnett declared a personal and non pecuniary interest in relation to any issues concerning the Leicestershire County Council by virtue of them being a County Councillor.

C44. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other committees.

C45. UPDATE ON DECISIONS

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to update Members on the update of decisions from the previous meeting.

RESOLVED that the update on decision be noted.

C46. HRA REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015-16

The Head of Central Services submitted a report to set the rents of Council dwellings, approve the HRA estimates for 2015-16 and set the working balance for 2015-16.

The Central Services Manager stated that the increase in rent mentioned in recommendations 2.1 is based on the prescribed government formula which has changed for 2015/16. Previously the formula took into account the RPI figure but this has changed to CPI which is currently lower. This has therefore influenced the level of rent with a lower than expected increase when compared to the previous formula.

It was stated that recommendation 2.1 should read 'The committee approve to recommend to full Council an average rent increase of 2.09%'

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Illingworth and seconded by Councillor Posnett.

RESOLVED that

- 1) An average rent increase of 2.09% for Council dwellings for 2015-16 be recommended to full council with effect from 6 April 2015 and that when a property is re-let the rent continues to be brought into line with the Governments formula rent.
- 2) The estimate for 2015-16 be approved subject to the receipt of the limit rent Determination, with delegated authority being given to the Head of Central Services in consultation with the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods to amend the estimated working balance based on charges to this determination.
- 3) A working balance of £942,410 be budgeted for at 31 March 2016 based on an average 2.09% rent increase.
- 4) The estimates for 2015-16 be updated in line with the resolutions made in item 9 on this agenda where required.
- 5) The estimates for 2015-16 be updated in line with the resolutions made in the intensive Housing Management Service (IHMS) item on the Policy, Finance and Administration committee (PFA) agenda on 27th January 2015.

C47. COUNCIL TENANTS- RENT IN ADVANCE

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report to ensure that any prospective tenants receive consistent treatment throughout the sign up process upon the request for rent in advance.

Welfare, Housing and Revenues Manager stated that the request is for 4 weeks rent in advance, however a person's inability to pay in advance will not affect them securing a tenancy.

Discussions took place regarding payments being paid monthly and tenants building up credit throughout the year as well as the wide range of support that Me and My Learning is offering tenants.

It was stated that a report will be brought back to this committee 6 months after the implementation of this process.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Graham and seconded by Councillor Twitney.

RESOLVED that the measure put in place to ensure no prospective tenant is adversely affected by the request for rent in advance be noted and supported.

C48. **REVISED SECURE TENANCY AGREEMENT**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report presenting a revised Secure Tenancy Agreement to Members for their consideration.

Welfare, Housing and Revenues Manager brought Members to the recommendations and stated that 2.1 should read that the agreement is attached at appendix B.

Para 3.7 outlining the significant changes was highlighted by Welfare, Housing and Revenues Manager and it was emphasised that every tenant would be written to and consulted with as well as given a notice of variation.

Members proposed some changes to the wording which was noted by Welfare, Housing and Revenues Manager, to be incorporated into the agreement.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Illingworth and seconded by Councillor Bush.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The draft tenancy agreement (Appendix B) be agreed.
- 2) Consultation with tenants about the revised tenancy agreement be undertaken and any significant amendments required as a result of that consultation be reported back to this committee.
- 3) The revised 'Tenancy agreement' be adopted, incorporating the amendments suggested, and sent to all tenants in accordance with the Housing Act 1985.

C49. **TENANCY POLICY 2015-2020**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report seeking Member's approval of the Tenancy Policy.

Strategic Housing Officer outlined the report.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Posnett and seconded by Councillor Graham.

RESOLVED that the refreshed Tenancy Policy (2015-2020) be approved.

C50. **CLOCKWISE HOUSING RENT PAYMENT ACCOUNT**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report asking Members to approve the new 'jam jar' rent accounts being offered by Clockwise credit union and the benefits they can bring to the residents of the Borough.

Welfare, Housing and Revenues Manager clarified para 2.1 stating that the £10 per account is the joining fee for a 'jam jar' account to be set up and that previously the £10 joining fee has acted as a barrier to people joining the scheme.

A Member praised the scheme and the way in which it supported tenants and highlighted that this early intervention would also save money in the long term.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Illingworth and seconded by Councillor Twitney.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The provision to open 50 rent accounts with Clockwise at £10 joining fee per account be approved.
- 2) The continued work with Clockwise Credit union to alleviate money concerns and debt issues be noted and supported.

C51. **THE FOX INN, ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE.**

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods submitted a report asking Members to make a decision on whether The Fox Inn pub at Thorpe Satchville should be classified as an Asset of Community Value.

The Chairman stated that both the owners of The Fox Inn pub as well as the Parish Council were invited to speak at this committee meeting.

As it was only the owners of The Fox Inn that were present at this meeting a vote was taken to decide if they would be given the opportunity to speak.

Members voted for the owners on The Fox Inn to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes.

Community Policy Officer outlined the background key issues of the Community right to bid, as well as giving the statistics of the population of Thorpe Satchville and Twyford.

The owners of The Fox Inn pub spoke for 3mins 50seconds and Members asked the spokesperson questions.

RESOLVED that The Fox Inn pub not be put on the Asset of Community Value register.

C52. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting which commenced at 6.30p.m, closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman