



Cabinet (Special)

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 31 May 2011
at 5.30 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Peter John (Chair)
Councillor Ian Wingfield
Councillor Fiona Colley
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor Catherine McDonald
Councillor Abdul Mohamed
Councillor Veronica Ward

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair gave notice that the following late items would be considered for reasons of urgency, to be specified in the relevant minute:

- Item 5 – Deputation Request: Residents of Jarman House and Canute Gardens, Hawkstone Estate
- Item 6 – Housing Investment Programme and Revised Strategy
- Item 7 – East Dulwich Estate Regeneration Scheme: Update and Proposals for Revision
- Item 8 – Deputation Request: The Friends of Southwark Park

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. REVIEW OF VOID DISPOSAL STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress of disposals of void housing properties since April 2009 be noted.

2. That the importance of void disposals to the overall housing investment strategy be noted.
3. That the categories of properties agreed for inclusion in the Void Disposal Strategy be amended so that they will now consist of:
 - Bedsits, 1 and 2 bed A & B Street flats at 1st and 2nd floors with a view to disposal of the freehold
 - Bedsits, 1 and 2 bed properties located on 3rd floor or above if based within a block
 - Void properties valued in excess of £300,000 irrespective of bedsize
 - Listed residential properties, irrespective of bed size
 - Properties that are difficult to let or uneconomical to repair
 - Leasehold units in blocks with a high percentage of leasehold properties where additional sales can mean that the freehold can potentially be considered for disposal, either by leaseholder enfranchisement or direct sale
 - Pre fabricated homes – due to their high level of investment need.

With the exception of the following:

- Ground floor properties that may meet medical needs or are suitable for adaptation
 - Properties suitable for rehousing households on regeneration schemes
 - 3 bed+ family units withdrawn from the programme based on the outcome of a Review Panel meeting as set out in paragraph 62 of the report.
4. That the target number of disposals be increased up to a maximum of 140 per annum.
 5. That the duration of this initiative be extended from 3 (2009-12) to 7 years (2009-16) to coincide with the new Five Year Investment Programme.
 6. That the trigger value of void properties targeted for disposal be subject to regular review and decisions on any changes delegated to the Leader of the Council.
 7. That all disposal decisions in respect of implementation of the policy be delegated to the Head of Property, and the process be monitored by an officer panel and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing. Such monitoring to have particular regard for geographical location and quantity of the properties referred for disposal.
 8. That the progress to date in delivering Hidden Homes be noted, and the project be continued subject to regular review by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing.
 9. That the feedback from Decent Homes Review Working Party be noted and taken into consideration.

5. DEPUTATION REQUEST: RESIDENTS OF JARMAN HOUSE AND CANUTE GARDENS, HAWKSTONE ESTATE

This item had not been circulated 5 clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent as the issues the deputation wished to raise were connected with the housing investment strategy item which was due to be considered at this meeting.

The cabinet received a deputation from residents of Jarman House and Canute Gardens, Hawkstone Estate. The deputation spokesperson Mr Alan Milne outlined the residents proposals which could reduce the amount of financial investment required for the Hawkstone Estate.

The deputation informed the cabinet that they were first promised windows in 1990. The deputation stressed that if the proposed works by UK Power Networks in Southwark Park went ahead, then the current windows would be at risk of falling out as Jarman House was situated opposite the park.

The deputation raised concern/disappointment at the prospect of the low rise blocks being moved to the end of the 5 year programme.

RESOLVED:

That the representations of the deputation and the comments of the strategic director of housing services be noted.

6. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND REVISED STRATEGY

This item had not been circulated 5 clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent as all social landlords were required to meet the Government's Decent Homes standard by December 2010. Southwark did not meet this deadline and therefore urgently needed to develop and implement the 5 year investment programme to deliver the standard and satisfy external scrutiny. The council needed to agree as soon as possible the programme and deadline for completion with the regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) to quickly satisfy them that the council will meet the government's standard within an agreed revised time frame.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Southwark Decent Homes Standard adopted on an interim basis in April 2008 be replaced with the Government's Decent Homes standard.
2. That approval be given to the start of work on schemes on the remaining two year programme of works on the basis that they are delivered to the new standard as set out in 1 above.

3. That approval be given to a minimum housing investment programme of major works to the value of £326.5m over the next 5 years to ensure that the Council's homes including those homes managed by Leathermarket Joint Management Board, are invested in to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard and make them warm, dry and safe.
4. That the outcome of the consultation with residents on housing investment priorities which has taken place through the 2011 resident postal survey be noted.
5. That the feedback from the Area Housing Forums, the Decent Homes Review Working Party, Tenant Council, and Home Owners Council in the light of the postal survey findings be noted.
6. That the outcome of the bid for Government backlog funding and the potential for future funds for investment in the council's housing stock be noted.
7. That it be noted that any requirement for borrowing to support the housing investment programme would be an additional call on Housing Revenue Account resources and would be a matter that is reserved for Council Assembly to agree.
8. That any additional funds that become available through Government backlog funding or any other sources, be used to bring forward schemes within the 5 year programme so that works can be carried out more quickly.
9. That the sale of voids be maximised within agreed criteria on the disposal of void properties, and that the Hidden Homes programme be continued as set out in the 'Review of Void Disposal Strategy' report, item 4 of the agenda.
10. That 6 estates (listed below) be designated as High Investment Needs Estates and be dealt with as follows:
 - Aylesbury Estate - no changes are currently suggested to the agreed proposals for the regeneration of the estate.
 - Elmington Estate - no changes are currently suggested to the agreed proposals for the regeneration of the estate.
 - Brandon Estate - approve the expenditure of investment works on the estate as part of the council's housing investment programme.
 - Four Squares Estate - approve that security works are undertaken to Marden Square and Layard Square on the Four Squares estate up to a maximum value of £5m in total, as recommended by the Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Cabinet on 17 May 2011, and that a further study is undertaken to examine options for investment in or regeneration for, the Four Squares as a whole, working closely in consultation with residents, and that a report is brought back to Cabinet in October 2011
 - Hawkstone Estate – approve that on the Hawkstone Estate, investment works are progressed for John Kennedy House, as previously agreed, but that option appraisal work is carried out for the low rise blocks on the estate, working closely in consultation with residents, and that a report is brought back to cabinet in October 2011.

- Abbeyfield Estate – approve that a further report is brought back to cabinet in October 2011 to make a decision on whether to retain and refurbish Maydew House or dispose of it, taking into account the implications for Thaxted Court and Damory House.
11. That the proposed 5 year programme for the council's housing stock, as set out in Appendix 8 of the report be noted and officers be instructed to undertake resident consultation on the programme during the summer and report back to Cabinet in the Autumn.
 12. That the strategic director of housing services make arrangements for the new head of major works to come back to cabinet with detailed proposals to develop and agree a 30 year housing asset management plan.
 13. That officers facilitate residents' project groups for each of the high investment needs estates, where they are not currently in place, including an independent expert to help support residents in the development of future options for their estates.

7. EAST DULWICH ESTATE REGENERATION SCHEME: UPDATE AND PROPOSALS FOR REVISION

This item had not been circulated 5 clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent as vacant possession of Badminton House had been achieved and there was now a security risk as the block, located in a prominent position had been subject to numerous break-ins and would be vulnerable to squatting as it now stood empty. A prompt decision on the future of the block was required to secure both the council and neighbouring residents' interests.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress on the East Dulwich Estate regeneration scheme and the need to amend elements of the 2005 Executive decision in the light of changed circumstances, to reimburse the Housing Investment Programme for expenditure already made on the scheme be noted.
2. That in principle agreement be given to the disposal of Badminton House, including the commercial interests, to a third party, and detailed terms be considered at a later date.
3. That in principle agreement be given to the disposal of the Pytchley Road site as a separate entity without planning consent, and detailed terms be considered at a later date.
4. That the marketing and management strategy of the void sales be approved.
5. That agreement be given to the inclusion of Whaddon House in the Hidden Homes programme.

6. That agreement be given to an alternative approach to the conversion of the drying rooms as outlined at paragraph 24 of the report.
7. That agreement be given to an alternative approach to the new build proposals as outlined at paragraph 26 to 29 of the report.
8. That it be noted that the precise terms of disposal of any of the sites shall be subject to further cabinet approval where necessary.

8. DEPUTATION REQUEST - THE FRIENDS OF SOUTHWARK PARK

This item had not been circulated 5 clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept the item as urgent as the issues the deputation wished to raise were connected to an imminent proposal from UK Power Networks concerning the use of Southwark Park.

The cabinet received a deputation from The Southwark Park Friends in respect of a proposal by UK Power Networks (UKPN) company to use Southwark Park as their main works compound for power supply works to the City of London.

The deputation spokesperson Mr Pat Kingwell outlined the concerns of The Friends of Southwark Park. He reported that a large area within the park would become inaccessible to the public from November 2011 – November 2013 and the proposed site located close to the China Hall Gate would be visually blighted during that period. He also reported that users of the park would be faced with the works compound and project machinery.

The deputation believed the landscape would be badly affected - green space would be lost and may never be properly replaced. There could also be a negative impact on trees and wildlife near to the compound. The deputation also raised concern about the spoil generated during the works and its removal.

Concern was also raised by the deputation in respect of the works disturbing the nearby athletics track, noise pollution and the impact on traffic to the wider area and the park. The deputation felt that the proposals threatened public leisure opportunities in the park as the proposed compound area was part of the sports centre redevelopment plan. The deputation also felt that the proposals would be an inappropriate use of a listed park and that there would be a loss of public land once the works had been completed as UK Power Networks would retain access rights to the park to service the tunnel created through the works.

The deputation did not believe that the UKPN proposal to use Southwark Park was the only viable option for the company and asked that Southwark Council press UKPN to find an alternative site.

RESOLVED:

1. That the comments of the deputation be noted.
2. That the leader of the council and the cabinet member for transport, environment and recycling meet with UKPN.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 21 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2011.

THE ABOVE DECISIONS WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTABLE UNTIL AFTER THAT DATE. SHOULD A DECISION OF THE CABINET BE CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY, THEN THE RELEVANT DECISION WILL BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION.