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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

HOUSING TASK & FINISH GROUP

Held on Wednesday, 21 December 2011 at 10.00 am in
Anglia Room, The Committee Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham,
NR19 1EE

PRESENT

Mr B J English
Mrs D.K.R. Irving
Mr T. J. Jermy
Mr A.P. Joel

Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mrs S.M. Matthews

Also Present

Mr P Claussen

- Executive Member for Planning &
Environmental Services

In Attendance

Darryl Smith

- Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and
Enabling)

Antony James-Orekogbe
Teresa Smith

- Principal Officer - Housing Options
- Committee Officer (Scrutiny & Projects)

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1/11 TO APPOINT A CHAIRMAN OF THE TASK & FINISH GROUP

RESOLVED that Cllr Shirley Matthews be elected as Chairman of the Housing Task and Finish Group.

2/11 APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

3/11 URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

4/11 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr D Irving declared an interest as an Executive Support Member for Housing.

5/11 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling) explained that the Terms of Reference had been written to outline the scope of the Task and Finish Group.

It was suggested that key partners and agencies were invited to the Task and Finish Group meetings as appropriate, to assist with

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shaping the policies.

A member asked if Empty Homes were being considered and it was clarified that this would be added as a bullet point to the Terms of Reference.

Cllr Paul Claussen asked if the Panel could have an understanding of the use of Key Select.

The Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling) explained that Breckland Key Select was an IT platform for allocations of housing, and would also inform the Panels discussion.

It was suggested that the Task and Finish Group received a training session on the elements of Housing. This would provide the group with valuable information to enable Members to make informed recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference be agreed, with the exception of adding two bullet points; Empty Homes and to include external agencies.

6/11 REVIEW OF THE TENANCY STRATEGY; ALLOCATION POLICY; HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling) asked the Group how they wanted the Panel to run. The documents provided with the Agenda gave background information to the areas that needed to be developed.

It was agreed that the Group would like training on the services housing provide to give greater knowledge and understanding of the subject.

A Member suggested that he wanted to understand the demand on housing, the circumstances and demographics on what housing dealt with.
This would be covered in the presentations by the Housing Team.

It was stressed by the Executive Member that this was a very important subject, and it needed to be right. The timescale was between 3 – 6 months.

A Member asked if shared ownership was an option. It was explained that forms of home ownership was an option. An example of Shared Equity had been very successful recently. Seven units had been purchased on a shared equity basis in Attleborough on a 75/25% basis. 25% of which had been given to the Council. Whilst it was not physical money, it was a paper asset to the Council. Therefore the options around forms of home ownership were improving.

Under-occupation was an issue for the district. Current secure

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tenancies were fixed and therefore the authority could not make people move but there may be the opportunity to incentivise moves. This issue would be discussed under the Allocation Policy when Members would be asked to consider the best use of housing stock.

It was important for the Group to remember that those in social housing formed part of a community and this was to be an important factor when asking tenants to move to either up-size or down-size their house.

The Principle Housing Officer (Housing Options) gave an overview of the draft Homelessness Business Plan which will set the direction of travel for services to those at risk of homelessness and those in housing need. Through the task and finish group it was hoped that Members would be able to give consideration to the impact of the documents would make collectively on the residents of Breckland.

The Chairman concluded by expressing her admiration to the Housing Team.

7/11 NEXT MEETING

It was decided that the next meeting of the Panel would be a training session.

Since the meeting had been held the following date had already been scheduled as Friday 20 January, 10.00am, Anglia Room, Committee Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham.

The meeting closed at 10.47 am

CHAIRMAN