

HOUSING CONSULTATIVE GROUP**MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2001 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT: The Executive Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being:
Councillor Bloxham (Chairman)

Councillors Farmer (2.10 pm onwards), Hodgson B and Joscelyne.

ALSO

PRESENT: Mr J Zitron - Director, Hacas Chapman Hendy
Mr P Anson - Assistant Director, Riverside Housing Group
Ms E Adams - Senior Consultant, PEP North
Mr J Egan - City Solicitor and Secretary
Mr D Thomas - City Treasurer
Mr D Steele - Accountancy Manager
Mr T Bramley - Director of Housing
Ms I Davison - Unison Representative
Mr D O'Brien - Conservative Political Research Assistant
Mr A Pateman - Liberal Democrat and Independent Political
Research Assistant
Mr J Shires - Labour Political Research Assistant
Mrs M Durham - Committee Clerk

HCG.11/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Bowman and Mrs Fisher, Mr H Evans (Riverside Housing Group), Mrs L Tyson and Mr B Tolley (Tenants' Advisory Group (TAG)), Mr P Stybelski (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Mrs L Dixon (Housing Transfer Project Officer).

HCG.12/01 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2001 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

HCG.13/01 HOUSING TRANSFER PROJECT PLAN

The Director of Housing presented a joint report with the City Treasurer (H.103/01) providing an update on the Project Plan for the housing transfer process.

At the last meeting it had been recognised that the Plan was in need of a major overhaul. Initial work had now been completed by Hacas Chapman Hendy (HCH) who had produced a draft 79 stage Project Plan showing critical paths and milestones for the delivery of the project.

The Director drew Members' attention to the draft summary attached to the report. He added that, subject to legal review, it was intended that the full Project Plan would be presented to the next meeting of this Committee, with a recommendation to the Executive that it should become the definitive master plan to be adopted with the DTLR.

Mr Zitron was present at the meeting and commented that the Plan took account of all necessary tasks, as well as legal and practical requirements. Although the period for statutory consultation was always tight, he was confident that it was sufficient to enable the necessary work to be undertaken and to allow full input from tenants.

The Director of Housing, Mr Zitron and Mr Anson then responded to Members' questions.

The Housing Consultative Group noted progress against the Project Plan.

HCG.14/01 TENANTS' ADVISORY GROUP

The Director of Housing submitted report H.105/01 concerning issues being examined by the Tenants' Advisory Group (TAG) and Priority Estates Project (PEP) since the meeting of the Housing Consultative Group on 1 October 2001.

Ms Adams commented that the TAG had continued its discussions on both the proportion and political balance of the City Council's nominees to the Shadow Board of the RSL in terms of its potential impact on the RSL's future control. Although the TAG understood the manner by which the Council made nominations to outside bodies and were aware of the decision taken, it still did not want politics to enter into the new organisation.

The Executive Portfolio Holder commented that the Council had on 30 October 2001 agreed its representation on the Shadow Board and, although he appreciated the TAG's concerns, it was now necessary to move forward. He added that the Board would initially operate for a period of eighteen months, following which its membership could be reviewed and he undertook to ask the Leader of the Council to consider the same at that time.

Councillor Farmer expressed his dissatisfaction at the scenario whereby the Labour Group had failed to take part in the evaluation process/take up membership of the Housing Consultative Group and yet a Member of that Group had "volunteered" to serve on the Shadow Board and been accepted. He felt there were other Members who had been actively involved in the transfer process and who should have been considered as potential Members of the Board.

Ms Adams commented that the TAG had adopted a new meeting format to enable the programme of draft RSL policies, which required to be consulted upon and drafted before the transfer offer was made to tenants, to be dealt with. A forward programme of key policies running from October 2001 through to February 2002 had also been approved.

The first area for policy review by the TAG had been the Tenancy Agreement and tenant rights. The Review had involved an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Council's existing Agreement and a comparison of the statutory and typical contractual rights of Councils and RSLs. Three specific issues had been identified, namely Right to Manage, Possession Ground 8 and Possession Ground 11. In addition, tenants had asked that issues such as anti-social behaviour and visitors to homes be investigated, and that a clause concerning the keeping of cats be added to the Agreement.

The Executive Portfolio Holder then provided an update on the position with regard to appointments to the Shadow Board. Interviews had been held the week before. There had been an extremely good response from professional people and the Interview Panel had recommended the appointment of four as Independent Members. Two tenant representatives had also been appointed (one tenant and one leaseholder) and arrangements were in hand with a view to filling the remaining two places as quickly as possible.

Mr Anson commented that an informal session would be held on 21 November 2001 for those Members who had been appointed, but the Board would not be formally convened until the remaining two Members were in place. It was envisaged that the first formal meeting of the Board would take place on 28 November 2001.

The Housing Consultative Group noted the views of the TAG as detailed in report H.105/01.

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being undertook to request that the Leader consider the issue of Board membership following the initial eighteen month period of operation.

HCG.15/01 LSVT – MEMBER BRIEFING

The Director of Housing submitted report H.104/01 introducing a proposed Member briefing paper on the key issues associated with the large scale voluntary transfer process.

The briefing paper was intended to be of general interest and benefit to all Council Members but, particularly, to those who did not have a direct or even indirect involvement in the LSVT process at present.

The Housing Consultative Group noted the Member Briefing paper which was to be recommended to the Executive for distribution to all Members of the City Council.

[The meeting ended at 2.47 pm]