

# TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## HOUSING COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 16 March 2023 at 7:30pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Pursehouse (Chair), Shiner (Vice-Chair), Evans, C.Farr, Gaffney, Montgomery, Robinson, Swann and O'Driscoll (Substitute) (In place of Hammond)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors S.Farr

**ALSO PRESENT (Virtually):** Councillor Pinard

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors Groves, Hammond and Stamp

### 261. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2023

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.

### 262. QUARTER 3 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING - HOUSING COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report outlining the financial position of the Revenue and Capital budgets for the Committee, including Housing Revenue Account, as of Quarter 3 2022/23.

The report set out a projected full-year overspend of £8k for the Housing General Fund. This was a £52k deterioration from the Q2 position. This was mainly a result of £26k expenditure on Meadowside Mobile Home Site including a site survey and reduced income, and £20k legal costs shared between the General Fund and the Revenue Account.

In terms of the Housing Revenue Account, there was a projected full-year underspend of £65k. This was a deterioration of £2k from the Q2 position. There had been a projected improvement in salaries of £61k. Deterioration were due to service charges of £61k and repair expenses of £2k.

In the Housing General Fund Capital Budget there was a full-year projected underspend of £60k related to delayed projects relating to the Disabled Facilities Grant. In the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme there was a projected underspend of £3,122k relating to delays and slippages in the Council House Building Programme and additional amounts being provided for potential development sites and inflationary rises.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee's forecast Revenue and Capital budget positions, including Housing Revenue Account, as at Quarter 3 / Month 9 (December) 2022 be noted.

### 263. HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME REVIEW

The Committee received a report recommending approval of the updated Housing Allocation Schemes from 1 April 2023.

The Council was required to have a scheme for the allocation of social housing. The scheme was last considered by Committee in March 2016. Minor amendments to the scheme have been made under delegated powers during the annual review. Officers explained that the current scheme continued to be effective. The Future Tandridge Programme meant further amendments to the scheme were recommended.

**RESOLVED** – that in accordance with its delegated powers, the Committee agree that the updated Housing Allocation Schemes be approved for publication from 1 April 2023.

## **264. SURREY HOUSING STRATEGY - CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

The Committee received a report on Surrey County Council's final draft Housing, Homes and Accommodation Strategy for Surrey. The strategy was set out in Appendix A of the report. All Surrey District and Borough Councils had provided a response to the draft strategy. The Council's response, written in consultation with senior Members and Officers, was set out in Appendix B.

Members expressed their agreement with the Council's response and requested an update on Surrey County Council's sale of the Dormer's Residential Home site in Caterham.

Officers explained that an offer for the Dormers site was being developed. Initial meetings had been held to discuss a Red Book Valuation of the site to agree a market value without the site going to the open market, but Surrey did not want to proceed.

Background work had been conducted in preparation for the making of an offer including the architects drafting a feasibility study and pre-application advice. The Council's offer would include emphasis on the importance of providing social housing in line with Surrey County Council's responsibilities in terms of health and social welfare.

Members expressed concerns over the draft strategy and Surrey County Council's approach to the Dormers site, while expressing support for the Council's response to the strategy and Officer's efforts to acquire the Dormers site for social housing.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee note the updates provided within the report.

## **265. UPDATE - HOMES FOR UKRAINE**

The Committee received an update on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The Scheme allowed Ukrainian families to come to the UK to live with a sponsor in suitable accommodation. As of February 2023, 121 Tandridge residents had welcomed 219 Ukrainian guests into their homes. 44 additional visas were pending or being issued.

It was noted that there were challenges relating to longer term housing options for Ukrainian guests. There was anticipated to be a greater demand from Ukrainian guests for help for accommodation with an impact on officer workloads and demand on accommodation within the District. Efforts were being made to encourage hosts to prolong their existing arrangements and to encourage new hosts to join the scheme.

Members gave thanks to officers and the voluntary sector for their work in carrying out the Scheme.

Officers responded to member questions and explained that:

- Within the Housing Allocation Scheme, preference was not given to Ukrainians over others who were entitled to apply, but were considered alongside those already on the register. No Ukrainian household had reached the top of the list to be allocated.
- Officers would escalate any concerns Members received over schooling arrangements for children from Ukraine at Surrey working groups.
- The anniversary of the scheme and the War in Ukraine was used to encourage residents to become hosts. Encouragement for new hosts to be achieved through communications from the Council and Members with individuals and groups within the voluntary and faith sector.

**RESOLVED** – that the updates provided within the report be noted.

## **266. COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME - NEW SCHEMES**

The Committee received a report seeking approval for Officers to begin preparing detailed proposals for the redevelopment of 53-67 Stanstead Road, Caterham to provide up to four 3-bedroom houses for affordable rent. The current development had been identified for demolition. The report also sought approval for a budget of £30k for the pre-application stage and up to £80k for disturbance and Home Loss Payments.

Officers explained that residents had been informed, would be formally consulted under Section 105 of the Housing Act and would be eligible for re-housing from April 2023. It was expected all residents would need to be re-housed by summer 2024.

There would be a further report to Committee seeking approval to submit a planning application once feasibility studies had been completed.

In response to a Member question, Officers explained that the current residents would be prioritised for appropriate accommodation outside of the Housing Allocation Scheme.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- A. Officers prepare detailed proposals for the redevelopment of 53 – 67 Stanstead Road, Caterham to provide up to four 3-bedroom houses for affordable rent; and that a budget of £30,000 for the pre-application stage and up to £80,000 for disturbance and Home Loss Payments be approved.
- B. Approval to proceed includes the appointment of an architect, Employer’s Agent and other specialist consultants and surveyors to act for, or advise the Council and the commissioning of necessary reports all subject to the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- C. Work to rehouse residents displaced by the redevelopment commence following this Committee’s decision being ratified by Full Council, including the payment of compensation where eligible.
- D. Appropriate notices to be served on tenants at the earliest opportunity to preclude the possibility of the Right to Buy.

- E. Authority be given for Officers to commence the process of appropriating the land from housing to planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **267. BUY BACK PROGRAMME - NEW**

Members were asked to approve a new 'buy-back' programme to repurchase ex-council owned properties. A budget of £3 million was proposed for the purchase of 10 homes along with associated legal costs, surveys, works to the properties and a small contingency. The aim was for the first five homes to be purchased in the 2023/24 financial year, with a further five to be purchased in 2024/25.

It was noted that properties purchased under the scheme would help to facilitate the Council's wider house building programme in one of three ways:

- Assist in releasing landlocked or hard to access sites where future redevelopment would allow the Council to reach a net housing gain.
- Acquiring restrictive leases from the Council's leaseholders that may cause a barrier to infill development on land currently owned by the Council.
- Through the supply of alternative temporary accommodation to help in achieving longer term aim of redevelopment of the Croydon Road TA scheme.

**RESOLVED** – that approval be given to start a new 'buy-back' programme to repurchase ex-council owned properties initially purchased under the Right to Buy with a budget of £3m for 10 homes, subject to the requirements of Financial Regulation 17, and the criteria detailed within the report.

## **268. HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY - CONTRACT TENDER**

The press and public were excluded from this item in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) on the grounds that:

- i) item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act; and
- ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**RESOLVED** – that

- A. Proposals to re-tender the existing contract for Home Improvement Agency services and to enter into a new contract for services with an external Home Improvement Agency provider for three years, with the option to extend for a further three years be approved.
- B. The existing contract with Millbrook Healthcare Ltd be extended until 31 March 2024.

## **269. COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME - ACF SEA CADETS, CATERHAM**

The Committee received a report seeking approval for Officers to prepare proposals and seek pre-application planning advice for the development of the Sea Cadet site, Caterham, for up to 16 new affordable homes, subject to acquisition of the site. The report sought approval for a budget of £50k for the pre-application stage.

Approval was also sought for Officers to commence the process of appropriating the land for planning purposes in accordance with Section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Officers explained that a Red Book Valuation had been undertaken which had enabled the Council to make an offer to purchase the land which was acceptable to the Ministry of Defence. The Council was currently at the final stages in the acquisition process. 175 households had been written to and would be consulted once the pre-application process had been undertaken and prior to planning permission being sought.

In response to Member questions, Officers confirmed that:

- the plans would include 2 parking spaces for each unit and visitor spaces
- the main access point to the site would be from The Grove or Hawarden Road.
- the architect would be instructed to ensure the plans would be sensitive to the historic character of the surrounding area
- a Construction Traffic Management Plan would be developed to limit disruption to residents. There was also space on site that could be utilised for construction vehicles.
- it was expected that plans would be submitted for planning application in the autumn or winter of 2023.
- a drainage consultant would be engaged to draw up a strategy for dealing with drainage. This would include natural drainage which doesn't currently exist at the site due to hard standing. General infrastructure would also be reviewed.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- A. Subject to acquisition of the site, Officers prepare proposals for and seek pre-application planning advice for the development of the Sea Cadet site for up to 16 new affordable dwellings; and a budget for the pre-application stage of £50,000 be approved. This budget is to cover the appointment of an architect, employers agent and other specialist consultants and surveyors to act for, or advise, the Council and the commissioning of necessary reports, all subject to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- B. Authority be given for Officers to commence the process of appropriating the land for planning purposes in accordance with Section 122 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Rising 8.30 pm