



NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date and Time:	Tuesday, 16 July 2013 at 7.00 pm
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Fleet
Telephone Enquiries to:	01252 774141 (Mrs G Chapman) gill.chapman@hart.gov.uk
Members:	Ambler, Appleton, Axam, Bailey, Collett (Chairman), Gani, Gorys, Harward, Lewis, Simmons, Southern

G Bonner
Chief Executive

CIVIC OFFICES, HARLINGTON WAY
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AGENDA

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AND BRAILLE ON REQUEST**

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 18 June 2013 are attached to be confirmed and signed as a correct record. **Paper A**

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare disclosable pecuniary, and any other, interests.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

Anyone wishing to put a question or statement to the Committee should contact the Committee Services Officer by phone or email (see front page of this Agenda) at least two clear working days prior to the meeting. Further information can be found at http://www.hart.gov.uk/public_participation_leaflet_-_201314.pdf

6 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (RIPA) – QUARTERLY UPDATE

There has been no further use of the RIPA provisions (Covert Surveillance Policy) since the report to Overview and Scrutiny in April 2013.

7 PURCHASE OF LARGER HOMES

To outline the rationale for Hart purchasing a limited number of larger homes in order to meet an identified medium term need for additional capacity. **Paper B**

RECOMMENDATION

That, prior to submission to Cabinet for consideration, the Committee comments on the proposal to allocate up to £1m from the ring-fenced housing capital fund for the purchase of larger homes to be let at affordable rent.

9 CABINET UPDATE

Councillor Crampton will attend to talk about her Cabinet portfolio.

10 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider which issues around Affordable Housing it would like to investigate.

11 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme is attached for information. **Paper C**

12 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is attached for consideration and amendment. **Paper D**

Date of Despatch: 2 July 2013

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 16 JULY 2013

TITLE OF REPORT: PURCHASE OF LARGER HOMES

Report of: Head of Housing Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dr Anne Crampton, Housing and Health

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the rationale for Hart purchasing a limited number of larger homes in order to meet an identified medium term need for additional capacity.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That, prior to submission to Cabinet for consideration, the Committee comments on the proposal to allocate up to £1m from the ring-fenced housing capital fund for the purchase of larger homes to be let at affordable rent.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are two drivers behind the need to increase the supply of larger homes.
- 3.2 The first relates to the availability of 4 bed properties through the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme. It is now just over two years since the Council introduced the Banding scheme. One of the basic principles of the scheme is that all those in housing need and with a local connection should have a reasonable chance of being able to access affordable housing, without the problem in the points system of continually being overtaken by those scoring higher points due to cumulative need. Thus the expectation was that anybody in Band C, ie in housing need and having a local connection, would have a reasonable expectation of coming top of a "bid" list in the CBL scheme within 5 years.
- 3.3 Analysis of the average waiting times, Appendix I, shows that this is being achieved for all property sizes other than the 3 and 4 bed category. While the 3 bed group fails by 1 month, nobody in Band C has come to the top of a bid list for a 4 bed home. The supply of 4 bed lets over the last 4 years is as follows:

2009/10	-	0x4 bed lets during the year
2010/11	-	3x4 bed lets during the year
2011/12	-	7x4 bed lets during the year
2012/13	-	2x4 bed lets during the year

- 3.4 There are currently some 49 x 4 bed homes in the social housing stock. There are currently 5 families in Band B and 35 families in Band C waiting for a 4 bed home.
- 3.5 The second driver for this report is the issue of affordability of larger houses in the private rented sector. Changes to the welfare system will mean that larger families on benefits will not be able to afford local adequate sized homes to prevent them being overcrowded. This will be a particular problem for the Council when it relates to families to whom a statutory duty exists to provide adequate housing.
- 3.6 In the last year there have been 22 x 4 bed houses sold in the district in the price range £200k - £300k, and 29 x 3 bedroom houses in the price range £140k - £200k.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The turnover of the 4 bed stock is comparatively low, however this may well increase as the effects of the changes in welfare system and the new time limited tenancies begin to take effect. The first fixed term tenancies are likely to be coming to an end in 2019. There are also some 20 x new 4 bed homes being delivered over the next 5 years. These effects may mean that turnover for this stock will increase, indicating it may only be that a relatively short term solution is required.
- 4.2 It is proposed that up to 4 larger lower priced 3 and 4 bedroom homes be purchased and that they be used:
- To meet the Council's statutory homelessness duty where adequate sized properties cannot be sourced locally at a rent which is affordable to those receiving benefits.
 - To offer medium term accommodation to those on the housing register in Bands C and above. Tenancies would be offered of a similar length to those now widely available in the social housing sector, 6 years.
- 4.2 A partner housing association will be used for the management of these properties. They are likely to charge in the order of 10% of the rent for this service.
- 4.3 Adding these units to the available stock, at least on a temporary basis, will reduce the risk to the Council that larger homeless families in urgent housing need would have to be placed in unsuitable accommodation such as B&B.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no policy implications as a result of this report.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposal is to use funding in the ring-fenced housing capital fund which currently has some £2.5m. In the past 2 years £178k has been allocated from this fund and £184k has been added.

- 6.2 It is not yet clear what the longer term effects of the welfare changes might be but it is considered that in future the pressure for larger homes in the social sector might reduce and the turnover of the existing stock is also likely to increase. Should this be the case, it is entirely possible that the Council could sell these houses in the future and realise a capital gain.
- 6.3 In the short-term there will be a revenue receipt in the form of any rent from these homes. Currently the local housing allowance for a 4 bedroom home is £1300 pcm in the area, however to charge that rate would make it in excess of 50% of the proposed benefit cap. It is suggested that any charge over £1000 pcm would make the homes unaffordable from a practical point of view. As advised above the cost of the management would reduce income by 10%. Provision will have to be made from the income to pay for a certain amount of repair / redecoration between tenancies and also maybe prior to any resale.
- 6.4 The risk to the council of problems in the management and maintenance of these properties will be reduced by the use of an experienced housing association partner to manage the properties.
- 6.5 There is no longer any requirement for the authority to operate a housing revenue account in this proposed purchase.

Contact Details: Nigel Preston nigel.preston@hart.gov.uk ext 4488

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Average Waiting Times on Hart's Housing Register

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

APPENDIX I

Grand Total

477

Average waiting time on Hart's Housing Register

Between 1 Apr 2011 and 30 Apr 2013 there were 319 properties let for general needs accommodation, 66 for sheltered and 92 for extra care.

The table shows how long successful applicants waited on average and the number of properties let (in brackets)

Band ▼	Type of property							All GN
	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom	Sheltered	Extra Care	
A	-	11 Months (6)	5 Months (11)	7 Months (6)	-	1 Month (2)	1 Year 8 Months (15)	7 Months (23)
B	1 Month (1)	1 Year 4 Months (14)	1 Year 3 Months (26)	5 Months (15)	4 Years 11 Months (9)	1 Year 3 Months (10)	1 Year 10 Months (18)	1 Year 7 Months (65)
C	1 Year 4 Months (17)	2 Years 9 Months (62)	3 Years 10 Months (116)	5 Years 1 Month (33)	-	11 Months (48)	8 Months (49)	3 Years 6 Months (228)
D	-	1 Month (2)	4 Months (1)	-	-	6 Months (5)	3 Months (10)	1 Month (3)
E	-	-	-	-	-	2 Months (1)	-	-
Total number of properties	18	84	154	54	9	66	92	319

CABINET

KEY DECISIONS/ WORK PROGRAMME AND EXECUTIVE DECISIONS MADE

July 2013

Cabinet is required to publish its Key Decisions and forward work programme to inform the public of issues on which it intends to make policy or decisions. The Scrutiny Committee also notes the Programme, which is subject to regular revision. Items in italics denote changes to a previously published Plan.

Report Title	Ref (Note 1)	Outline/Reason for Report/Comments	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Key Decision Y/?	Cabinet Member (Note 2)	Service (Note 3)
Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Hart Health and Wellbeing Strategy	May 13	For approval	June 13	July 13		AC	CD
Upgrade/Migration of IT Server Infrastructure	Mar 13	For approval	May 13	July 13		BB	CX
Home Insulation Scheme	May 13	Proposals	July 13	tbc	Y	AC	HS
Purchase of Larger Houses	May 13	Proposals	July 13	Aug 13	Y	AC	HS
Review of Designated Protected Areas	May 13	Review	July 13		Y	AC	HS
Budget Monitoring Current Year	May 13	Monitoring	July 13			KC	F
Review of Council Tax Support Scheme	Feb 13	Review of current scheme	July 13			KC	F
Housing Allocations Policy	Jan 13	Review proposals	June 13	Aug 13	Y	AC	HS
Adoption of NE Hook Development Brief	Feb 13	For approval	June 13	Aug 13		SP	CD

2012/13 Quarterly Budget Monitoring	Quarterly	Quarterly monitoring	Sept 13 Dec 13 March 14			KC	F
Treasury Management Progress	Twice Yearly	Outturn and Report	Nov 13 June 14			KC	F
Economic Development	Twice Yearly	Progress Report	Nov 13 June 14			KC	CX
IT Strategy Working Party	Jan 12	Progress report	Nov 13			BB	CX
Apprenticeship Scheme	June 13	Update	Nov 13			KC	CD
Setting the Council Tax Base	Annual	Report	Jan 14		Y	KC	F
Treasury Management Strategy	Annual	Update	Feb 14			KC	F
2014/15 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Proposals	Annual	Approval. Recommendation to Council.	Feb 14			KC	F
Food Safety Service Plan	Annual	For approval	March 14			JK	EH
Service Plans	Annual	Service Plans 2014/15	April 14				All
Revenue and Capital Outturn 2012/13	Annual	Report on outturn	June 14			KC	F
Outside Bodies	Annual	To confirm representatives on Outside Bodies	June 14			KC	CX
Green Lane Car Park	July 11	Report on future options	Oct 11	TBD		AC	HS

Notes:

1 Date added to Programme

2 Cabinet Members:

KC	Crookes	BB	Burchfield	AC	Crampton	GE	Evans
JG	Glen	JK	Kennett	SK	Kinnell	SP	Parker

3 Service:

CX	Chief Executive	CD	Corporate Director	P&ER	Planning and Environmental Regulation
CS	Community Safety	HS	Housing and Customer Services	L&EP	Leisure and Environmental Promotion
F	Finance	DS	Democratic Services	TS &EM	Technical Services and Environmental Maintenance
SLS	Shared Legal Services	MO	Monitoring Officer	EH	Environmental Health

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

18/6/13	Cllr Glen	Provision of Footpath at Azalea Park, Church Crookham	Not called in
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME – JULY 2013

Issue and Description of Topic	Current Position Objective	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Resources Required	Contact
RIPA	Quarterly Update	July 13 Nov 13 Jan 14 April 14		Report	Monitoring Officer
Purchase of Larger Homes	Proposal to purchase larger homes	July 13		Report	Head of Housing
Flooding	Notes from January/July meeting of Agencies	Aug 13 Jan 13		Minutes	Technical & Environmental Maintenance
Quarterly Budget Monitoring	Quarterly update	Aug 13 Nov 13		Report	Head of Finance
Performance Information to include Revenue Budget Monitoring (Quarterly)	Committee receives quarterly highlight reports.	Aug 13 Dec 13		Report	Corporate Director
Developer Contributions and Infrastructure		May 13	Aug 13		SP & CD
Joint Governance report on Street Care and Grounds Maintenance	Review of the first year contract for street cleaning and grounds maintenance, working in partnership with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.	Dec 13		Report	Head of Technical Services
Council Tax Base	Report on setting the Council Tax Base.	Annual	Dec 13	Report	Head of Finance
Treasury Management	Report setting out the treasury management strategy for the council	Annual	Jan 14	Report	Head of Finance

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME – JULY 2013

Issue and Description of Topic	Current Position Objective	Original Due Date	Revised Due Date	Resources Required	Contact
Strategy					
Service Plans	Draft Service Plans 2013/14	Mar 14		Report	Corporate Director
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	Annual meeting	Mar 14			Corporate Director
Outside Bodies	Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies	Apr 14		Report	Corporate Director
2013/14 Performance Information – Annual Outturn	Annual update	June 14		Report	Performance and Innovation Officer
Nominations to Service Boards	Member nominations	June 14			Chairman O&S Committee
IT Strategy	Pre Cabinet Scrutiny	TBC		Report	Chief Executive
Equity Share Affordable Housing	To conduct scrutiny of shared ownership of affordable housing. The Head of Housing is liaising with one of our partner RSL's with a view to them attending an appropriate O&S meeting.	TBC		Presentation	Head of Housing Services
Replacement of Hart Leisure Centre	Business Case review – assessments are being undertaken to establish the financial feasibility associated with the potential replacement of the Hart Leisure Centre on land on the opposite side of Hitches Lane. Consultants have been engaged to advise on possible approaches to the procurement and future management of the new centre (Cabinet approval 2011). The brief includes advising on a financial business model covering depreciation of the asset and replacement/maintenance costs. The final report will be brought to Committee again, prior to consideration by Cabinet and Council.	TBC		Report	Head of Leisure and Environmental Promotions Services

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Tuesday, 16 July 2013 at 7pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Collett (Chairman)

Ambler, Bailey, Gani, Gorys, Harward, Lewis (from item 21)

In attendance: Councillor Crampton

Officers:

Patricia Hughes	Corporate Director
Nigel Preston	Head of Housing and Customer Services
Phil Turner	Head of Housing and Customer Service (elect)

14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 18 June 2013 were confirmed and signed as a correct record, with a note that Councillor Gani would like to attend Housing Service Board. It was also noted that Councillor Simmons was unable to make the meeting times of the Community Safety and EH Service Board.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Axam, Simmons and Southern.

16 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman and Members gave their best wishes to Nigel Preston who was leaving as Head of Housing after 23 years. All wished him the very best for the future. A warm welcome was given to Mr Phil Turner who would join as Head of Housing on 29 July.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE AGENDA)

None.

19 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (RIPA) – QUARTERLY UPDATE

It was noted that there had been no further use of the RIPA provisions (Covert Surveillance Policy) since the report to Overview and Scrutiny in April 2013.

20 PURCHASE OF LARGER HOMES

Members considered the report providing the rationale for Hart purchasing a limited number of larger homes in order to meet an identified medium term need for additional capacity.

The Committee made the following comments:

- 1 That £1 million may not purchase 4 houses. Housing was asked to carry out further work ahead of Cabinet on the availability of stock in this price range.
- 2 Four properties may not have a significant impact on the waiting time for larger households and requested further work ahead of Cabinet on the projected impact, the purchase of these houses would have.
- 3 That if it was not ultimately possible to purchase four properties with the funding available, that further information be provided to Cabinet on the business model, rates of return on investment, based on a three home strategy.
- 4 That there may be an opportunity to convert an existing larger home into two smaller homes, thereby helping two currently under occupied households to find smaller accommodation and releasing larger properties.
- 5 That further information should be provided to Cabinet on how our housing partners are charging for these larger homes?
- 6 What further help could we provide these families to escape the benefit trap?

RESOLVED

That the Committee's comments be considered in the proposal to Cabinet to allocate up to £1m from the ring-fenced housing capital fund for the purchase of larger homes to be let at affordable rent.

21 CABINET UPDATE

Councillor Crampton gave an update on her portfolio, in particular helping our residents to find homes that are long term and provide for sustainable communities.

Councillor Crampton then discussed the health element of the Portfolio, discussing the recent changes in the countywide Health and Wellbeing Board and NHS.

There was a discussion around a Member of Overview and Scrutiny attending the Hart Health and Wellbeing Board, and there was a request that the meeting dates be circulated to the Housing Service Board.

There followed a general discussion covering topics as the spare room subsidy, and the varying levels of requests to join the housing register. The Committee then thanked Councillor Crampton for her very useful information.

NB A written response from Councillor Kinnell relating to the June meeting is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.

22 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered which issues around Affordable Housing it would like to investigate.

The Committee requested a report in six months time on the housing impact of the benefit changes and delivery of affordable housing including tenure and size.

23 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was considered.

24 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was considered and amended.

The meeting closed at 8.12 pm

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 13th June 2013

Written response from the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Councillor Sara Kinnell

- **Green Flag**
The Green Flag is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. It is run by the Keep Britain Tidy group which also is responsible for many other open space initiatives including the national "In Bloom" competitions. The award is now reaching a wider audience in Europe, particularly the Netherlands and Germany where the scheme is currently being trialled. More information on the scheme can be found on <http://greenflag.keepbritaintidy.org/about-us/about-green-flag-award/>

- **Facilities at Edenbrook Country Park**

A Strategic Plan for Edenbrook Country Park was presented to and approved by Cabinet on the 7th March 2013 (minute 136). This plan includes the intended provision and those currently agreed to be provided by Berkeley Homes. There will be a revised layout of the Country Park as part of Berkeley Homes pending housing application, this is discussed in section 4.1.2 of the plan (Management Zones - Option 2).

- **Is Grazing Compatible with Dog Walking on Edenbrook SANG**

There are strong ecological, sustainability and financial reasons why grazing, particularly on conservation grade grassland such as Edenbrook should be carefully considered.

The Countryside Service are very experienced in grazing small compartments of land with open access for dog walking and the successes of both Fleet Pond and Elvetham Heath Nature Reserves are a tribute to this. Edenbrook will be treated in the exact manner, with the same level of care as our other sites. Action Plan Point 5.7.1 of the Edenbrook Country Park Strategic Plan recommends that a Grazing Strategy should be produced and incorporated into the Site Management Plan. The Strategy will include how this would enhance the visitors experience and inform and educate thus allowing for full use of the SANG by dog walkers.

- **What is the Length of the Grazing Trial and what are the Success Criteria?**

essentially, this is a 5 year trial looking at Lowland Heathland Grazing in controlled areas of Hazeley Heath. The success criteria will involve proving that there is ecological and financial benefits over mechanical methods of management. The group will also look at public access and improvements to levels of acceptance from the site users. Initial overviews are looking positive.

- **It was requested that the Access Forum be advised that Fleet Pond has Accessible Fishing Pitches**

We originally consulted with the Access Forum when we started to look more productively at visitor facilities but this was some time ago now. We will ask a ranger to make contact. They also will be a Stakeholder for the Fleet Pond Visitor Strategy consultation.

- Information was requested on evidence that sport facilities are the best way of promoting health and fitness, rather than other provision such as cycle paths and countryside activities.

The indoor vs outdoor leisure question is a complicated issue. There has been attempted research carried out but no definitive conclusions as this subject has so many variables eg weather, seasonal changes, access to countryside, disposable income, age, location, demographics etc etc. The link provided is another attempt into researching this area that is being carried out in Scotland, but with only 100 participants its credibility as a meaningful study is already flawed.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-22174293>

The indoor and outdoor facilities should complement each other and each has their own advantages and disadvantages. There are many activities that can only be carried out indoors or outdoors and that provides a varied choice for residents to become active. Promotion of Health, fitness and wellbeing should incorporate any opportunity - whether indoor and outdoor.

Here is another link from Sport England with regard to the active people survey that is continually updated. There is clear criteria as to what is included.

<http://www.sportengland.org/research/about-our-research/active-people-survey/>

Further information is available for any Members who wish to explore this further from David Love (david.love@hart.gov.uk)