



Leicester
City Council

MINUTES EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2003 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Walker - Chair
Councillor Allen - Conservative Spokesperson

Councillor Nurse
(For Minutes 94 -101)

Councillor Taylor

Also in Attendance

Christine Cronogue Leicester Federation of Tenants' Associations
Roger Ford Leicester Housing Associations Liaison Group

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94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests which they might have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

No such declarations were made at this time.

100. PRIVATE HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY - REFORMS

The Corporate Director of Housing submitted a report concerning the new freedoms available to Local Authorities to develop their own local approaches to renovation grants, home repair grants, renewal areas, and any other form of assistance to owners of private housing which would improve, repair, or adapt their homes.

The report provided details about the new powers, and made proposals for future policies, subject to further consultation, with a view to implementation by 1 July 2003.

The new powers could be used once a formal policy had been agreed and published.

RESOLVED :

- 1) that it be noted that the broad strategy for improving defective private housing on an area basis continued, and unless otherwise specified, the general rules governing the current grant provision and general policies adopted, should continue ; and
- 2) that it be noted that the policy changes outlined in Appendix 1 of the report, once agreed subject to consultation, would include :-
 - a) Renovation Grants to be replaced with Home Improvement Grants.
 - b) The means test for Home Improvement Grants to be changed so as to make it payable to more low-income households.
 - c) Grant to be repayable on a sliding scale if the house was sold within ten years.
 - d) The Citywide Home Maintenance Service to complete the current two-year programme.
 - e) In agreeing the Capital Programme each year, consideration be given to making provision for conversions, extensions, and landlord grants.
 - f) Introduction of a discretionary Adapted Alternative Home Grant, payable when moving to a new home, would be more cost effective than paying a Disabled Facilities Grant.
 - g) Explore more loan products with financial institutions.
 - h) Whilst the policies outlined guided the provision of the described discretionary services in general, all valid applications to be considered on their individual circumstances and merit.
In exceptional circumstances, the Corporate Director of Housing to have delegated authority to approve applications outside of the general policy.
 - h) Consultation to commence with those parties listed in Appendix 2 of the report with a view to implementation on 1 July 2003.

- i) Once the policy had been agreed, any future major changes would be brought to Cabinet for decision, but minor changes be delegated to the Corporate Director of Housing.
- j) An annual monitoring report be presented to the Housing Scrutiny Committee.
- k) A common point of access and marketing strategy be developed for assistance to homeowners with repairs, home energy, security and safety work.