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4 September 2007

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Housing Board
DATE: 12 September 2007
TIME: 6.00pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Lindsey Holloway

BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Councillor Mrs Wright (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Cully (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Foster
Councillor Ms Ballard	Councillor Foster-Reed
Councillor Burgess	Councillor Mrs Mudie
Councillor Champion	Councillor Rigg

The Mayor (Councillor Gill) (ex officio)
Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully) (ex-officio)

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (continuous ringing) or bomb alert (intermittent ringing) sounding, please leave the room immediately.

Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- If you are in a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking and require access to the Committee Room on the First Floor of the Town Hall for this meeting, assistance can be provided by Town Hall staff on request

If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE:

- i. Members are requested to note that if any member wishes to speak at the Board meeting then the Borough Solicitor is required to receive not less than 24 hours prior notice in writing or electronically and such notice shall indicate the agenda item or items on which the member wishes to speak.
- ii. Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

RECOMMENDED
MINUTE
FORMAT

PART A ITEMS

1 APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON
13 JUNE 2007 [Copy herewith].

4 DEPUTATIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.5

(NOTE: The Board is required to receive a deputation(s) on a matter which is before the meeting of the Board provided that notice of the intended deputation and its object shall have been received by the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Monday 10 September 2007. The total time for deputations in favour and against a proposal shall not exceed 10 minutes).

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS – STANDING ORDER 3.6

(NOTE: The Board is required to allow a total of 15 minutes for questions from Members of the public on matters within the terms of reference of the Board provided that notice of such Question(s) shall have been submitted to the Borough Solicitor by 12 noon on Monday 10 September 2007).

6 HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES
2007/08

To approve the grants set out in this report with funding as set out in the report from government homelessness grants and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), no funding will be required from the General Fund to meet these grants. (report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer:
Steve Newton
Extension 5296

7 REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE LEISURE

The purpose of this report is to outline the progress that has been made in relation to the redevelopment of The Leisure at Cunningham Drive, Bridgemarky. It reports on the consultations that have been taking place with a number of parties in relation to the realisation of a new scheme for the site. The report seeks a decision to transfer the land to Hermitage HA who would carry out the redevelopment of The Leisure. (report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer:
Oona Hickson
Extension 5292

Continued next page...

8 PROCESSING DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

To formally permit average costs to be accepted by the Private Sector Housing Team when assessing private sector (non – Gosport Borough Council tenants) Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant applications; in cases where the client would prefer a more expensive option to meet their needs. (report attached)

PART II
Contact Officer
Trevor Charlesworth
Extension 5510

9 INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES
(report to follow)

PART II
Contact Officer
Kim Carron
Extension 5669

10 ANY OTHER ITEMS

- which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances.

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 13 JUNE 2007

The Mayor (Councillor Gill)(ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully)(ex-officio), Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Burgess (P), Champion, Mrs Cully (Vice Chairman), Foster (P), Foster-Reed (P), Mrs Mudie (P), Rigg and Mrs Wright (Chairman) (P).

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Janne Carter.

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillors Carter, Hook and Wright would replace Councillors Champion, Mrs Cully and Rigg for this meeting.

5 APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from The Mayor (Councillor Gill)(ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Cully)(ex-officio) and Councillors Champion, Mrs Cully and Rigg.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 7 March and 17 May 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

8 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

9 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

PART II

10 NEW DELEGATIONS UNDER THE HOUSING ACT 2004

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'A') which sought to formally delegate powers contained within the Housing Act 2004 to the Housing Services Manager.

Officers responded to Members' questions regarding the scope of the proposed delegated powers to the Housing Services Manager. It was explained that enforcement powers available to the local authority would be used in instances where the landlord refused to repair a property but the powers could not be used in relation to owner/occupied properties. Part 4 of the Act related to Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs). These orders could entail holding a separate property tribunal. Regarding additional

control provisions for residential accommodation to determine whether a survey or examination of a property was necessary, it was confirmed that this piece of legislation was designed to ensure the safety of tenants and might not include areas such as roof aerial maintenance. The Borough Solicitor confirmed that the Government was delegating powers to local authorities under this piece of legislation.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the recommended delegated powers to the Housing Services Manager as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report and contained within the Housing Act 2004 be approved; and
- (ii) the Policy and Organisation Board (27 June 2007) and Council (11 July 2007) be recommended to approve the delegation of powers to the Housing Services Manager as contained within the Housing Act 2004.

11 BEST VALUE SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'B') which brought before Members the conclusions of the Best Value Sheltered Housing Working Group review and consultation with residents.

The Assistant Branch Secretary of Unison, addressed the meeting with regard to Unison's involvement with staff within the Sheltered Scheme Service. Discussions had centred on cleaning costs of communal areas and residential and non-residential staffing issues. Unison congratulated the Working Group and officers on the successful conclusion of this process.

Members were pleased that two bedroom units were being planned into redevelopments; it was hoped that new building designs would avoid any 'nooks and crannies' to minimise the potential for crime. When decanting residents, Members were in favour of consideration being given to residents' wishes to return to the same area or to be permanently re-housed elsewhere. Members were concerned that a recent News article had worried residents but it was confirmed that no press release had been issued by the Council.

Members welcomed the report and the valuable contribution made by the Working Group to initiate improvements. Following Members' questions regarding the source of finance for investment and redevelopment of the schemes, the Financial Services Manager explained that funding would come exclusively from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), within the HRA business plan.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) officers be instructed to work with an appointed Housing Association Partner or Partners to deliver detailed re-development plans for subsequent consideration by the Housing Board for The Leisure, Rogers House and Agnew House, including management options by the Housing Association Partner and/or the Council. Also that any re-development plans be subject to full consultation with the Ward Members for the particular schemes, with the views of Ward

Councillors being included in the subsequent re-development report;

- (ii) officers be instructed to identify alternative solutions for the future of Behrendt House and that any future solutions be considered in consultation with the Trade Union and be approved by the Housing Board;
- (iii) the retention of and investment in Alec Rose & Slocum House, Fortune House, Gloucester House and Woodlands House be approved and that investment in these schemes is programmed within the annual investment programmes approved by Members;
- (iv) amending charges for guest rooms to £5.00 and £7.50 per night be approved, depending on the facilities on offer at the specific schemes, and that any increase in guest room charges be linked to annual average rent increases;
- (v) officers be instructed to examine the cleaning costs for each scheme as part of a Best Value process;
- (vi) a policy of providing scooter spaces/recharging facilities and buggy stores into any new scheme development, where feasible, be approved and that further approval be given to re-charging electricity to users of Mobility Scooters. Charging for storage spaces to be in line with charges for car parking bays.
- (vii) when Sheltered Scheme Managers' accommodation becomes vacant, officers be instructed to explore ways to utilise the released accommodation and that any existing staff moving from tied accommodation be re-housed on a like for like basis.

12 HOMELESSNESS GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2007/08

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'C') which sought approval of the proposed grants to Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau; Housing Aid Centre, Rowner; Accommodation Resource Centre and the expansion of the Supported Lodgings Scheme.

Members were informed of an amendment to the report in that the Council's Best Value Performance Indicator for the prevention of homelessness in 2006/07 now stood at 6 (228 households) per 1,000 households in the district.

In response to Members' questions it was explained that officers were working to increase capacity for young homeless people as there is a lack of alternative accommodation for them in the Borough; this was borne out by the relatively high number of homeless identified in 2006/07.

Members were assured that although inappropriate allocation/s had recently been made, no precedent had been set as each case was considered on its own merits. Officers confirmed that procedures had been put in place to avoid future instances occurring; however current tenancy agreements could not be rescinded. The Housing Services Manager explained that the current Choice Based Lettings scheme was under review and the planned new points system would be presented to a future Housing Board meeting.

Members were concerned as to what the funding sources were for the proposed grants and emphasised the need to be clear and to monitor expenditure on comprehensive information. Officers gave an explanation of the planned funding sources for the grants including the domestic violence alarm service and travelling time for the Housing Aid Centre at Rowner. After further discussion Members were in favour of deferring the decision on the grants until the next Housing Board meeting to allow time for officers to prepare a detailed analysis of sources of funding for these grants.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the grants be deferred to the next meeting of the Housing Board, such report to also include information justifying the outreach service request to fund travel time.

13 HOUSING EDITORIAL PANEL REVIEW

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book as Appendix 'D') which proposed a change in title for the 'At Your Service Panel' and which set out terms of reference for the new Housing Editorial Panel.

The Chairman considered it important to change the name of the Panel as this would enable consideration to be given to other Housing Services' publications.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) the title of the 'At Your Service' Panel be amended to the Housing Editorial Panel; and
- (ii) the terms of reference for the new Housing Editorial Panel set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report be approved.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6.47pm

CHAIRMAN

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	12 September 2007
Title:	HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2007- 08
Author:	Housing Services Manager/SN
Status:	For decision

Purpose

To approve the grants set out in this report with funding as set out in the report from government homelessness grants and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), no funding will be required from the General Fund to meet these grants.

Recommendation

That the following grants be approved and funded by government homelessness grant (unless otherwise stated):

1. Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau, debt service: £11,911.74 of which £3,335 to be approved by this Housing Board from the HRA;
2. Housing Aid Centre, Rowner outreach service: £ 2,353.05;
3. Accommodation Resource Centre (Mediation and homeless education service): £7,092;
4. £20,000 to an agency for the supported lodgings scheme, subject to Service Level Agreement approved by the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman and Group spokespersons. The agency to be determined through the Hampshire Supporting People tendering exercise;
5. A budget of £1,558 for Fareham and Gosport Family Aid to act as agent for this Council in installing and removing domestic violence alarms;
6. A budget of £420 for domestic violence alarms monitoring by Hermitage Care;

1 Background

- 1.1 The June 2007 Housing Board referred this matter back to Officer's to amend the report so as to include the costs of domestic violence alarms within this report so that all costs could be considered at the same time.
- 1.2 For the year 2007-08 the Council has received funding bids as follows:
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Debt Service:
 - Accommodation Resource Centre:
 - Mediation and homeless education services:
 - Lodgings expansion scheme (new);
 - Housing Aid Centre, Rowner service:
 - Domestic Violence alarms
 - Capital costs for purchase of alarms
 - Revenue costs for monitoring deployed alarms
 - Revenue costs for installation and removal of alarms by Fareham and Gosport Family Aid;
- 1.3 Appendix A sets out the financial considerations contained in this report, and compares costs with last year. The costs are separated into capital and revenue costs.
- 1.4 The source of funding for the grants applications is as follows:
- £40,000 from The Department of Central and Local Government (£26,000 further grant being used for Housing Options team staffing). £20,000 of this is a one-off windfall grant made to this Council in recognition of successes made in reductions in numbers in temporary accommodation and to continue this work.
 - £3,335 from the Housing Revenue Account for the Citizens Advice Bureau debt. The amount recommended to come from the Housing Revenue Account is proportionate to Council tenants use of the service;
 - For Members information, a further £20,000 per annum revenue from Hampshire Supporting People has been secured to provide new support provision for the supported lodgings initiative;
 - £5,565.75 capital grant from Gosport and Fareham Community Safety Partnership, in respect of the purchase of domestic violence alarms;

- 1.5 The Housing Services Manager may approve grant for the Citizens Advice Bureau debt service and the Accommodation Resource Centre, mediation service, under previously delegated powers in consultation with Housing Board Chairman and Group Spokespersons. The other funding requests, being new, must be considered by Housing Board.

2 Report

2.1 Citizens Advice Bureau, Debt Service

In the year 2006-07, this long established service (funded by Gosport Housing Services) had the following service outcomes.

	Total cases	Homelessness prevented
Direct Council Housing Options Service referrals	65	37
Estimated Council tenant referrals*	28%	0
Non-direct Council referrals	130	Not recorded

* Reported statistics in columns B & C are annual projections based upon actual results October 2006 to March 2007 inclusive

- 2.2 The funding request for 2007-08 is for £11,911.74. This includes an incremental pay increase for the two part-time debt advisers and an additional 2 hours administration support in recognition that debt works accounts for 32% of all Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau work currently. The Housing Revenue Account contribution to funding is commensurate with the proportion of Council tenants using the service.

2.3 Housing Aid Centre

The Housing Aid Centre, operated by Southern Focus Trust, runs an outreach service in the Rowner multi-storey area. Although this is funded primarily from the Legal Services Commission (non-solicitor advice services) the Commission has terminated travel payments from 1 April 2007. The loss to the Housing Aid Centre is reported as £4,840 for 2007-08.

The Housing Aid Centre has requested a grant of £3,872 from this Council in 2007-08. Having reviewed the finances following completion of negotiations on domestic violence alarms it is clear that available finance is short of requested commitments by £1,518.95. It is recommended that this shortfall be taken from the Housing Aid bid (meaning a grant of £2,353.05) in total.

Southern Focus Trust does not think this reduced grant will result in the service closing. Southern Focus Trust has confirmed that they will report any adverse impact on the service arising from this reduced grant.

2.4 The Housing Aid Service in Rowner (and in combination with the Portsmouth County Court help desk that the Housing Aid Centre manages) has achieved 118 homeless preventions out of 268 cases seen.

2.5 Accommodation Resource Centre, Mediation and homelessness education services.

This Council's homelessness grants have made a contribution to funding of this service for several years in recognition of the work this agency does for young people. The grant requested for 2007-08 is £7,092, which is a 2.5% increase on the 2006-07 grant. It is recommended that this grant be approved.

2.6 Service outcomes for the Accommodation Resource Centre, in the first three quarters of 2006/07 are set out below.

	Total referrals	Homeless prevented
Council mediation referrals to ARC	20	4
ARC general cases	241	98

2.7 Accommodation Resource Centre – Lodgings scheme expansion.

This Council was one of three Council's in Hampshire that received additional homelessness grant for 2007/08. Gosport received £20,000. The purpose of that grant is to assist in the further reduction of numbers in temporary accommodation (Government instruction for a 50% reduction by 2010 applying).

Council officer advice to the Government was that the intended use would be to expand supported lodgings provision in the district. The reasons for this are:

- The largest (since 2005) and most difficult category of customer for the Council to manage are young single vulnerable customers (particularly those under eighteen years of age).
- Our experience has shown, and the Government view is, that supported lodgings is a good accommodation option for these customers;
- By enabling an agency to house the customer:

- Suitable accommodation with specialist support is secured;
- The customer is not counted as homeless, thus reducing this Council's homeless count

2.8 In outline, the scheme has two funding streams:

- Council grant that will be used to give incentives to accommodation providers to take in more challenging lodgers;
- Hampshire Supporting People Grant that will be used to provide new support provision to support the lodgers in this scheme;

The Hampshire Supporting People grant has been secured and a tender exercise is underway. It is recommended that this Council accept the Hampshire Supporting People tender exercise as the means to determine which agency is also awarded the Council grant of £20,000.

2.9 At this stage it is not possible for this Council to give any commitment to grant funding beyond the £20,000. However, Supporting People grant will continue. In the event that this Council, or other source provides no further grant, and lodgings providers feel unable to continue taking in the more challenging customers the scheme will revert to a standard supported lodgings scheme.

At minimum, this initial funding by the Council will achieve a longer-term expansion of supported lodgings provision in the district.

2.10 **Domestic Violence Alarms**

The domestic violence alarm scheme provides a useful housing option for victims of domestic violence where the perpetrator does not live in the property. The alarm is linked to Hermitage Care. If the alarm is set off, and the user does not cancel the activation by speaking to the operator and saying the password, the Police are automatically called on a priority call out.

This has proved an effective means of enabling victims to remain in their own home **at their option**, rather than apply as homeless and be accommodated in temporary accommodation.

2.11 The Police have been highly supportive of the Gosport scheme being expanded to Fareham. In addition, this Housing Board has already agreed the principal of transferring the responsibility to install and remove the alarms from this Council to Fareham and Gosport Family Aid (see 2006/07 Grants report).

2.12 The new scheme provides the following advantages over the old scheme:

- Victims of domestic violence in Gosport **and** Fareham will now be entitled to the scheme, regardless of tenure;
- Victims who do not have a telephone line can now be offered the service through mobile technology;
- Victims will be able to have alarms fitted at the weekends instead of just week days;
- With Fareham and Gosport Family Aid installing the alarms, alarm monitoring and on-going support will go hand-in-hand;
- Fareham and Gosport Family Aid outreach service come into more contact with victims of domestic violence and it is hoped that this will increase access to the scheme;
- Hermitage Care have confirmed that this Council can retain the existing units for the contingency of demand outstripping supply, and to address the much smaller number of cases where alarms are needed for other reasons (neighbour harassment, racially or sexually motivated harassment.)

2.13 Hermitage Care put a number of costed schemes to the Council, but by far the most cost effective scheme was for Gosport and Fareham to purchase 30 alarm kits (5 of which being mobile technology), and thereby reducing unit costs because no lease charge would apply. All alarms are covered by a five-year warranty. The scheme recommended to this Housing Board involves:

- Gosport and Fareham Community Safety Partnership funding the purchase of the alarms;
- Gosport and Fareham Housing Options (homelessness) funding their respective deployment and monitoring of deployed alarms costs. The costings in Appendix A assume a 50/50 split in costs across the two districts (i.e. the figures quoted for deployment and monitoring are only Gosport's costs – Fareham have the same costs)

Part of the grant in favour of Fareham and Gosport Family Aid is for testing equipment and training as alarms have to be tested before each installation.

3 Risk Assessment

3.1 The grants set out in this report achieve good value for money in terms of the prevention of homelessness agenda. In terms of service delivery it is important that the Council is not the only source homeless prevention in the district. There is no cost to the General Fund in providing these grants to help prevent homelessness in Gosport.

4 Conclusion

4.1 In addition to this Council's homeless prevention work (in the top quartile nationally) it is clear that significant numbers of people have their homelessness prevented by the voluntary sector. Continued funding of these external voluntary sector agencies is considered strategically important to ensure the best network across the district to prevent homelessness.

Financial Services comments:	Financing sources are detailed in Appendix A.
Legal Services comments:	The Council has power to make these grants.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	None
Corporate Plan:	None
Risk Assessment:	See paragraph 3.1
Background papers:	Grants to Voluntary Bodies and Prevention of Homelessness, 2006 (delegated powers report)
Appendices/Enclosures:	
Appendix 'A'	Financial costings
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Steve Newton

APPENDIX A
FINANCIAL COSTINGS – 2007/08 COUNCIL GRANTS

Agency	Comparison 2006/07 grant	2007/08 proposed grant	Source of grant 2007/08
Citizen Advice Bureau –Debt service	£12,055.71	£11,911.74	72% homeless grant 28% Housing Revenue grant
Accommodation Resource Centre – Youth mediation/education	£6,919.00	£7,092.00	Homeless grant
Fareport Fund-A-Home	£1,250.00	£0.00	N/A
Domestic Violence alarms DV alarms- Hermitage call centre costs	3000	£420	Homeless grant
DV alarm installation/removal by Fareham and Gosport Family Aid (inc electrical testing of alarms at each installation)		£1,558.50	Homeless grant
Housing Aid Centre	£0.00	£2,353.05	Homeless grant
Expanding supported lodgings (unspent grant in 2007/08 to be carried over)	£0.00	£20,000.00	Homeless grant
Total costs	£20,224.71	£43,335.29	
Summary of Revenue Grant source 2007/08			
DCLG grant available for external grant	£20,000.00	£40,000.00	
HRA contribution	£6,022.85	£3,335.29	
Total funds	£26,022.85	£43,335.29	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

Board/Committee:	HOUSING BOARD
Date of Meeting:	12 September 2007
Title:	REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE LEISURE
Author:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER/OH
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the progress that has been made in relation to the redevelopment of The Leisure at Cunningham Drive, Bridgemarky. It reports on the consultations that have been taking place with a number of parties in relation to the realisation of a new scheme for the site. The report seeks a decision to transfer the land to Hermitage HA who would carry out the redevelopment of The Leisure.

Recommendation

That the Housing Board recommends to the P & O Board;

- a) That the land at the Leisure, excluding that occupied by the bungalows, be transferred to Hermitage Housing Association for no consideration, and on terms to be agreed.
- b) That the Housing Services Manager, in liaison with Ward Councillors continues working on the detailed proposals, including financial and development discussions, for the redevelopment of the Leisure Sheltered Housing Scheme

The continuation of the rehousing and redevelopment proposals, noting the proposed time table and the expectation that a further report to Housing Board on this matter will be presented as matters progress.

1 Background

- 1.1 At the Housing Board meeting on 13 June 2007 a report from the Member Working Group, which had met during 2006 to consider the Council's Sheltered Housing Stock, was considered and its recommendations discussed and agreed. Members will recall that a major recommendation was to bring forward redevelopment proposals for 3 schemes, The Leisure, Rogers House and Agnew House, in conjunction with our Housing Association partners.

- 1.2 Hermitage Housing Association, now part of the Guinness Group, and one of our Housing Association partners had previously worked on a proposal for The Leisure which had not been successful in receiving financial support from the Department of Health. It was agreed with the Chairman of Housing that they and Parnell Design (architects of the original scheme) be approached again to work on a new proposal, this was mainly because it was felt that with a Housing Corporation bid round approaching this autumn it was important to develop a scheme with the potential of attracting Corporation funding.

Hermitage HA is a local housing provider who, as well as being one of our established partners, have significant experience in the management and provision of sheltered and frail elderly housing. One third of the stock that they own in Havant is accommodation for the elderly including a large scheme for the frail elderly on Hayling Island. Hermitage HA and Guinness also have a specialist care and support provider within their group which we have accessed to give further advice on design management and revenue issues in relation to this proposed scheme.

The new development would be owned by Hermitage HA as the grant to deliver the scheme would come from the Housing Corporation.

2 Report

- 2.1 Since the adoption of the Housing Board report and the decision to work up a bid for The Leisure a project team has met to develop plans for the new scheme, and to begin to resolve all the issues that arise with a proposal of this scale.
- 2.2 What is proposed is the rehousing of the existing tenants from the 24 bedsit scheme of which 15 bedsits are occupied. All existing residents have been consulted about the proposal so far, and their Housing requirements including any domiciliary care needs are now being collated. All existing residents will be sensitively decanted, and will be offered Home Loss and disturbance payments as compensation. All existing residents of The Leisure understand that they have the right to return to the new scheme should they so wish.

The bungalows surrounding the Leisure sheltered block are not directly affected by the redevelopment proposal and would remain within the ownership and management of the Council.

- 2.3 The proposed new scheme by Hermitage HA would involve the demolition of the existing scheme and the provision in its place of a 50 property development of one and two bedroom flats, all of which will be wheel chair accessible and four of which will be specifically adapted for wheelchair users. The scheme would include a

communal lounge and a separate resident's lounge, a dining room and a catering kitchen. Additional elements would include smaller rooms for resident's activities or treatments e.g. hairdressing, assisted bathing facilities, a laundry, reception and offices for scheme manager and staff as well as a guest room, and ancillary space for plant and buggy storage.

- 2.4 This will create a scheme capable of flexible use to provide a much wider range of facilities for use by older residents in the Gosport community. The proposal has been built on good practice from other areas of the country in relation to the development of "very sheltered housing" otherwise known as "extra care housing" and is a model which is supported by Hampshire County Council.

All of the 50 new flats would be available to rent from Hermitage HA by local older people with a range of housing and care needs.

Additionally there would be a service charge for the use of communal and other facilities.

- 2.5 Hampshire County Council (HCC) support is important to enable the delivery this scheme. HCC's supported housing expertise is represented on the project group for the scheme and the expectation is that HCC will provide some capital funding.

Hampshire County Council is seeking to establish a capital fund to develop, with other partners, at least 400 new very sheltered housing places across the county. The report seeking this approval is due to be considered by their Cabinet on 24 September 2007. Commitment to the revenue required for the development of very sheltered housing places has already been given in principle by the Hampshire Supporting People County Core Group in June 2007.

- 2.6 The financial contribution from Gosport Borough Council to the scheme would be the land that the new scheme will occupy. This is vital to the success of the scheme and its bid for Housing Corporation funding and is currently estimated to be worth between £700,000 and £800,000. This would be a similar to the redevelopment of the 'Orlit' and 'Steane' properties, whereby the land was transferred from the council with the new homes owned and managed by the Housing Association. Gosport Borough Council would be acting in an enabling capacity to provide new affordable homes for rent to older local people.

The total costs for the realisation of the scheme, including notional land and on costs, is currently £7.95m. Of this it is anticipated that £3.7m will be sought in grant from the Housing Corporation, £2.7m raised as a long term loan by Hermitage HA and the other capital costs supported by GBC in the form of land and HCC via a capital contribution.

- 2.7 There is a strong demand for affordable sheltered accommodation in Gosport with current demand far greater than available supply. The Best Value Sheltered Housing Review calculated that there will be a demand for an extra 400 units of sheltered accommodation to be met by 2011. Gosport currently has no very sheltered housing provision but demographic trends of the area indicate that there is an urgent need for this type of provision to be developed; this also assists in the funding case for such a scheme with both the Housing Corporation and HCC.
- 2.8 Typically, such a scheme will cater for a range of older persons needs and ensure that for as long as possible older citizens are able to live independently in good quality accommodation which is designed to allow for a variety of mobility and sensory impairments which may come with age. Schemes typically have a Warden and other care staff and also offer on-site facilities such as an optional cooked midday meal other activities include a social club and access to facilities that may be required including assisted bathing and hairdressing. Any housing care provided to the residents is via an individual housing care and support package. The Housing Care and Support package would be tendered under the standard Supporting People arrangements.
- 2.9 The timescale for the new scheme, once all the current residents have been sensitively rehoused and the existing building demolished is for it to take 18 months to build. It is therefore anticipated that the redevelopment would commence in 2008 and the new scheme would open in 2010.
- 2.10 In order to maximise the chances of obtaining Housing Corporation support the scheme will be submitted for planning approval shortly after detailed consultation with the residents of The Leisure, properties adjacent to the scheme, and the wider community. The Housing Corporation focus is on deliverable schemes, and schemes have little chance of funding if they are unlikely to receive planning approval. The costs of making the planning application which are considerable are being born by Hermitage HA and will be absorbed by them if the scheme is unsuccessful.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The major risks to this scheme are securing planning permission and financial in terms of the grant required to realise the scheme. The scheme cannot proceed if either of these are not forthcoming. However, the partnership approach to the scheme delivery offers the best option for scheme realisation and the role of the Local Authority in supporting such an initiative is a major consideration when the Housing Corporation is considering funding opportunities.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The report describes the progress so far in developing proposals for the redevelopment of The Leisure sheltered scheme, and details the rehousing, consultation and redevelopment discussions that have taken place to date. The final detailed arrangements for the redevelopment are to be reported to a future Housing Board meeting.

Financial Services comments:	As outlined in the report. It is unlikely that an affordable solution could be developed involving retaining ownership of all of the units without significantly jeopardising the ability to achieve Decent Homes Standard with our housing stock.
Legal Services comments:	<p>The Recommendation made is to transfer the Council's land to the RSL Partners for a nil consideration. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 (Local Authority Assistance for Privately Let Housing) and the General Consents issued by the Government under that Section, permit the Council to transfer the land for a nil consideration so long as such financial assistance to RSLs does not exceed £10m in any one year, and that certain conditions are met. A certificate from the Council's Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer or Chief Legal Officer shall be conclusive as to the amount of such assistance.</p> <p>The Borough Solicitor will ensure that the conditions referred to above are provided for in the documentation of Transfer.</p>
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Meeting the Decent Homes Standard is a key objective of the Housing Services SIP (Service Improvement Plan)
Corporate Plan:	Meets objectives in relation to the Strategic Priority of Prosperity by improving access to decent housing
Risk Assessment:	See paragraph 3.1
Background papers:	None
Appendices/Enclosures:	None
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Oona Hickson Head of Housing Strategy and Enabling

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	12 September 2007
Title:	PROCESSING DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS
Author:	Housing Services Manager/TC
Status:	For decision

Purpose

To formally permit average costs to be accepted by the Private Sector Housing Team when assessing private sector (non – Gosport Borough Council tenants) Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant applications; in cases where the client would prefer a more expensive option to meet their needs.

Recommendation

That the Housing Board formally approves permission for the Private Sector Housing Team to accept average costs when assessing private sector housing Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant applications; in cases where the client would prefer a more expensive option to meet their needs.

1.0 Background

1.1 Under the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 the Borough Council must provide Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants for private sector residents when it has been assessed (usually by an Occupational Therapist) that the works entailed will meet the needs of a registered or registerable disabled person towards:–

- Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, from and within the property;
- Making the property safe for the disabled occupant;
- Providing suitable and accessible living, sleeping, bathing, WC and cooking facilities;
- Providing suitable heating;
- Altering as required the heating, lighting and electrical systems/fittings.

The intention of the proposed works is to give disabled people a greater degree of independence in their own home.

- 1.2 The Council must award a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant upon receipt of a full and proper application. The application must be made according to the prevailing legislation (Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996) and Government guidance that determines, amongst other things, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum contribution that may be made, and the test of financial resources (since 31 December 2005 the parents of disabled children have been exempt) that must be applied.

It is a statutory requirement that all applicants must have their needs assessed by a suitably qualified person, usually applicants make their initial approach to Hampshire County Council Adult Services Occupational Therapy Unit.

Where appropriate, applicants are urged to pursue their application via the local Home Improvement Agency which, in Gosport, has recently changed, following a formal tendering procedure, from Southern Focus Trust to 'In Touch'.

- 1.3 The capital funding of assistance for approved works for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants comes from the Council's own resources and Central Government funds. The Government reimburses 60% of all expenditure on Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants below an allocation of specified capital grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government. If the Borough Council spends more on Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants than the allocation of specified capital grant from the DCLG they will not reimburse 60% of this expenditure. The Borough Council would have to provide 100% of the cost of the works.

2.0 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant Process

- 2.1 For the vast majority of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant applicants the process begins when they apply to Hampshire County Council Adult Services Occupational Therapy Unit for an assessment. The Occupational Therapist assesses the person and, if appropriate, recommends necessary and appropriate works to meet the needs of the disabled person under Section 24(3) (a) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 2.2 Having assessed that a client's needs should be met by the installation of an aid or adaptation, a recommendation is forwarded to the Private Sector Housing Team who must then determine if the relevant works are reasonable and practicable. The same Team processes the application, approves it and then ensures the works are completed satisfactorily. As the Team approves grants that are funded using Government and local authority finances, they must ensure that the works are reasonably priced and that the Borough Council is obtains good value for money.

- 2.3 Usually the applicant chooses to employ the services of the local Home Improvement Agency as their agent. This is because the legal process of making a 'bone fide' application can be difficult as the applicant has to complete a detailed application form and provide proof of earnings, income, investments, etc; and find two reputable contractors to provide reasonable quotes for the necessary work.

The local Home Improvement Agency, a non-profit making charity, receives funding from Supporting People, Gosport Borough Council and Social Services. Their aim is to assist clients remain in their homes in a reasonable degree of comfort and security, and give free and impartial advice in a supportive and helpful way.

Choosing the local Home Improvement Agency is entirely optional and the applicant does not have to do so but, the vast majority of applicants use them because of their vast experience and charitable status.

3.0 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant Approved Works

- 3.1 The purposes for which an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant must be approved are set out under Section 23(1) of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. A summary of such has been produced in paragraph 1.1.
- 3.2 The vast majority of recommendations from the Occupational Therapy Unit involve providing access to bathing facilities and, providing access to facilities in a property above the ground floor. Providing access to bathing facilities is usually satisfied by the removal of a slipper bath in the client's home and the installation of a level access shower or 'wet room'.

Providing access to the floors above the ground floor is usually satisfied by the installation of a straight stair lift, or curved stair lift. In the last financial year, 2006-07, a total of 41 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant were completed. As part of this total 24 were for level access showers or 'wet rooms', 11 were for straight stair lifts and, 3 were for curved stair lifts.

In some instances a single Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant involved the installation of a level access shower and a stair lift.

- 3.3 Having assessed that a client's needs should be met by the installation of a specific aid or adaptation, these are the works which the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant will be approved for. The cost of using reasonable materials, installed at a reasonable rate will be met wholly or partly by the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

Some clients prefer a different but costlier adaptation, such as a more powerful shower, or even a ground floor extension. As the Private

Sector Housing Team must ensure good value for money, it can only approve the cheapest option for works that will satisfy the needs of the client. So, any costs above those assessed as reasonable by the Private Sector Housing Team, but requested by the client, must be borne by the client.

4.0 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant request for different works

- 4.1 In a few cases, twice per year on average, the client chooses to have an extension built rather than a stair lift or/and a level access shower. In these instances the amount of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant approved can only cover the cost of the original approved aid/adaptation i.e. level access shower.

To ascertain relevant costs it is necessary for the agent (usually the local Home Improvement Agency) to request quotes from two reputable contractors (two quotes are always required except in exceptional circumstances) for the original works.

If the quotes are adjudged to be reasonable, then the lower of the two is used to assess the amount of grant aid that can be allocated to the client.

- 4.2 Whatever extra works, above and beyond the cost of the original Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, are undertaken; they must still meet the needs of the client and be carried out to a satisfactory standard. Requesting quotes from reputable local contractors for works that they will never be able to undertake wastes their time, as well as the time of the agent and the Private Sector Housing Team, who have to assess them.
- 4.3 It would improve efficiency for all parties if an up-to-date list of average costs were used to calculate how much grant aid can be allocated to those clients who request an extension. The average costs of the most commonly installed adaptations in the Borough in 2006-07 is listed in Appendix A.
- 4.4 It is therefore proposed that, in cases where a client requests a more expensive adaptation option to the one that has been proposed by the Occupational Therapist, that an average cost be used. This average cost will be updated annually. A client not wishing to accept an average cost may request two original quotes.
- 4.5 The proposal has been reviewed and confirmed as suitable by Internal Audit.
- 4.6 There are no specific Crime and Disorder implications to this report.

Financial Services comments:	There are no direct financial implications for the Council.
Legal Services comments:	The relevant legislation relating to this Report is set out within it.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The implementation and monitoring of work undertaken under the provisions of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 will be part of the Housing Service Improvement Plan for 2007-08
Corporate Plan:	The Strategic Priority of Prosperity aims to achieve better access to decent housing
Risk Assessment:	Risk assessments have been carried out for separate elements of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996:
Background papers:	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and related guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix 'A'
	The Most Commonly Installed DFG Adaptations in the Borough (2006-07)
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Trevor Charlesworth, Principal EHO

APPENDIX A

The Most Commonly Installed DFG Adaptations in the Borough (2006-07)

Adaptation	Number	Average Cost
Level Access Shower / Wet Room	24	£3,835.77
Straight Stair lift	11	£1,640.55
Curved Stair lift	3	£4,040.00

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

Board/Committee:	Housing Board
Date of Meeting:	12 September 2007
Title:	INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES
Author:	Housing Services Manager/KC
Status:	For decision

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information about Introductory tenancies.

Recommendation

1. The Housing Board decides whether to adopt introductory tenancies for Gosport Borough Council stock.
2. That if it concludes to do so that it instructs officers to develop a comprehensive policy for implementation by 31st March 2008 and that an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation is submitted to Council for agreement.
3. That if it concludes not do so that officers submit a further report within 3 years or sooner if necessitated by changed circumstances.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Since the introduction of the Housing Act 1996 councils have been able to offer what is termed an 'introductory tenancy'. This is a 12 month probationary tenancy after which tenants may become a secure tenant provided they meet the conditions of their tenancy agreement.
- 1.2 Chapter 1 of Part 5 of the Housing Act 1996 allows local housing authorities and housing action trusts to adopt an introductory tenancy scheme for all new tenants. Introductory tenants are essentially on probation and the landlord can evict them during the probationary period. They do not have as many rights as secure tenants. At the end of the probationary period, the landlord may seek to extend an introductory tenancy in cases of anti-social behaviour or other *significant* breaches of the tenancy agreement. Otherwise the introductory tenancy will automatically become a secure tenancy.
- 1.3 Section 179 of the Housing Act 2004 amended the Housing Act 1996 to give social landlords the flexibility to extend introductory tenancies by a further 6 months, where there are continuing doubts about the conduct of a tenant or in cases of anti-social behaviour. Provisions to extend only apply to new introductory tenancies granted after 6 June 2005. The landlord must serve on the tenant a notice setting out the reasons

for the extension and informing the tenant of his right to request a review of the landlord. The review must be conducted in accordance with The Introductory Tenancies (Review of Decisions to Extend a Trial Period) (England) Regulations 2006.

- 1.4 Introductory tenancies must be brought to an end by a County Court possession order. Before Court proceedings are commenced a valid notice to quit must be served on each tenant so that the tenancy is brought to an end after the expiry of 28 days. Furthermore a prescribed notice must be served alongside the notice to quit that informs the tenant of their right to a review of the decision to seek an order for possession. Where a landlord decides to seek possession there is **no** requirement upon them to demonstrate to the Court any of the Grounds for possession for secure tenancies contained in Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985. At the possession hearing, the Courts *only* consider whether the appropriate procedure was followed, and do not consider the facts on which the landlords decision was based, or the merits of its decision. Where the court is satisfied that the correct procedure was followed a possession order must be granted.
- 1.5 The procedure does include a statutory right to an internal review of the landlord's decision to seek possession. The review must be conducted fairly and in accordance with the Introductory Tenants (Review) Regulations 1997.
- 1.6 Overlaying legal considerations under tenancy law, new Court of Appeal precedent under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places significant obligations upon any Council. Those obligations are detailed, but can be summarised as:
 - a) Requirement to establish, **in every case** where eviction is considered, whether an occupier is disabled (the definition of disability being far reaching and of a low threshold);
 - b) To consider this point before notice is issued;
 - c) To put in place appropriate services to assist the person- in this circumstance it would be services which might modify behaviour so as to circumvent the need for possession action;
 - d) Failure to adopt these measures and /or the inability to evidence effective and suitable measures can provide an absolute defence to proceedings.
- 1.7 In the circumstances where a tenant wishes to challenge the decision to recover possession, or to take issue with the procedure followed on review, this must be by way of judicial review. If the County Court considers that a tenant has a realistic prospect of success with a judicial review application it may grant a short adjournment pending determination of the judicial review.

2.0 INTRODUCTORY TENANCY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 An introductory tenancy provides tenants with many of the same rights as a secure council tenancy, but tenants can be evicted more easily. In addition, introductory tenants cannot;

- a) Exchange their tenancy with any other tenant
- b) Transfer the tenancy, unless they are ordered to by a court or in other very rare circumstances
- c) Exercise the right to buy (however, the period of introductory tenancy may count towards the right to buy)
- d) Take in lodgers or sublet all or part of the property
- e) Make improvements to the property without the Council's permission.

2.2 Introductory tenants have the right to be;

- a) Told about introductory tenancies and the council's duties to repair
- b) Consulted on housing matters and kept up to date about any changes that affect introductory tenancies.

2.3 However, those with an introductory tenancy have a number of responsibilities too including;

- a) Pay the weekly rent
- b) Keep the property clean and decorated
- c) Respect the neighbours and not cause a nuisance
- d) Make sure that anyone living at or visiting the property does not cause a nuisance
- e) Keep their garden in a neat and tidy condition
- f) Allow council staff and contractors into the property to carry out inspections and repairs
- g) Give the council four weeks notice to end the introductory tenancy.

2.4 If a tenant under an introductory tenancy breaches any of the conditions of their tenancy agreement then they may be evicted. This could include failure to pay due rent, the tenant causing or allowing visitors to cause a nuisance or annoyance or the tenant moving out and renting the home to someone else.

2.5 A Housing Officer would firstly visit the tenant to discuss the matter and try to sort out any difficulties. If, however, the tenant has broken the conditions of the tenancy agreement, a notice of possession may be issued which will inform the tenant that the council will be requesting an immediate possession order.

3.0 INTRODUCTORY COUNCIL TENANCY SCHEMES IN ENGLAND

3.1 The number of council's who operate an Introductory Tenancy scheme

has been building slowly over the last 11 years. Research in 2000 indicates that at that time approximately 30% of Councils had implemented Introductory Tenancies. It is estimated to be now 50% of Councils. Generally the schemes are aimed at households who are becoming tenants of a council for the first time. They are not used when for example when a tenant is transferring from one council property to another or when Housing Association tenants transfer to the Councils stock.

- 3.2 A number of introductory tenancy schemes offer practical tenancy support for vulnerable households who would otherwise struggle to live independently in the community. Council's are aware of their homelessness prevention responsibilities and are therefore keen to avoid increasing the volume of homeless households in their own area.

4.0 PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION OF INTRODUCTORY TENANCIES BY THE HOUSING BOARD

- 4.1 The Housing Board considered an initial report on Introductory Tenancies on 4 June 1997. It resolved that the Council undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise with its tenants and leaseholders and those on the waiting list over the possible implementation of Introductory Tenancies.
- 4.2 The Housing Board received a further report on Introductory Tenancies on 14 January 1998 which included the results from the consultation exercise. 31 respondents out of the 34 that responded to the consultation stated a preference for the introduction of an Introductory Tenancy Scheme. Due to the low number of responses from the consultation exercise the Housing Board decided not to pursue an Introductory Tenancy scheme at that time.

5.0 ALLOCATIONS POLICY

- 5.1 There would be a need to amend this council's current allocations policy and while this would involve a minor amendment (this is shown at Appendix A) there would be a statutory need to consult with our customers on the Housing Register and with our Housing Association Partners prior to implementation of any introductory tenancies.

6.0 OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL RESEARCH

- 6.1 The latest research carried out for the Welsh Assembly Government (Housing Research Summary HRR 3/04 published in August 2004) into Introductory tenancies made a number of recommendations (see Appendix B): A selection of observations from the report are highlighted below:
 - 6.1.1 There had been little research actually undertaken into the effectiveness of Introductory Tenancies, but that research that had

been undertaken found mixed views on their effectiveness

- 6.1.2 That Introductory Tenancies were widely held by existing tenants to be good practice (confirming research undertaken by Leicester CC where 90% of tenant endorsed the initiative)
- 6.1.3 That 68% of evictions of those with Introductory Tenancies [in Wales over the study period] were for rent arrears with 19% for anti-social behaviour
- 6.1.4 That Introductory Tenancies should be seen as just one tool within a comprehensive framework of anti-social behaviour initiatives.
- 6.1.5 That no evidence of malicious or unfounded complaints against those holding introductory tenancies was found
- 6.1.6 That consultation with residents should take place prior to the introduction of any initiative and that where an authority decides not to pursue Introductory Tenancies it should regularly review that decision.

7.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The delivery of this initiative will require staffing resource and a small budget allocation for other costs including printing. Although it is anticipated that these can be met from existing budgets this project may affect the ability to carry out alternatives.
- 7.2 It can be anticipated that there will be implications for daily workloads for certain staff associated with the running of this new initiative although these may be offset, to an extent against reduced workloads in dealing with rent arrears and/or anti-social behaviour if the initiative is a success.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Introductory tenancies may have an impact in reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour.

8.0 TIMESCALES

- 8.1 Should the Housing Board decide to implement introductory tenancies, it should be possible to begin the scheme by 31st March 2008

Financial Services comments:	As detailed in 7.0
Legal Services comments:	Introductory Tenancies can be adopted by the Council under The Housing Act 1996, as amended
Service Improvement Plan implications:	The implementation of Introductory Tenancies is not part of the Housing Service Improvement Plan for 2007-08
Corporate Plan:	The Strategic Priority of People aims to achieve reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour
Risk Assessment:	There are no risks associated with the introduction of Introductory Tenancies
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 of Part 5 of the Housing Act 1996 • Section 179 of the Housing Act 2004 • Housing Board report on Introductory Tenancies 4 June 1997 • Housing Board report on Introductory Tenancies 14 January 1998 • Welsh Assembly Government Housing Research “Evaluating The Use of Introductory & Starter Tenancies” HRR 3/04 published in August 2004
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix A: Allocations Policy Appendix B: Housing Research Summary HRR 3/04 published in August 2004
Report author/ Lead Officer:	Kim Carron, Head of Strategy and Enabling

Existing Policy extract

SECTION THREE

LETTINGS OUTSIDE OF HOUSING REGISTER POLICY

1. The following categories do not fall to be considered under the Housing Register Policy:
 - (a) Offers of accommodation on a non-secure tenancy basis.[Amend to add: "other than on an introductory tenancy basis (Section 124 Housing Act 1996)]

Board:	HOUSING
Date of meeting:	12 September 2007
Title:	Exchange of Land Trinity Green Area: The Council and Kelsey Housing Association
Author:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER/ch
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To seek Board approval for the exchange of land between the Council and Kelsey Housing Association as shown hatched [GBC 1-2] (Kelsey Housing Association to the Council) as shown double hatched [K1-3] (The Council to Kelsey Housing Association) on the attached plan.

Recommendation

1. That the Board approves the exchange of land between the Council and Kelsey Housing Association as detailed in this report.
2. That the Board authorises the Borough Solicitor to enter into such legal documentation as is necessary to effect the above decision
3. That the Board recommends to the Policy and Organisation Board that the transfer of land as detailed in this report is progressed.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In March 2004 Gosport Borough Council entered into an agreement for the transfer of four tower blocks (Harbour and Seaward Towers, Blake Court and Hammond Court) and associated land to Kelsey Housing Association.
- 1.2 Kelsey Housing Association has subsequently approached the Council with a proposal to rationalise some of the original land transfer boundaries. It also wishes to exchange land in order to facilitate environmental works that they are proposing to undertake in the area.
- 1.3 Parallel to this request the Council is requesting that two areas of land original transferred in March 2004 are returned to Council ownership for development and maintenance purposes.
- 1.4 Officers of the Council and Kelsey Housing Association have reached agreement (subject to appropriate Board approval) of land to be exchanged to the mutual benefit of both organisations.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The areas of land to be exchanged are detailed on the attached plan [Appendix 1] and the rationale for exchange is explained in 2.1.1 to 2.1.6 below:
- 2.1.1 The transfer of land from Council to Kelsey Housing Association are indicated by a double hatch and marked K1 to K3 on the attached plan. The transfer of land from Kelsey Housing Association to the Council are indicated by hatching and marked GBC1-2 on the attached plan.
- 2.1.2 K1 [28m²]: a small area of land behind the garage site to be transferred. Originally retained by the Council in error.
- 2.1.3 K2 [346m²]: Access to Harbour Tower car park. Ownership currently with the Council but vested in the Highway Authority. It is understood that Kelsey Housing Association require the land to provide additional landscaping and parking facilities. It will rest with Kelsey Housing Association to make an application for a stopping up order, and to that extent the transfer of this land will be “at risk” for them.
- 2.1.4 K3 [314m²]: Access to Seaward Tower car park. Ownership currently with the Council but vested in the Highway Authority. It is understood that Kelsey Housing Association require the land to provide additional landscaping. As 2.1.3 for an application for a stopping up order.
- 2.1.5 GBC1 [482m²]: currently a grassed area, west of Barclay House hostel accommodation. The re-acquisition of the land will allow it is be used, if required, in any future proposal to redevelop the Barclay House area.
- 2.1.6 GBC2 [312m²]: grassed area west of the Millennium Sundial. The surrounding area to the Sundial is currently owned and maintained by the Council. Re-acquiring this land will provide continuity in maintenance.
- 2.2 The Head of Property Services is of the opinion that this transaction represents Best Consideration under the provisions of Housing Act 1985, as amended, in that the land to be disposed of has little or no monetary value, and the Council is being compensated for it by the proposed exchange of land that it requires for its future plans.

3.0 Risk Assessment

There are no risks associated with the acceptance of the proposal.

4.0 Crime And Disorder Implications

- 4.1 There are no Crime And Disorder Implications for this report

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 That the transfer of these small areas of land between the Council and Kelsey Housing Association will be of mutual benefit to both organisations.

Financial Services comments:	
Legal Services comments:	Any disposal of the Council owned land will be under the provisions of The Housing Act 1985, as amended. The disposal can proceed if the Council obtains best consideration for its land. It is noted from the Report that the Head of Property considers this to be the case (2.2). The acquisition will proceed under the same Act, and Members can approve the same if they are satisfied that the Council is receiving value for money.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	This exchange of land is not in the Housing Services Service Improvement Plan for r2007-08. There are no implications of this report to the Housing Service Improvement Plan
Corporate Plan	None
Risk Assessment	There are no risks associated with this report
Background papers:	GBC & Kelsey Housing Association original Transfer Document (March 2004)
Appendices/Enclosures:	Appendix 1/Plan
Lead Officer	Charles Harman: Head of Operational Services (x5287)