



## COUNCIL

**MEETING** : Thursday, 14th August 2014

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Llewellyn (Mayor), Noakes (Sheriff & Deputy Mayor), James, Dallimore, Norman, Organ, Porter, Haigh, Hilton, Gravells, Tracey, McLellan, Smith, Hobbs, Lugg, C. Witts, Hanman, Ravenhill, Field, Williams, Brown, Dee, Taylor, Hansdot, Gilson, Mozol, Patel, Randle, Toleman, Chatterton and Pullen

**Others in Attendance**

Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

Tanya Davies, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Parvati Diyar, Democratic Services Officer

Tony Wisdom, Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES** : Cllrs. Lewis, Wilson, Bhaimia, S. Witts and Beeley

### 35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

35.1 Councillors Hansdot, Lugg, Randle and Toleman declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 4, Housing Futures – Outcome of Formal Consultation on Housing Transfer as Board Members of Gloucester City Homes. They retired to the public gallery for this item.

35.2 Councillor Smith declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in respect of her daughter's employment with Gloucester City Homes.

### 36. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

36.1 Moved by Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture) and seconded by Councillor Dallimore (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) –

36.2 **RESOLVED** - That Council Procedure Rules be suspended to allow the relevant officers to address the Council in respect of agenda item 4 (Housing – Outcome of Formal Consultation on Housing Transfer).

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**37. HOUSING FUTURES - OUTCOME OF FORMAL CONSULTATION ON HOUSING TRANSFER**

- 37.1 Councillors Hansdot, Lugg, Randle and Toleman having declared a prejudicial interest in this matter as Board Members of Gloucester City Homes retired to the public gallery for this item.
- 37.2 Councillor Organ, Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure presented the report and addenda which requested Council to consider, pursuant to its duties under Schedule 3a of the Housing Act 1985, representations made during the Stage 1 consultation and whether any changes should be made to the Council's offer, and to consider whether to proceed to the formal Stage 2 of the consultation process, balloting the Council's secure and introductory tenants and testing the opinion of leaseholders and shared-owners.
- 37.3 He noted that the report represented a critical point in the transfer of the Council's housing stock which was the only way to ensure that the stock would be maintained in a good state of repair.
- 37.4 He emphasised that the Stage 1 consultation was not the formal ballot and the 4 per cent return was consistent with, if not higher than, that experienced with other recent Arm's Length Management Organisation transfers.
- 37.5 He stated that acceptance of the recommendations in the report would allow the Council to move to an independently conducted ballot of the tenants over a four week period.
- 37.6 He advised Members that should a majority of the Council's tenants vote in favour of the transfer, the Government would help with repayment of the historic debt. If the transfer did not proceed substantial cuts in the service would have to be made and the stock would fall into disrepair.
- 37.7 Councillor Organ outlined the recommendations in the report and moved their acceptance. Councillor James, Leader of the Council, seconded the motion.
- 37.8 Councillor Hilton supported the recommendation and asked when the ballot would be held. He referred to paragraphs 7.7 and 7.8 of the report and expressed some concern regarding the potential land transfer. He noted that there were areas of land in his ward (Kingsholm) which were regarded as public open space and he requested that each Member be supplied with a definitive map of such land within their wards and be asked to comment on the proposals.
- 37.9 Councillor Haigh supported the recommendations and encouraged the Council's tenants to become involved in the process. She believed that the tenants would be more secure if the management of their homes were to be removed from the vagaries of local government finance. She supported Councillor Hilton's concern regarding transfer of land.
- 37.10 Councillor Tracey noted the importance of the transfer and wished to be informed of any land proposed for transfer within her ward (Westgate). She believed that the interests of the Council's tenants were paramount and noted that Gloucester City

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Homes had proved itself and she thanked their Chief Executive, Ashley Green, for his efforts.

37.11 Councillor Smith had been impressed with the level of knowledge displayed by members of the Housing Futures Residents' Panel and called for them to be sent the thanks of the Council for their involvement to date.

37.12 Councillor Organ advised that the date for the ballot had not been set as dates were awaited from the Electoral Reform Society who would conduct the ballot. He noted that the transfer of land was a big issue and every Councillor should be involved as their local knowledge would be invaluable. He noted that the Land Sub-Group was in action and surveyors were measuring plots of land. He undertook to write to the members of the Housing Futures Residents' Panel.

**37.13 RESOLVED –**

- (1) No changes should be made to the Council's offer as contained in the Offer Document dated 7 July 2014 and that no further clarification is required.
- (2) The Council proceeds to stage 2 of the formal consultation (the tenants' ballot) and to issue a formal Stage 2 letter to the Council's secure and introductory tenants.
- (3) The Council also proceeds to a good practice Stage 2: test of opinion of leaseholders and shared owners that requests they formally express their opinion in favour or against the proposal to transfer their homes to Gloucester City Homes.
- (4) It be noted that the results of the ballot and test of opinion will be reported separately to the next meeting of the Council that follows the closing date of the ballot and test of opinion and will include recommendations about future actions and statutory notices.

**Time of commencement: 18:00 hours**

**Time of conclusion: 18:20 hours**

**Chair**