

MEETING OF THE CABINET.

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road,  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield

on Thursday, 21st June, 2001, at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor K.A. Creed, in the Chair;

Councillors K. Barsby, Mrs. E. Bonam, G. Dove,  
A.A. Hobson, J.R. Knight, L. Matthews,  
A.W. Price, S. Tomlinson and J.M.A. Wilmott.

Apology for Absence: Councillor Mrs. M. Thorpe (on other Council  
business)

Officers Present: E.N. Bernasconi, S.G. Brown, C. Hazard,  
A.G. Mellor and P.F. Yendle.

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. R.M. Madden, D. Shooter and  
Mrs. G. Thierry.

CA1.11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS.

Councillors K. Barsby and S. Tomlinson declared an interest in respect  
of item no. 10 (Leisure Centre Management Report).

CA1.12 HOUSING OPTION APPRAISAL.

The Strategic Director, Community Services submitted a report which summarised the recommendations of the Council's external advisor, Beha Williams Norman, to adopt an arms length approach to the future management and maintenance of the Council housing stock. The report had been prepared following an Housing Options Appraisal by the advisors, but had been delayed to take account of developments within central government and the future of housing which was now set out in the recent Housing Green Paper and had subsequently been translated into policy statements. The Housing Green Paper had unveiled a new option called Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMO's) by which the Council could maintain ownership of its housing stock and, if it was a high performer following a Best Value inspection, gain access to additional finance. The Director was pleased to announce that Ashfield was now in this position. The report concentrated on the issues arising from the recommendation to adopt an arms length approach, subject to tenants support, for the future management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock. Comments on the report from Unison and GMB had been circulated before the meeting.

*K.A. Creed*  
26/7/01

Speaking in support of the proposals set out in the report, Councillor Matthews welcomed the extra money (initially £21m) that would be available under the scheme which would provide much needed investment in the housing stock as well as environmental work and disabled adaptations to be undertaken on the Council's housing estates. He also referred to the fact that the Government now expected local authorities to carry out their repairs backlog within 10 years and that ALAMO would allow this Council to achieve the Government's targets. He also appreciated the Union's concerns if ALAMO was adopted, but stressed that the Council would look closely at protecting employees under TUPE regulations. The Leader of the Council emphasised that if the Council adopted the ALAMO option, the Council would still own the housing stock and tenants would continue to hold a secure Council tenancy.

In considering the report, Members also considered the alternative options which were:

- i. maintain a directly managed stock;
- ii. pursue stock transfer;
- iii. pursue the private finance initiative.

Prior to Members reaching a decision on this matter the Solicitor to the Council informed them that as the proposals contained within the report did not fall within the Council's agreed policy framework, it was necessary for any decisions arising from the report to be referred to Council for approval.

RESOLVED that  
the following be recommended to Council:-

- (a) the Government be informed that this Council intends to submit a bid to adopt the arms length approach for the future maintenance and management of the Council's housing stock and that work be undertaken towards making a bid to the Government by the end of September 2001 and the setting up of an organisation by mid-2002;
- (b) consultation be carried out with tenants to gauge the level of support for the arms length approach, the method of consultation to be determined by the Strategic Director, Community Services in consultation with the Lead Member;
- (c) approval be given to the preparation costs of the bid and the retention of the services of Beha Williams Norman as lead consultants.

*Hobbes*  
*26/7/01*