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MEETING	DECISION SESSION - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES
DATE	23 MARCH 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MORLEY (EXECUTIVE MEMBER)
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR SIMPSON-LAING

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### 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Executive Member was invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests he might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

### 2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Decision Session – Executive Member & Adult Social Services held on 26 January be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

### 3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - DECISION SESSION**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Representations were received from Cllr Simpson-Laing regarding agenda items 2, 4 and the two information only reports.

Cllr Simpson-Laing thanked Bill Hodson for the work he had done over his time at the Council and wished him well in the future.

Regarding item 2, minutes from the previous meeting, she asked officers to:

- Confirm if they would be considering reviewing the empty properties situation within the next 6 months.
- Confirm the results of the Social Care Fairer Charging Survey and what the financial impact of the survey has had. Officers confirmed that this information was in the public domain and they agreed to send the results to Cllr Simpson-Laing.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding item 4, Former Tenants Arrears-Write Off, she requested officers:

- Make it clear, in the individual cases, who were deceased.
- Consider providing information to Members on cases that were reaching the £3000 mark.

Regarding the results of the Annual Housing Satisfaction Survey, Cllr Simpson-Laing was pleased to see the survey had produced good results and asked officers to:

- Confirm what the action plan was to reduce Anti Social Behaviour and the car parking issues, as these were continuing problems that needed to be addressed.
- Remember that not all residents have access to the internet and still need to be contacted face to face or by post.

Regarding the No-Access Procedure – Gas Servicing Information only report she asked officers to confirm if the Residents Association and Federation had been consulted on the report. Officers confirmed that they had not consulted with them at this stage but would be contacting them.

Cllr Simpson-Laing left the meeting.

Action Required

Send Cllr Simpson-Laing information regarding the Social Care Fairer Charging Survey DM

**4. FORMER TENANTS ARREARS - WRITE OFF**

The Executive Member considered a report, which sought agreement to write off a number of former tenants arrears (FTA).

Officers gave an update and confirmed that officer delegated powers were restricted to writing off debts of £2000 or less. Officers informed the Executive Member that a debt that had been written off could be recovered if the customer was located. Officers confirmed that from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009 to 24<sup>th</sup> January 2010 £80,640 had been written back onto the rents accounts and the current FTA to be written off totals £44,317.53. This represents 0.16% of the total debit. These write offs can be contained within the bad debt provision of the Housing Revenue Account, as the current provision totals £1,255,449.

Officers noted Cllr Simpson-Laings comments and in answer to some of her questions officers confirmed:

- They had previously reviewed the empty property procedure which had been approved by the Executive Member. It was suggested that if Cllr Simpson-Laing feels that this is an area for consideration, it should be put forward as a potential scrutiny review.
- They would be more explicit on the reason for the debt and would make it clearer if the customer was deceased.
- Given that rent arrears is an area of performance where significant improvements had been made over recent years, with current rent arrears level being lower than at any time in the last decade, that to

provide additional detailed information to the Executive Member as a matter of course would not have any impact on improving performance. However, if the Executive Member requested officers would provide a one off performance report which would cover debts up to £3000. The Executive Member did not feel this was necessary and agreed that if Cllr Simpson-Laing had concerns about the process this would be better dealt with through a scrutiny review rather than a case study report.

- They would contact Cllr Simpson-Laing to discuss the action plan to reduce Anti Social Behaviour and the car parking issues.

Officers informed the Executive Member that they would contact Cllr Simpson-Laing direct to answer her queries.<sup>1</sup>

The Executive Member thanked Bill Hodson for all his work with the Council and wished him well for the future.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Member approves Option 2 which involves writing off Former Tenant Arrears of £44,317.53 as detailed in Annex A.

Reason: This is in line with the recommendations of the audit report detailed in paragraph 1 and also for the financial implications listed in the report.

Action Required

Respond direct to Cllr Simpson-Laing regarding her SW representations

Cllr Morley, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.50 pm].

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