

**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Housing and Central Services Committee  
26 January 2006**

Councillor Julie Searle (Chairperson)  
Councillor Carol Eade (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillor Ken Bashford  
Councillor Brian Boggis  
Councillor Ann Bridges

Councillor Robert Dunn  
Councillor Debbie Kennard

Absent\*

**HCSC/677/05-06    Declarations of Interest / Substitute Members**

There were no declarations of interest or substitute members.

**HCSC/678/05-06    Questions and Statements by the Public**

Members of the public were invited to ask questions or make statements about any matter for which the Council had a responsibility or which affected the district.

There were no members of the public present.

**HCSC/679/05-06    Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

The Chairman noted that at the previous meeting the Adur Consultative Forum had asked the Committee to nominate a member to attend the Compact Working Group, due to meet in early March. She reported that the committee had considered this and agreed that the member be Councillor Ann Bridges.

**HCSC/680/05-06    Adur Consultative Forum Minutes**

There were no minutes from Adur Consultative Forum for consideration.

**HCSC/681/05-06    Housing Revenue Account – Budget 2006/07**

Before the Committee was a report of the Head of Financial Services, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these Minutes as Item 5.

The Head of Financial Services introduced the report which set out the financial arrangements for the Housing Revenue Account and asked the committee to agree the level of rents and charges for 2006/07. He noted that there had been zero increase on housing dwelling rents for two years and zero increase on garage rents for five years. The report recommended an average rent increase for housing dwellings of 3.1% which would result in a deficit of approximately £34,000 to be covered from existing reserves.

The Committee asked whether the economic deprivation in some wards in the area was taken into account when calculating the level of rent for Council dwellings. The Head of Financial Services replied that the calculation takes into account the average earnings in West Sussex and the value of the property but not the level of economic deprivation in particular wards. The Director of Services clarified that the level of economic deprivation is reflected in applications for Housing Benefit.

Members proposed that the level of rent for Council dwellings be increased by an average of 3.1%, as set out at recommendation (a), as implementation of progression towards restructured rents. This was seconded and agreed.

The Committee discussed the level of increase to be applied to rents for Council garages. It was noted that, as part of a scheme to address the number of void garages in the District, some garages were being let at lower rents than others. The Committee felt that this scheme had helped to reduce the number of vacant garages and address parking problems. Members suggested that previously subsidised rents be increased in line with the standard rent levels. The Head of Housing Management clarified that this aspect of garage rents would be reviewed by the Committee in due course. The Committee agreed that the scheme should continue as per the timetable previously agreed.

Members proposed that the level of rent for Council garages be increased by 3.1% in line with the average increase agreed for Council dwellings. It was noted that this increase would equate to an increased income of approximately £10,500 which could be used to offset the deficit of £34,000. This was seconded and agreed.

The Committee agreed that service charges and Supporting People charges should be delegated to the relevant officers, as set out in recommendations (c) and (d), in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

**Resolved**

- (i) that the Housing Revenue Account estimates be approved;
- (ii) that an average increase of 3.1% for rents of Council dwellings for 2006/07 be agreed, as set out in the report, as implementation of progression towards restructured rents;
- (iii) that an increase of 3.1% for rents of Council garages for 2006/07 be agreed;
- (iv) that the level of Service charges for 2006/07 be delegated to the Head of Housing Management and Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee;
- (v) that the level of Supporting People charges for 2006/07 be delegated to the Head of Housing Management and the Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, the setting of the Supporting People charges to match the ODPM funding when details are issued.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 7:35pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm.

**Chairman**