

Housing Transfer Committee

Wednesday, 21 February 2007

Present: Councillor Peter Goldsworthy (Chair), Councillors Peter Malpas and Francis Culshaw

Also in attendance: Mr A Johnson (Enterprise BWNL) and Mr R Beiley and Mr M Gaskell (Trowers and Hamlets), Colin Campbell (Executive Director – Environment and Community), Gary Hall (Director of Finance), Helen Schofield (Corporate Transfer Project Officer), Gordon Bankes (Democratic Services Officer)

07.HTC.19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

07.HTC.20 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any Members in any of the meetings agenda items.

07.HTC.21 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Transfer Committee held on 6 February 2007 were confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

07.HTC.22 HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER - PROJECTS HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Committee received the Corporate Transfer Project Officer's updated highlight report on the transfer process covering the period September 2006 to February 2007.

The report summarised the developments and actions completed since the last meeting of the Committee, outlined the current work of the three sub-groups and indicated outstanding matters still under consideration.

The report revealed that the overall project status was amber, as agreement had not yet been reached on key commercial elements of the transfer contract, however substantial progress had been made on the afternoon of this meeting indicating that completion of transfer was on target for 26 March 2007.

The Chairman and Members congratulated the Executive Director - Environment and Community and his officers on the progress of the project.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.HTC.23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

07.HTC.24 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER AGREEMENT

Mr P Beiley from the Council's Legal Consultants, Trowers and Hamlins, presented a summary report on the progress of negotiations on the Transfer Contract.

The draft contract for the sale of the Council's housing and related assets, to Chorley Community Housing Limited (CCH) had been prepared and presented to CCH and its solution for consideration. The majority of the comments related to standard commercial considerations.

Members raised queries relating to the Deed of Warranty by the Council in favour of the company in connection with the environmental claims and other risks.

An additional report outlined the format for the Council meeting on 6 March 2007 when the Council will be requested to give final approval to the transfer of its housing stock to Chorley Community Housing Limited (CCH) as well as give full delegated authority for the Committee to approve all outstanding matters relating to the housing stock transfer and the Transfer Contract including any consequential variations that may be required to complete the transfer.

RESOLVED – That the Council be recommended to:

- 1) Approve the transfer of the Council's housing stock to Chorley Community Housing Limited (subject to the Secretary of State's approval) on the best acceptable final terms that can be negotiated based upon the draft terms and provisions as outlined in the Trowers and Hamlin's report.**
- 2) That the Council be recommended to give full delegated authority to the Housing Transfer Committee to approval all outstanding matters relating to the Housing Stock Transfer and the Transfer Contract including any consequential variations that may be required to complete the transaction.**
- 3) That the lease on the Gillibrand Street offices be extended to 3 to 5 years with a review after 3 years.**

07.HTC.25 COTSWOLD HOUSE

The Committee received a report seeking members' views on the replacement of the provision for homeless persons at Cotswold House.

A report was commissioned on the condition of Cotswold House and the alternative future provision for homeless persons, which indicated that the building was unlikely to continue to meet the standard demanded and falling short of the Government's standard.

A number of sites had been identified and appraised as possible replacements for Cotswold House and concluded that with the exception of one, all had been ruled out on grounds of size and location. The only site identified would be investigated as a suitable site for the replacement of Cotswold House and the submission of a planning application for this use was authorised.

RESOLVED –1) That the former Yarrow depot be investigated as a suitable site for the replacement of Cotswold House and a planning application lodged to this end.

2) That the Council staff employed at Cotswold House be transferred to Chorley Community Housing upon completion.

07.HTC.26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that the next meeting be Thursday, 22 March 2007 commencing at 11.00am with a possible meeting on Friday, 23 March commencing at 2pm and Monday, 26 March commencing at 9.00am if required.

Chair