



AGENDA

For a meeting of the
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL
to be held on
THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2005
at
9.30 AM
in
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM
Duncan Kerr, Chief Executive

Panel Members:	Councillor Pam Bosworth (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Joyce Gaffigan (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Yvonne Gibbins, Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Stephen Hewardine, Councillor Bob Sandall, Councillor Mrs Judy Smith, Councillor Gerald Taylor and Councillor Mrs Mary Wheat
Scrutiny Officer:	Paul Morrison 01476 406512 p.Morrison@southkesteven.gov.uk
Scrutiny Support Officer:	Lucy Bonshor 01476 406120 l.bonshor@southkesteven.gov.uk

Members of the Panel are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed below.

1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To receive comments or views from members of the public at the Panel's discretion.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The Panel to be notified of any substitute members.

3. APOLOGIES

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

5. ACTION NOTES

The notes of the meeting held on 31st May 2005 are attached for information.

(Enclosure)

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

7. STRATEGIC HOUSING SERVICES

- Report on the visit to Wychavon District Council
- Best Practise – a Presentation from Wychavon’s Housing & Revenues Manager, Kath Smith
- Update on progress against the Improvement Plan

(Enclosure)

8. LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER (LSVT)

Update to be given at meeting.

9. SCRUTINY HANDBOOK

A copy of the Draft Scrutiny Handbook is attached for Members to comment on.

(Enclosure)

10. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- Housing Issues specifically difficult to let properties and voids.
- Strategic Housing.
- Street Drinking.

11. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(Enclosure)

12. WORK PROGRAMME

Scrutiny Work Programme attached for information.

(Enclosure)

13. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

To receive updates from members on outside bodies.

- Community Care for the Elderly

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, which the Chairman, by reasons of special circumstances, decides is urgent.



MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 31 MAY 2005 9.30 AM

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Pam Bosworth (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Joyce Gaffigan (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Yvonne Gibbins
Councillor Stephen Hewerdine

Councillor Bob Sandall
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Gerald Taylor
Councillor Mrs Mary Wheat

OFFICERS

Corporate Director Regulatory Services
Care Services Manager
Business Services Manager
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Support Officer

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew

7. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

8. MEMBERSHIP

None.

9. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Bisnauthsing.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

11. ACTION NOTES

The action notes from the meeting held on 12th May 2005 were confirmed as a correct record of the decisions taken.

12. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

None.

13. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE - POLICY & PROCEDURES

Conclusion

The Community DSP supported and welcomed the introduction of a Policy and Procedure document for the Protection of Vulnerable People within the South Kesteven District Council and looked forward to its implementation in due course.

The Care Services Manager referred the Panel to the report circulated with the agenda which concerned the provision of a Policy and Procedure document for the protection of vulnerable people be they children, adults or older people.

He gave a brief presentation to members which summed up the current situation which existed. It was hoped that by the end of the month a council wide policy would be approved which would provide information, advice, guidance and identify what action should be taken if a member of staff or an elected member were to witness or observe an incident that caused them to have concerns.

Following work on the Councils Risk Register Managers identified that the council could be exposed to risk from individuals, their advocates or representatives about their treatment in receiving council services. It also highlighted the lack of awareness and understanding amongst staff with regard to vulnerable people out in the community, failure to deal with these risks would leave the Council exposed.

Presently within the Council there were two areas which had working policies one was Leisure and Cultural Services where they had an internal code of practice, a Child Protection Policy associated with the work that was undertaken with the play schemes and Care Services which had put in place an internal policy and procedure for the Protection on Vulnerable Adults in 2004. Whilst both these areas were working to safe and sound policies the review undertaken by Managers on the Risk Register found that these policies and procedures would benefit other area of the Council.

The new Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Vulnerable People had amalgamated both policies into a generic policy fit for use in any of the Council's areas of work.

The Care Services Manager detailed the wide consultations that had been undertaken with the various bodies such as Lincolnshire Social Services, Primary Care Trusts, Age Concern, Tenants Compacts, UNISON and other staff groups. It was envisaged that after Council had approved the policy an officer/member working group would be established to look at the subject to ensure that the range of training and awareness was followed and that there

was a central monitoring point that dealt with the real and genuine concerns. Changes in legislation would be incorporated within the Policy and Procedure document as and when they happened to keep the document as up to date as possible and a robust training plan would be put in place with the help of the Training Manager.

He then referred members to Section 9 of the document which outlined the 4 R's – Reacting, Reporting, Recording and Refer which were the four main steps outlining the council's procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse.

Questions and comments were then made about the difficult situations that staff found themselves in and the actions taken. Also who was ultimately responsible for investigating and prosecuting if necessary to which the Care Services Manager replied that it would be the responsibility of Social Services. Further comments were made about central governments involvement and the training required by both staff and elected members. The reporting and reacting and recording of incidents was also discussed and how things can become confused if the incidents are not recorded straight away, information can become lost. The issue of private homes and whistle blowing was also discussed and the issue of deciding what was fact and what was fiction. It was stressed that everyone had a duty to report any concerns which they had concerning either a child or an adult. Also discussed were CRB's and enhanced CRB's for staff to which the Care Services Manager said he would follow the issue up with the Corporate Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development. Training was also discussed and the Care Services Manager stated that once the Council had approved the Policy and Procedure he would contact Lincolnshire County Council as he was sure there would be a bespoke training package available.

The Chairman thanked the Care Services Manager for his very informative presentation and the excellent debate by members.

14. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

- Housing Issues specifically difficult to let properties and voids.

The Chairman informed members that she had not heard from the Property Surveyor regarding a property in the Deepings to complete the dwellings visited.

The Corporate Director Regulatory Services informed the Panel that the re-let/void properties were in a bad position and the Head of Housing had been asked to put together an improvement plan. However, at the recent CMT meeting it was felt that the scope of the improvement plan was not strong enough and the Head of Housing had been asked to rework it especially as it had financial implications on the Housing Revenue Account when properties were not being let.

The Panel were informed that the Property Surveyor would be away from the Office for some time but the Director of Regulatory Services

would ensure that his work with regard to the Panel would be continued.

A member brought up the condition of a property in Stamford that he had referred to at previous meetings and stated that still nothing had been done. Both the Corporate Director Regulatory Services and the Portfolio Holder said they would look into the matter.

- Strategic Housing

The current position in relation to the re-structure of Housing following the Strategic Housing report was also discussed with members asking various questions about the re-structure process including the new posts and where they would be advertised to which the Director of Regulatory Services replied.

15. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Conclusion

That a short written commentary be appended to the BVPI's to help with interpretation of the figures.

The Business Services Manager circulated to members an up to date BVPI and referred to the sentence at the top of the page which indicated that some of the indicators should be read with caution especially the local indicators. He then went through each indicator giving members a brief background commentary to the figure shown especially if it was highlighted in red and answered member's questions.

It was felt that the indicators would be easier to read if a short written commentary was appended to the figures, as their interpretation and perception could be misconstrued without the background information. Also where percentages were used it would be more meaningful to members if actual figures could be included.

16. WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer referred to the Work Programme appended to the agenda and reminded the Panel that items that they wished to be considered could be added.

17. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received and noted a report from Councillor Mrs Wheat on the Community Care for the Elderly.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT

Councillor Hewerdine raised the issue of afternoon meetings due to his work commitments. The Chairman indicated that she preferred morning meetings but would consider holding occasional meetings in the afternoon.

Councillor G Taylor referred to the working group which had looked at the issue of street drinking which had never been resolved. The Scrutiny Officer indicated that he would look into the matter and report back to the panel.

The Scrutiny Officer drew the panel's attention to the scheduled meetings of which there was not a Community DSP until September. The Chairman indicated that there was a strong possibility that a meeting would be held towards the middle/end of July but members would be informed accordingly.

19. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 11.45am.

REPORT FOR COMMUNITY DSP

REPORT OF: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (REGULATORY SERVICES)

REPORT NO: DRS20

DATE: 15TH SEPTEMBER 2005

TITLE:	IMPROVING OUR STRATEGIC HOUSING SERVICES BY LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICE – A DAY IN RURAL WORCESTERSHIRE
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	Yes
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	April 2005

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Community Cllr. Peter Martin-Mayhew
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	Housing Management
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	None
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	None
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Housing Improvement Plan approved by Council 26 th May 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2005 South Kesteven District Council received an inspection report from the Audit Commission which ‘scored’ our Strategic Housing Services as ‘poor and has uncertain prospects for improvement’. In June 2005 Council agreed an improvement plan which, when implemented, would deliver a ‘good’ or ‘2 star’ service when the Inspectors returned in 2006.

- 2.1 To help us understand what would likely be needed on our improvement journey on 27th June 2005 ten representatives from South Kesteven travelled down to Pershore in Worcestershire. 5 councillors (Cllr Mrs Gaffigan, Cllrs. Martin-Mayhew, Taylor, Joynson and Parkin) and 5 officers (Duncan Kerr, Sally Marshall, Mandy Gee, Dawn Clark and Kevin Martin) attended an 'Excellence in Housing' event being staged at Wychavon District Council.
- 2.2 This report attempts to provide some feedback on the day and our findings.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Wychavon has very similar demographics to South Kesteven and is in our Audit Commission family group. Member numbers, political make up and indeed council tax levels are similar to ours also. They had however transferred their housing stock to the private sector (1994).
- 3.2 During the 2003 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Wychavon achieved an overall 'good' rating but were told that their Strategic Housing Services were not meeting residents' needs. It was this that made Wychavon embark on a 5-year pledge to turn things around for its customers.
- 3.3 By February 2005 however, after an inspection, the Audit Commission have now dubbed Wychavon's housing service as 'excellent, with excellent prospects for development'; thus making them the first district council to receive a double excellent ranking for Housing Services.

4. THE EVENT

In the morning there were 3 presentations:

- 4.1 The Improvement Journey presented by the Managing Director and the Head of Strategy. This was an overview explaining how they got to where they are now from where they were 2 years previously
- 4.2 The Top 10 drivers for Housing Success by the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Head of Revenues, Housing and Democratic Services

The ten drivers identified were:

- Improving for residents, not the Audit Commission
- Having the guts to confront poor performance
- Political buy-in
- DIY and knowing what matters
- Money matters
- Recruiting for attitude not qualifications
- Empowering staff
- Encouraging innovation
- Training and Development
- Think about the customer experience

- 4.3 What does excellent look and feel like? By the Housing Services Managers and the Senior Housing Needs & Projects Officer. This presentation related the experiences of customers, staff and partner organisations and what had changed to improve the service so dramatically.
- 4.4 In the afternoon Members and Officers double teamed to attend all of the 5 workshops. These covered
- Member Involvement and Commitment
 - Achieving a Fit for Purpose Housing Strategy
 - Housing Advice & Homelessness – A Proactive Approach
 - Working in Partnership to deliver additional Affordable Housing
 - Private Sector Housing – Focussing on those in Housing Need

A summary of the top tips and key feedback from these workshops is appended to this report for information. Members will also find attached a copy of a summary information sheet produced by Wychavon.

5. OUR FINDINGS

- 5.1 On the journey home there was general agreement that as soon as we walked into Wychavon's offices there was 'something in the air'. The surroundings gave off the 'ambience' of a strong and motivated organisational culture.
- 5.2 During the day it was also easy to identify with the Team Wychavon - One Council approach that had been adopted. Wychavon staff gave the impression of being highly motivated and valued, Leading members and senior officers together talked of strong leadership & relationships and the existence of member led strategies.
- 5.3 All the SKDC attendees agreed that it had been an interesting and useful visit. On the back of this we have attempted to foster a relationship with Wychavon District Council and are hopeful that we will be able to use them as a critical friend in the future wherever possible.
- 5.4 At the time of writing this report it is hoped that the Housing & Revenues Manager from Wychavon will be attending our Community DSP meeting on the 15th September to give a presentation to our Members on Wychavon's Strategic Housing Service.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

- 6.1 Kevin Martin
Business Services Manager
South Kesteven District Council
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Housing Event 27th June 005

Workshop Top Tips and Feedback

Workshop 1 - Member Involvement and Commitment

Wychavon Top Tips

- ◆ Win over the Members to the cause. This has to be a whole Council effort, not just for the Housing Department. Everyone in every department must feel they are doing their bit, and Members and Officers must work effectively together.
- ◆ Extra cash may be needed, but don't waste it on consultants – get smart, think outside the box, visit authorities who have already got the situation under control, and learn from their doing. Make sure your investment is effective long term, for real improvements and not just fire fighting.
- ◆ Partnership working is essential: get the RSLs on board, use the LSP effectively to deliver, etc.
- ◆ It's important to be even clearer about what you are not going to do than about what you are hoping to do.
- ◆ Be pragmatic not dogmatic, and remember at all times to see the wood for the trees – think strategically even when looking at detail.

Key Feedback from Workshop

- All members need to be involved
- Members and officers - work together - trust and honesty
- Change at the top where needed - swallow the pill
- Draw a line get rid of the blame culture
- Packaging and presentation
- Treat Council / Departments as a business - team build, manage relationships
- Let the members present items at public meetings creates ownership & team philosophy.
- Involve other members
- Cross party groups / meetings / papers
- Overview & Scrutiny - task and finish groups
- Break down barriers - encourages consensus rather than opposition
- CPA self-assessment is key - honest inward looking removes false self protectionism
- Temporary accommodation - private landlords providing
- Rural proofing - providing services e.g. subsidised transport, East Midlands Development Agency provide mopeds
- Put rural hamlets in a hub
- South Oxfordshire - rural exceptions sites have established land values
- Small employment sites and affordable housing - could reduce emigration of valuable youth element - more self-sufficiency at village level.
- Lack of supply of affordable housing - allocate to local people only - any surplus - Staffordshire Moorland build own

Workshop 2 - Achieving a 'Fit for Purpose' Housing Strategy

Wychavon Top Tips

- ◆ Up to date robust, evidence of Local Housing Market needs. Don't rely on your perceptions - get evidence and target resources more effectively
- ◆ Effective consultation with members, partners and residents - reaching the hard to reach groups e.g. focus groups, text messaging
- ◆ Involvement of other Departments - bring in the expertise you need e.g. Strategy Unit, Finance Department, Planning Department etc
- ◆ Strong financial planning with Member engagement and support - don't try to implement actions within your own resources, identify what resource will be needed to achieve the actions and get member support
- ◆ Clear, concise document

Key Feedback from Workshop

Resources

- Inadequate capacity within housing teams is common - need to get senior officer/member support for investment
- Land for affordable housing - need to work with Planning to lobby for public land to be sold on a not-for profit basis.
- Need for key worker accommodation - may be able to work with employers to gift land
- Rural exceptions sites are outside of permitted numbers - need to promote the benefits to members
- Members are accountable - where planning applications are refused members should defend planning appeals
- Encourage more RSL direct funding for additional affordable housing
- Stretch resources further - private sector loans / RSL contribution / support transfers into new affordable homes with vacancies allocated to those on housing register
- SLA / protocols to bring in added value services from other organisations - recognise SLA needs to be clear regarding expectations - monitoring is crucial.
- Delivery of affordable housing at a more economic cost - Redrow properties - £55,000 to develop each

Housing Needs

- Encourage closer working between Housing and Planning departments
- Need to move towards ongoing housing need assessment - linked with stock condition survey - perhaps employ one person between a number of Local Authorities and share the cost. Cannot use existing staff - too resource intensive.
- Need to develop the same methodology for use by different Local Authorities to enable cross authority comparison
- Need to make cost of housing needs assessments more attractive - joint commissioning should reduce costs. Promote the need to undertake these assessments with members.
- To make best use of existing sources of information e.g. land registry, census etc
- Encourage more people in housing need to register for housing - both for social rented and shared ownership properties

Consultation

- Many different ways to consult;

- e-mail draft strategy for views
- Consultation events for stakeholders
- focus groups for hard to reach groups e.g. ethnic minorities
- text messaging or e-mail surveys, use of website
- questionnaire in local residents magazine / tenants newsletter
- presentations to local stakeholder groups e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships
- Ask people to vote on issues at consultation events
- Playing cards or 3 pins into a board to assess views on priorities
- Telephone surveys - get more out of speaking to a customer
- Link consultation with housing needs survey - door-knocking
- Cross agency /authority - pay for an officer post to undertake this work
- Tap into main interest - home ownership
- Via local voluntary groups
- Tell people the outcomes
- Co-ordinated consultation - organise all consultation activities via 1 point within the Council

Workshop 3 - Housing Advice and Homelessness - A Proactive Approach

Wychavon Top Tips

- ◆ Link with Revenues (ability to fast-track benefit claims, dedicated assessors, access to Discretionary Housing Benefit payments)
- ◆ Close links with RSLs to ensure re-housing in discharge of duties, sustaining of tenancies, work with under 18s.
- ◆ Introduction of 'early warning system' - ensuring that we can do preventative rather than just reactive works.
- ◆ Access to Welfare Benefits and Money Advice - again preventative works
- ◆ 'Spend To Save' budget permitting some innovative thinking e.g. mediate with parents to keep adult children at home paying £50 per week as incentive, negotiating with private Landlords to prevent homelessness by paying market supplements, installing door defenders for victims of violence, paying off rent arrears and allowing customers to pay back to us at a small amount per week, paying half towards void work to move a man with mental health and alcohol issues to a more suitable property which freed up a 3 bed house for a homeless family

Key Feedback from Workshop

- ◆ Use of bed & breakfast - 50% reduction now we have introduced temporary accommodation, also have information packs showing accommodation, good move on arrangements
- ◆ Prevention - proactive not reactive - rearranged team to put most resources into prevention, hospital discharge scheme, nomination rights for 'empty homes', early warning system, Police Liaison Group, Mental Health Group, Rent Deposit, fast track to Welfare Benefits and Money Advice member involvement - coffee morning for members, tell the customers story, let members shadow you
- ◆ Staffing - recruit for attitude and then train, you can't train someone to have the right attitude. Be honest in your recruitment process homeless work is not for everyone

Workshop 4 - Working in Partnership to Deliver Additional Affordable Housing

Wychavon Top Tips

- ◆ Being creative
- ◆ Good communication network
- ◆ Robust housing needs evidence
- ◆ Clear policies for the delivery of affordable housing -
- ◆ Member support for delivery of affordable housing

Key Feedback from Workshop

- ◆ How will we reconcile delivery where no allocated sites left
- ◆ Need to lobby for closer alignment of the Regional Planning Strategy/Regional Housing Strategy
- ◆ Wyre Forest Affordable Housing Toolkit - considers loss through Right to Buys
- ◆ Rural exception sites - how can we deliver them? Broadland D C is allowing market housing to cross subsidise the affordable housing. Issues of affordability. Consider Parish owned land - Community Land Trusts.
- ◆ Use of Rural Housing Enabler to undertake local needs assessments and bring forward sites for affordable housing in rural areas
- ◆ Skills shortage an issue
- ◆ Nature of partnerships with RSLs at strategic level - use of recyclable capital grant - need for transparency
- ◆ Develop a register of potential sites within the area
- ◆ Councils joining together on preferred partner agreements
- ◆ Maximise opportunities for development at nil grant
- ◆ Specify the developing RSL in s106 agreement
- ◆ Threaten not to give planning permission
- ◆ Shared ownership - less traditional forms - need to promote with members
- ◆ Affordability - preference not to have 100% staircasing
- ◆ 2nd homes/holiday homes - reduce discounts on Council Tax
- ◆ Staffordshire Moorlands - local needs occupants -? subject to challenge
- ◆ SPG on affordable housing key tool
- ◆ Rural resistance to affordable housing provision an obstacle to be overcome
- ◆ Use of own resources for affordable housing - council owned sites
- ◆ Re-development of existing RSL stock
- ◆ What will happen beyond ADP - if not a priority for investment
- ◆ Commuted sums - calculations vary from LA to LA
- ◆ Policy - go to 40% as a minimum - Conflict between authorities re %ages sought - West Sussex experience - relates % to property values

Workshop 5 - Private Sector Housing - Focussing on Those in Housing Need

Wychavon Top Tips

- ◆ Reach out to the vulnerable
- ◆ Gather data
- ◆ Action Plans
- ◆ Research and organise evidence
- ◆ Staff attitude

Key Feedback from Workshop

- Recruitment and retention issues - why did we all deal with it, discussed careerships, market supplements, secondments
- Innovative solutions - Pods and ramps
- Private sector - discussed type of grants e.g. Landlord grants with nomination rights
- Turnaround time from OT visit to completion of work - all agreed depended on type of job
- 5 year financial plan - how did we manage to agree with members - discussed
- Waiting list for DFG - most agreed done on a priority need
- Member involvement - ways of getting members involved, shadowing, coffee mornings etc.
- Landlords - forums, leaflets, grants
- Disrepair - grants etc.
- Lack of consultants - Wychavon used the expertise in house
- Diversity of staff - who brought what skills
- Manage expectations of customers, be honest and open
- Shops and text - very cheap and effective

Achieving the First District Double Excellent in Housing Services in the Country

Summary Sheet

Wychavon District Council has radically improved in recent years with top resident satisfaction scores for services including leisure, parks, waste and recycling and 70% of PIs are top quartile or above average. It's just got the first double excellent score for housing services in the Country following an Audit Commission inspection. But it wasn't always doing so well and housing was previously our worst service with a poor strategy, backlogs of work and low team morale.

Volunteering to pathfind for CPA provided the momentum to sort out a number of corporate and service based issues. Our presentation covers our housing turnaround from where we were, where we are now and the Top 10 things that have really made the difference. We'll draw out the essentials... **a positive attitude, a focus on the right things, brave decisions and constructive challenge.** It's only now that we feel able to share our journey to help others – when you're in the thick of change it's hard! We've learnt that what makes for effective services and organisations comes down to **a simple formula for success...**

People – strong leadership, good relationships and staff pride

+

Plans - exciting vision, practical things to deliver

+

PR - strong communication, in the council and the community

=

Great Performance

Top 10 turnaround – things that have helped improve housing

- 1. Improving for our residents, not the Audit Commission** - inspectors saying the service wasn't good enough is one thing, really recognising the need to change is quite another. Our initial denial gave way to wanting to improve the service - for our residents, not auditors. Seeing housing rise up on residents' priorities helped – we could see we had a role to play that cut across lots of services, like planning, benefits, communications and finance.
- 2. Having the guts to confront poor performance** – we put two departments – Revenues/Benefits and Housing together, we changed the management and joined up services that need to work together anyway. Getting a handle on just how bad things had got e.g. backlogs of work on grants, waiting list and homelessness, meant we could tackle performance.
- 3. Political buy in** – as a low cost Conservative council and one of the first to devolve stock in 1994 the general view was that housing wasn't our concern. Officers felt their voices weren't heard so it took our new portfolio holder's boundless enthusiasm, and hard won member 'conversion programme' to win hearts and minds and pull in resources.
- 4. Money matters** – get real - turning around services needs money – and building capacity meant new people with new skills on key issues like empty homes and property standards. We were creative and trained people up internally where open recruitment yielded no joy. New IT systems like Document Image Processing meant the processes got quicker so we could spend more time with people and less on the paper chase.
- 5. Real teamwork** – Members and officers being on the same side, liking and respecting each other meant we could be open and honest and put our efforts into making progress, not allocate blame for the state of the service, far more constructive.

6. **DIY and knowing what matters** – we could have brought in consultants to interim manage or write the housing strategy. But we didn't. We built that expertise from within using skills across the council to help, such as seconding a Revenues and Benefits Manager to bring a fresh insight and involving our Deputy Managing Director to set out a new strategy. Being clear what we needed to focus on meant we sent letters to people on the 'waiting list' that we could never help and pointed them to other avenues. And we were clear what we were not going to do too – we knew we didn't want to become a social landlord again. That's why we work creatively with house builders, planners and RSLs – we can't deliver without them.
7. **Motivating and empowering the team** – it's the little things that have made a difference – moving to a new part of the office, regular contact with the portfolio holder so the team feel valued - as well as the big things like new managers, new staff, focusing on the important priorities and re-building team confidence. Letting people get on with the job, empowering people to make decisions and a new culture of trying out new ideas such as a spend to save budget – paying arrears and removals helped get people re-housed and reduced temporary accommodation costs.
8. **Seeking solutions with the RSLs and the private sector** – we've worked with our RSL partners to provide excellent quality temporary accommodation, reducing the use of B&B substantially when we had been told this wasn't possible previously. We've improved our relationships with RSLs – fast tracking benefits is one example and temporary accommodation another. We've had an excellent response from partners along our journey and found they've always been willing to help.
9. **Listening and never standing still** – hearing the feedback from our housing customers on how we've changed people's lives gives us the motivation to keep improving the service and through our texting clients on issues relevant. Using all our resources to help from money and debt advice, ongoing support after rehousing homeless, modular units for disabled, loans and creative spend to save money so we provide lots ways to help people. And we support people and help them to be independent.
10. **Above all, a feeling of failure if we didn't invest in success** – how did we as an organisation treat housing so much as a Cinderella service when it is pivotal to the well being of many of our residents? How did we not react to poor performance quicker than we did before external inspection? The drive for improvement was motivated for the right reasons and we now manage performance.

Our journey as others see it...

Where we were

"Wychavon provides good services overall with the exception of housing which, although in the process of recovery, is currently poor" **Audit Commission CPA report, March 2004**

Where we are now

"We have assessed Wychavon District Council as providing an excellent three star service that has excellent prospects for improvement.... The pace of change and improvement has been rapid and sustained" **Audit Commission Housing Services Inspection report, April 2005**

"Everyone was very supportive in my time of need – thank you so much" **Feedback from customer we rehoused, April 2005**

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SCRUTINY HANDBOOK

2005/2006

Foreword

Since July 2004, South Kesteven District Council has been operating revised political structures and management arrangements. The Executive makes day-to-day decisions within a policy and budget framework agreed by full Council and the Development and Scrutiny Panels (DSPs) have a broad monitoring function.

DSPs review Council policy and performance and monitor Executive decisions. They make recommendations on service delivery, set up working groups or panels to conduct in depth scrutiny of selected aspects of the Council's work and can call in Executive decisions. Details of all these roles are to be found within this scrutiny guide.

The DSPs are working to establish a dialogue with all Members, Council staff, residents and local organisations. To fulfil their role the DSPs will need to engage with all sections of the community. They will need to work openly and objectively to demonstrate that they are an effective watchdog that has the will and the ability to hold the Executive to account.

Since the DSPs were established, the Council has been undergoing a steep learning curve. We have had to establish, modify and review our practice, the process of scrutiny and the way of identifying the topics for consideration.

The Council had previously, through its policy development committees, a limited experience of conducting formal scrutiny, so the process has been relatively new to all of us – councillors, officers, local organisations and residents. This handbook draws upon the experiences of the past 12 months.

This handbook is, therefore, a set of guidelines rather than a rigid prescription of how to carry out scrutiny. The aim is to ensure that there is a broad consistency of approach and achievement of high standards in carrying out overview and scrutiny work. This handbook will be updated and amended in future to reflect new experiences and understandings of how to achieve these goals. I and my colleagues in the Scrutiny Team welcome feedback on how scrutiny is developing and suggestions for changes or additions to this guide. This will help us all to develop good practice.

Paul Morrison
Scrutiny Officer

Contents

	Page
Scrutiny Explained	4
Development and Scrutiny Panels	
Making DSPs Effective	6
Terms of Reference	8
Planning the Work of Scrutiny	11
Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs – Job Description	13
Call-in	
A Brief Guide	17
Meeting Protocol	18
Scrutiny Techniques	
14 Steps to Scrutiny Success	20
Gathering Evidence	21
Balancing Inquiry and Advocacy	22
Types of Questioning	26
Holding the Executive to Account	29
Conducting a Scrutiny Review	
Introduction and Scoping	30
Scrutiny Review Scoping Template	31
Developing and Concluding	32
Monitoring	33
Key Officer Contacts	34
Useful Websites	35
Appendices	
Call in request form	Appendix A
Schedule of Call-ins for 2004/05	Appendix B
Council Vision, Values and Priorities	Appendix C

Scrutiny Explained

What is Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny is crucial to the Government's Modernising Agenda for local councils. The role of Scrutiny in South Kesteven is to help develop policy, to improve the performance of the Council and to look in detail at decisions to make sure Council policy is being carried out and powers are being used wisely. Scrutiny should act as a critical friend to the Executive and the Council, standing back from day-to-day decision making to look at outcomes for the people of South Kesteven and contribute to improved council performance. Scrutiny is based on the model of parliamentary select committees at Westminster and is one of the most significant ways in which the non-executive councillor can contribute to the direction of the Council and act as a community leader for the people of South Kesteven.

Who can be scrutinised?

A lot of people think that scrutiny is only confined to Cabinet and Executive Member decisions. That is not the case, any Council decision and indeed any aspect of the Council can be **scrutinised**, this includes decisions of Full Council and regulatory committees and delegated officer decisions. But the only decisions that can actually be **called –in** are Cabinet and Executive Member decisions and any officer key decisions.

For a more detailed explanation of call-in, see below.

Scrutiny and the Outside World

Scrutiny's work does not just lie within the Council; under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2000, Councils were given the power to do "anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well being of the area". This allows scrutiny to consider the actions of other organisations operating within South Kesteven and ask them to explain their activities.

The Health and Social Care Act gave further powers to county and unitary councils to scrutinise health services within South Kesteven. Within SKDC this is Lincolnshire County Council but scrutiny of certain health services within the district was carried out by the Councils Communications and Engagement Development and Scrutiny Panel (DSP) during 2004/5.

The Role of Scrutiny

- To provide “critical friend” challenge to the Executive as well as external authorities and agencies
- To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Scrutiny Members should take the lead and own the Scrutiny Process on behalf of the public
- Scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services

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Development and Scrutiny Panels

Making DSPs Effective

Introduction

Developing effective arrangements for scrutiny has been one of the most challenging tasks for the Council. It is a real opportunity for members to undertake investigative and deliberative scrutiny and reviews of policy that will contribute to the Council's policy framework. Reviews might well examine how well a policy has been implemented and if the desired outcomes have been achieved. Such reviews may well focus on oral hearings and written evidence whilst others may include workshops, seminars, public meetings, focus groups and the commissioning of specific research.

The process for gathering evidence will vary depending on the subject under review. Although the work will share certain characteristics with traditional committee procedures there are significant differences. The standard "committee" approach is for members to receive an officer written report that outlines the issues and offers ready made recommendations. Development and Scrutiny work is different in that it should be centred on finding solutions by weighing up all the evidence. This can come from several sources and Members will only get reports, data or oral submissions from individuals, when requested, as part of the review process. The process is not concerned with decision making (ie no committee style decision is taken) but is an investigative process similar to the Select Committees in Parliament.

The key to a successful outcome for this type of work is good organisation and a clear focus on the skills needed to make the process effective.

The Process

In a traditional committee meeting there was little time for an in-depth analysis of specific issues by Members, although some significant issues were discussed and debated. Scrutiny demands more detailed consideration; this can be achieved by the whole Panel, but is more likely to be effective if it is done by setting up single issue working groups which operate on a "task and finish" basis.

Such working groups are a useful way of taking forward specific issues and require a range of skills that would not normally be called upon in a traditional committee meeting. These will include

Asking relevant questions/seeking necessary information

Diagnosing why certain things happen and the reasons behind them

Summarising – bring together a considerable amount of information reflecting back to others the points to check understanding

Concluding what has to be done in order to solve problems or improve on current practice and making appropriate recommendations

Monitoring the outcome

Further details on skills to support effective scrutiny are provided in the chapter on Scrutiny Techniques

In short

- Scrutiny should be member led
- Any conclusions must be backed up by evidence
- Meetings should adopt an inquisitorial rather than adversarial style of traditional local government committees.

Terms of Reference

ECONOMIC DSP

Chairman:
Councillor John Nicholson

Vice Chairman:
Councillor Jeff Thompson

Economic Development Portfolio
Holder:
Councillor John Smith

Remit of the Panel:

Public conveniences
Street furniture
Car parks
Conservation
Markets
Tourism
Industrial Estates
Miscellaneous property
Economic development grants and assistance
All planning services and policies
Town centre development and partnerships
Industrial Development
Agriculture and the rural economy
Liaison with SSPs and TCMPs

COMMUNITY DSP

Chairman:
Councillor Mrs Pam Bosworth

Vice Chairman:
Councillor Mrs Joyce Gaffigan

Community Affairs Portfolio
Holder:
Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew

Remit of the Panel:

Crime and disorder
CCTV
Emergency planning
Watercourse and dykes
Flood prevention
Housing management
Private Housing
Licensing
Occupational health and safety
Care services
HRA management
Enabling the provision of affordable housing
Homelessness
Housing repairs
Property maintenance
Home safety
Energy advice
Building control
Footway lighting and maintenance
Sustainable rural communities
Police service liaison

ENGAGEMENT DSP

Chairman:

Councillor Mike Taylor

Vice Chairman:

Councillor Mano Nadarajah

Access & Engagement Portfolio

Holder:

Councillor Paul Carpenter

Remit of the Panel:

E Government and ICT
 Customer service and modernisation
 Communications and Consultation
 Local Area Assemblies
 Youth engagement and local liaison (YELLS)
 Elections
 Democratic representation
 Register of electors
 Freedom of information
 Data protection
 Printing
 Dial-a-ride
 Public transport initiatives and concessions
 Bus stations
 Vehicle management
 Courier service
 Access to services for rural communities
 Community strategy
 Local strategic partnerships
 Annual stakeholder conference
 East Midlands Regional Assembly
 Lincolnshire Local Government Association
 Welland partnership
 Shared service partnerships

RESOURCES DSP

Chairman:

Councillor Reg Lovelock

Vice Chairman:

Councillor John Kirkman

Resources & Assets Portfolio

Holder:

Councillor Teri Bryant

Remit of the Panel:

Council tax collection
 Non-domestic rates
 Audit and accountability
 Special expense areas
 Grants and subscriptions
 Risk management
 Finance and accountancy
 Budget preparation and council tax
 Procurement
 Liaison with ODPM on resources
 Human resources, Training and development
 Community leadership
 Organisational development
 Performance Management
 CPA and Best Value Reviews
 Scrutiny arrangements
 Members induction and development
 programme
 Liaison with IDeA

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT DSP

Chairman:
Councillor George Waterhouse

Vice Chairman:
Councillor Nick Craft

Healthy Environment Portfolio
Holder:
Councillor Ray Auger

Remit of the Panel:

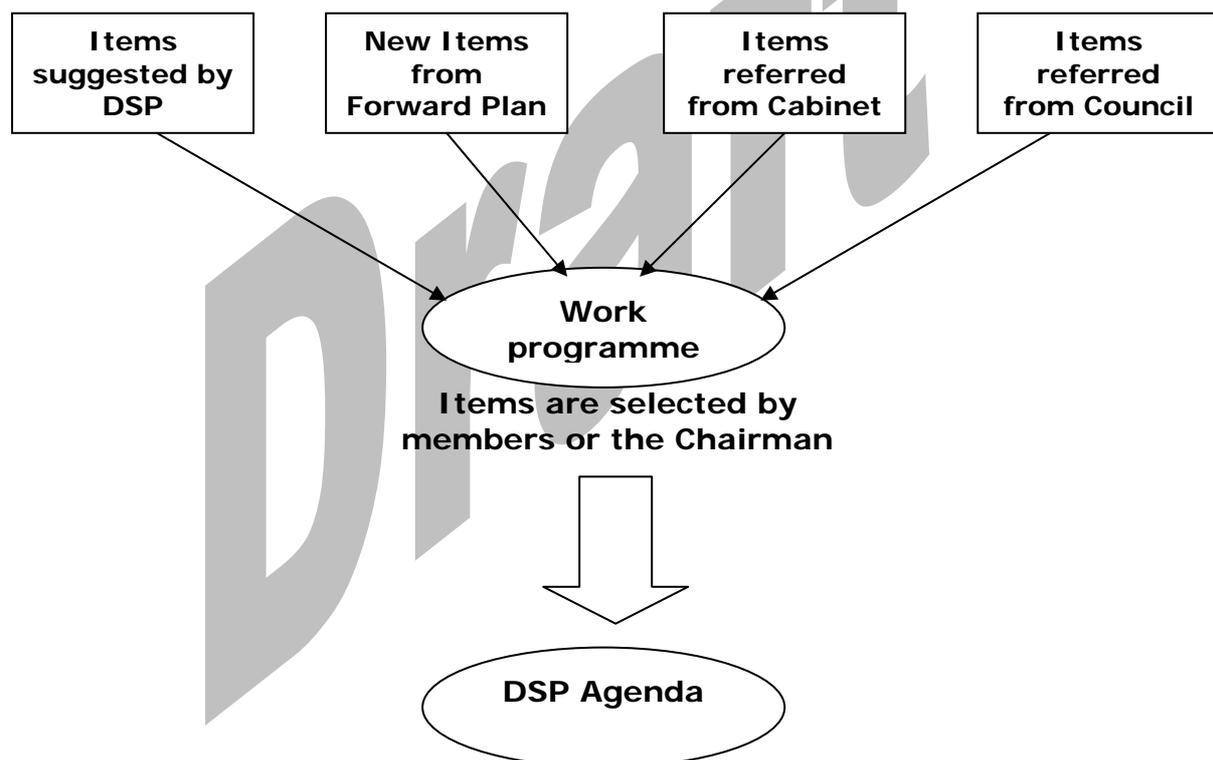
Arts centres and development
Community centres
Fairs
Leisure Centres
Parks, gardens, and recreation grounds
Playing fields and play areas
Grass cutting and grounds maintenance
Sports development
Health promotion
Food safety
Noise and pollution control
Contaminated land
Water supplies
Waste management
Street sweeping and litterbins
Recycling
Closed burial grounds
Burial of the destitute
Infectious diseases
Graffiti removal
Dog fouling
Animal health and control
Pest control
Rural environment
Health services liaison
Environment Agency liaison

Planning the Work of Scrutiny

It is vitally important that the work of DSPs is well planned and co-ordinated. Mainly, panels need to filter potential items of work, to be selective and to **prioritise**. Panels should not be over ambitious when setting their work programme. Time and resources are limited and some capacity should always be left for any issues that may arise at short notice.

The Work Programme

At each scheduled DSP meeting, members update the work programme. They do this by including new items from the Forward Plan or those referred from Cabinet or Council and other issues raised by members. Members of the Panel are then required to bring forward items from the programme onto meeting agendas:



Selecting Items for the Agenda

Members of the DSP must be proactive in identifying items they wish to include on panel agendas. Officers will not choose them for you! If you would like an item to be included on a future agenda, either request this at an earlier meeting of the Panel or contact the DSP Chairman or the Scrutiny Officer at least three weeks before the date of the meeting. It is worthwhile noting that the Local Government Act provides that *any* DSP member can place an item on a scrutiny agenda.

Issues to consider when deciding whether or not to bring forward an item from the work programme:

- Will this topic add value to and support the corporate priorities and vision?
- Can the scrutiny work be successfully delivered within available resources?
- Is the topic of concern to the public?
- Will scrutiny of this topic lead to increased value for money?
- Is there imminent new government guidance or legislation?
- Is the service meeting all the relevant performance indicators?
- Are there customer satisfaction issues?

Scrutiny Panels should focus on **strategic issues**. It is important that ward or minor operational issues do not dominate the work of scrutiny. Such issues should be pursued through other channels as explained during your general Councillor induction.

Not to be Selected for Scrutiny

An item should not be included in the work of a DSP if:

- It is or has just been the subject of a scrutiny review.
- The issue will be addressed as part of a Best Value Review within the next year.
- It is subject to an imminent external inspection.

Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs – Job Description

SECTION	DESIGNATION	REF	DATE
Council	Chairperson Development & Scrutiny Panel		
PURPOSE OF JOB	RESPONSIBLE TO	TYPE OF CONTRACT	
To lead the panel and ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities for policy development and review and scrutiny	South Kesteven District Council and the local people		
GROUP RELATIONSHIPS	LOCATION/PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
Reports to the Leader	Council Offices, Grantham or any location in the District as required		
HOURS OF WORK			
As required			
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS			
This post attracts a special responsibility allowance as per the current Members allowance scheme.		POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POST	
		N/A	
DUTIES: The activities described on the following page may be varied from time to time to meet the needs of the service. The potholder may be required to undertake any other relevant duties by the Council.			

NO	OBJECTIVE	NO	DUTIES
1.	Provide Leadership & direction	1.1	Champion the panel inside and outside the Council
		1.2	To represent the panel at meetings with the cabinet or other agencies
		1.3	Ensure that work of the panel is constructive and adds value to the Council and the community
		1.4	<p>To chair meetings for the panel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable all members of the panel to contribute. • Follow a prioritised work programme. • Ensure all meetings achieve outcomes based on sound evidence
2.	Ensure compliance with the constitution and any rules, regulations that are in place	2.1	Ensures meetings take place in accordance with those set at the annual general meeting and at any other time as required by the work
		2.2	Liaise with the scrutiny officer to ensure that agendas are sent out to panel members informing them of the business to be addressed at each meeting
		2.3	Manage any finances made available to the panel in order to perform their scrutiny function
		2.4	Make the annual report to full Council on the workings of their DSP, making recommendations for future work programmes, and amended working methods if appropriate.
		2.5	Request full Council to approve the cooption of members as required for a limited time or for specific purposes
		2.6	Report back to the panel any decisions that the Ch & vice chair have taken as a matter of urgency. Such decisions to be taken in consultation with the Chief officer or service managers.

3. Attend the Cabinet and Scrutiny Liaison group to coordinate work plans and share learning	3.1	Attend any meetings held to plan the business of the panel
	3.2	Contribute to the Liaison group to improve effectiveness of the scrutiny process and to Co-ordinate work plans
	3.3	Keep up to date on national & local issues and consider impact on work programme
	3.4	Ensure familiarity with the change management plan and how the work of the panel relates to it
4. Lead and manage a member led work programme	4.1	Ensure that the work programme is developed from input from panel members, the Cabinet and Scrutiny Liaison group and Officers,
	4.2	Manage a prioritised and feasible work programme.
5. Maintain integrity of policy development & review process	5.1	Monitor the effect of national legislation on the Council
	5.2	Lead and manage investigations, research of proposals and topical issues & consultations making best use of panel members as well as specialist expertise inside and external to the Council
	5.3	Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options
	5.4	Lead targeted reviews of existing policies & the development of new policies
6. Maintain Integrity of Scrutiny process	6.1	Promote scrutiny function
	6.2	Hold Executive to account in respect of their actions in carrying out Council policy
	6.3	Lead investigations into the basis on which decisions are taken and ensure they are consistent with Council Policy
	6.4	Ensure panel Monitors the Councils decision making process

	6.5	Oversee call ins
	6.6	Ensure panel monitor the council's performance
	6.7	Lead Scrutiny of external reports on council performance
	6.8	Lead timetable of investigations, selection of witnesses and writing of scrutiny report
	6.9	Ensure panel Investigates the quality of service provided
	6.10	Lead &/ or participate constructively in any short life task groups
	6.11	Ensure regular contact with non-executive members, community representatives, local stakeholders, & public to inform the effective scrutiny of Council policies, strategies, budgets and performance
7. Ensure panel members access relevant & timely training and development	7.1	Identify training and development needs that apply to the panel as a whole, and take action to address issues
	7.2	Identify training and development needs that apply to individual panel members and take action to enable them to access the appropriate support.

Call in

A brief guide

Introduction

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced, for the first time, the power for individual members of the Executive to make decisions on their own. Previously councillors had only been able to make a decision when meeting collectively as the Full Council or in a committee. In order to balance these new powers, and that of the Cabinet collectively, mandatory scrutiny arrangements were introduced, which includes the power to “call-in” executive decisions. Underpinning the whole system is ethical standards which was introduced by Part 111 of the 2000 Act.

However in introducing these call-in powers the Government intended that they should only be used in exceptional circumstances and not maliciously, vexatiously or for political point scoring.

How the call-in system operates

All Key decisions that the Cabinet, or an individual Cabinet Member (known as a Portfolio holder) intends to take must be published in the Council’s Forward Plan. Once the decision has been taken, this must also be published within two working days of the decision being made.

The definition of what is a key decision is a matter for the Council to decide. At South Kesteven it is defined as an executive decision which will result in “significant” expenditure or savings to the Council or a decision that will affect two or more wards.

Non key executive decisions may also be called in by the relevant DSP. Decisions of regulatory committees and full Council cannot be called in, but these may still be scrutinised by a DSP if there is concern about a particular issue.

Once an executive decision has been made and published it is implemented and comes into force after five working days have elapsed, unless a valid call-in request form is received. A valid form must be signed by either five members (from any political group) or the Chairman of the relevant DSP. A call-in request form is at Appendix A. No member may sign more than three requests for a sanctioned call-in and no DSP may call-in more than 6 decisions in any one municipal year. A schedule of call-ins for 2004/05 is at Appendix B.

Once a form has been received, the proper officer must rule on whether it is valid, if it is valid then the meeting must be called as soon as possible.

Call-in Meeting Protocol

- 1) The Chairman introduces the meeting and welcomes members, witnesses etc. Announces the decision that has been called-in, whether it was made by the Cabinet or an individual Portfolio Holder and explain that it has been called-in either by the relevant DSP Chairman or any five members. If the decision-making body or person or a particular officer has been formally invited to the meeting – say so.
- 2) The Scrutiny Officer or deputy is invited by the Chairman to explain to the panel the following procedure to be undertaken during the meeting and the conclusions available to the panel, which are:
 - Conclude to support the call-in and therefore refer the decision back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration – the nature of the panel’s concerns must be specified in the conclusion;
 - Conclude not to support the call-in and therefore not to refer the decision back – the original decision will therefore take immediate effect
 - Conclude to refer the decision to full Council (only if it is believed the decision is outside the policy framework or budget)
- 3) The Scrutiny Officer or deputy is to advise the panel to wait until all evidence has been heard before coming to a conclusion.
- 4) Those members who called-in the decision are invited by the Chairman to make verbal representations to support their reasons for call-in.
- 5) Panel members are invited by the Chairman to question those members who requested the call-in or to ask for further clarification on their reasons for call-in.
- 6) Panel members are then invited to question the decision-maker (if present) who may also respond on the points raised by the call-in request.
- 7) Panel members are then invited to question officers and other witnesses present.
- 8) Any other member present may be invited to ask questions at the panel’s discretion.
- 9) The Chairman should then make sure everyone has had the opportunity to ask questions.

- 10) The Chairman should then state that the panel has to now consider all the evidence they have heard and discuss the three conclusions available.
- 11) The panel should, ideally, come to a mutual conclusion without the need for a formal vote. If the panel chooses to refer the decision back, the reasons for doing so must be stated. The Executive is unlikely to change its mind about a decision if there is no evidence to support a call-in.

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Scrutiny Techniques

14 Steps to Scrutiny Success

Although many of these steps have already been completed at SKDC, it is worth considering these core requirements for success to monitor our progress. Suggested levels of achievement as at 1st July 2005 are below:

1. Discuss and agree a definition of overview and scrutiny	Achieved
2. Select Chairs and Vice-Chairs who will give effective leadership to their committees and have comprehensive role descriptions to guide their work	Partly Achieved
3. Ensure that members selected for overview and scrutiny are prepared to make time for scrutiny, are committed to making overview and scrutiny work and have comprehensive role descriptions to guide their work	Partly Achieved
4. Design a structure which fits the purpose of overview and scrutiny, related well to the executive and officers and suits the culture of the authority	Achieved
5. Develop a member-led, realistic, flexible work programme for each committee	Achieved
6. Move away from traditional service committee processes by developing a wider range of activities	Partly Achieved
7. Prioritise a small number of items to investigate in-depth and ensure that these are effectively project managed	Not Achieved
8. Finish investigations on time and produce member-led reports which concisely summarise the evidence gathered and the recommendations of the committee	Partly Achieved
9. Ensure that there is adequate officer support for overview and scrutiny	Achieved
10. Create a separate budget for overview and scrutiny to fund site visits and other non-meetings based activities; pay the expenses of external witnesses; buy-in external advice and pay for training and development.	Not Achieved
11. Develop cross-party working, ensuring that no party group applies the whip to overview and scrutiny	Achieved
12. Ensure that the opposition parties have a key role to play by at least allocating some chairs and vice-chairs to the opposition	Partly Achieved
13. Provide a training and development programme for overview and scrutiny members, officers directly supporting overview and scrutiny and any co-optees. Provide awareness training for all other councillors and officers down to middle managers	Achieved
14. Develop and implement a system for continuously monitoring what is working well and what needs improving and undertake a more comprehensive evaluation at least every two to three years (and more frequently in the early stages)	Partly Achieved

Gathering Evidence

It is often said that "scrutiny should be evidence-based". This is because evidence will support members in each of their scrutiny roles (see page five) by giving **substance** to recommendations. Gathering evidence gives a real opportunity for members to think outside the box and be imaginative. Although DSPs have a Scrutiny Support Officer to undertake research, members are encouraged to undertake their own research either to support items already on a meeting agenda or to present to the Panel as a new item for the work programme. Below are some ideas on sources of evidence and it is suggested that good scrutiny would include a number of different sources for each issue.

- Witnesses - These can be officers of the Council, Cabinet members, other members with certain expertise and external witnesses.
- Co-optees - These can be appointed short or long-term. Internal or external "experts", member of public or service user.
- Site Visits - These could take place within the organisation to look at service areas, other authorities, organisations or locations relevant to the issue under scrutiny.
- Focus Groups & Workshops - These could include a wide range of "witnesses" at an informal session with two way feedback, exploring topics in detail and allowing people to speak who may not normally be so confident in formal meetings.
- Legislation, Policies etc. - Reference to government legislation, regional guidance, local policies and strategies of this authority or others.
- Surveys - This allows broad or narrow consultation, potential for confidentiality to allow more 'honest' evidence. Internal or external use.
- Mystery Shoppers - Good method of obtaining service user point of view.

Balancing Inquiry and Advocacy

There is a danger that discussions at meetings can quickly become a spiral of increasing advocacy with both sides moving further into their own opposing positions. Members can get caught in the trap of listening to others only to dismiss their arguments and to reinforce their own point of view. Similarly, when members are in pure inquiry mode, dialogue is replaced with questions and members fail to share their own perspectives. In this case, silence, rather than members' arguments, negates any learning on either side.

The balancing act of inquiry and advocacy is one which, when achieved, will enable members to share their own ideas whilst gaining the best possible information and ideas from other members or witnesses.

To improve inquiry skills:

- Use the skills of active listening.
- Ask others to share the reasoning behind their conclusions.
- Use non-aggressive language to ask your questions.

To improve advocacy skills:

- Make your thinking process visible to others by articulating how you have come to your point of view.
- Encourage others to explore your assumptions and any information you may have obtained.
- Freely acknowledge where you think there might be gaps in your reasoning. This will invite others to participate by helping you resolve these gaps and makes your position appear more open.

An example of achieving this balance is to lay out your reasoning and thinking, and then encourage others to challenge you: "Here is my view and here is how I have arrived at it. How does it sound to you? What makes sense to you and what doesn't? Do you see any ways I can improve it?"

Members should be aware that there are dysfunctional forms of both advocacy and inquiry. For example, in organisations, adroit people can skew the inquiry process by relentless "interrogating," without caring at all for the person being questioned. In the same vein, advocacy can feel like an inquisition if the advocate simply "dictates" his or her point of view, while refusing to make their own reasoning process visible. People who are unwilling to expose their thinking may also "withdraw" into silence, instead of taking the opportunity to learn through observation.

One of the most destructive conversational forms is "politicking," in which there is no overt argument - just a relentless refusal to learn while giving the impression of balancing advocacy and inquiry. Scrutiny should be non-partisan and should embrace cross-party working.

The following protocols for improving the balance between inquiry and advocacy are from *The Fifth Discipline* by Roberts & Ross:

Improved Advocacy

- Make your thinking process visible

What to do	What to say
State your assumptions, and describe the data that led to them	<i>"Here's what I think and here's how I got there."</i>
Explain your assumptions.	<i>"I assumed that. . ."</i>
Make your reasoning explicit.	<i>"I came to this conclusion because. . ."</i>
Explain the context of your point of view: who will be affected by what you propose, how they will be affected, and why.	
Give examples of what you propose, even if they're hypothetical or metaphorical.	<i>"To get a clear picture of what I'm talking about, imagine the you're a customer who will be affected. . ."</i>
As you speak, try to picture the other people's perspectives on what you are saying.	

- Publicly test your conclusions and assumptions.

What to do	What to say
Encourage others to explore your model, your assumptions, and your data.	<i>"What do you think about what I just said?" or "Do you see any flaws in my reasoning?" or "What can you add?"</i>
Refrain from defensiveness when your ideas are questioned. If you're advocating something worthwhile, then it will only get stronger by being tested.	
Reveal where you are least clear in your thinking. Rather than making you vulnerable, it defuses the force of advocates who are opposed to you, and invites improvement.	<i>"Here's one aspect which you might help me think through. . ."</i>
Even when advocating, listen, stay open, and encourage others to provide different views.	<i>"Do you see it differently?"</i>

Improved Inquiry

- Ask others to make their thinking process visible.

What to do	What to say
Gently walk others down the ladder of inference and find out what data they are operating from.	<i>"What leads you to conclude that?" "What data do you have for that?" "What causes you to say that?"</i>
Use unaggressive language, particularly with people who are not familiar with these skills. Ask in a way which does not provoke defensiveness or "lead the witness."	<i>Instead of "What do you mean?" or "What's your proof?" say, "Can you help me understand your thinking here?"</i>
Draw out their reasoning. Find out as much as you can about why they are saying what they're saying.	<i>"What is the significance of that?" "How does this relate to your other concerns?" "Where does your reasoning go next?"</i>
Explain your reasons for inquiring, and how your inquiry relates to your own concerns, hopes, and needs.	<i>"I'm asking you about your assumptions here because. . ."</i>

- Compare your assumptions to theirs.

What to do	What to say
Test what they say by asking for broader contexts, or for examples.	<i>"How would your proposal affect. . .?" "Is this similar to. . .?" "Can you describe a typical example. . .?"</i>
Check your understanding of what they have said.	<i>"Am I correct that you're saying. . .?"</i>
Listen for the new understanding that may emerge. Don't concentrate on preparing to destroy the other person's argument or promote your own agenda.	

Facing a Point of View With Which You Disagree

What to do	What to say
Again, inquire about what has led the person to that view.	<i>"How did you arrive at this view?" "Are you taking into account data that I have not considered?"</i>
Make sure you truly understand the view.	<i>"If I understand you correctly, you're saying that. . ."</i>
Explore, listen, and offer your own views in an open way.	<i>"Have you considered. . ."</i>

Listen for the larger meaning that may come out of honest, open sharing of alternative mental models.	
Use your left-hand column as a resource.	<i>"When you say such-and-such, I worry that it means. . ."</i>
Raise your concerns and state what is leading you to have them.	<i>"I have a hard time seeing that, because of this reasoning. . ."</i>

When You're at an Impasse.

What to do	What to say
Embrace the impasse, and tease apart the current thinking. (You may discover that focusing on "data" brings you all down the ladder of inference.)	<i>"What do we know for a fact?"</i> <i>"What do we sense is true, but have no data for yet?"</i> <i>"What don't we know?"</i>
Look for information which will help people move forward.	<i>"What do we agree upon and what do we disagree on?"</i>
Ask if there is any way you might together design an experiment or inquiry which could provide new information.	
Listen to ideas as if for the first time.	
Consider each person's mental model as a piece of a larger puzzle.	<i>"Are we starting from two very different sets of assumptions here? Where do they come from?"</i>
Ask what data or logic might change their views.	<i>"What, then, would have to happen before you would consider the alternative?"</i>
Ask for the group's help in redesigning the situation.	<i>"It feels like we're getting into an impasse and I'm afraid we might walk away without any better understanding. Have you got any ideas that will help us clarify our thinking?"</i>
Don't let the conversation stop with an "agreement to disagree."	<i>"I don't understand the assumptions underlying our disagreement."</i>
Avoid building your "case" when someone else is speaking from a different point of view.	

Types of Questioning

In addition to addressing the balance of advocacy and inquiry, members should be aware of their questioning techniques and their effectiveness.

The Do's

Open Questions

Open questions have the greatest potential. Information is requested in a neutral way and the witness is encouraged to do most of the talking and to expand the points at issue.

These often start with 'how', 'why', 'could you explain...', 'what are your views on...'

It is a good idea to follow up responses to these questions with future probing questions to yield additional clarity.

Probing Questions

This technique, as well as providing clarity, can also be used to strive beyond a superficial or rehearsed answer to the previous question. Remember, DSP meetings are not the same as committee meetings and there are no rules limiting members to how often they can speak.

Probing questions may be 'what is your evidence for that?' or 'how have you arrived at that conclusion?'

Hypothetical Questions

This can be useful in obtaining good evidence, as well as testing possibilities to formulate new ideas and solutions. They can also be valid in testing knowledge.

For example, 'How would you set about changing the Council's strategy on X?'

The Don'ts

Closed Questions

These questions invite only a 'yes/no' answer or seek only basic facts. If over-used, these questions will limit the quality of evidence gained from a witness.

'Do you like our Council magazine?'

'Are you happy with the recycling service?'

Leading Questions

These questions are phrased in such a way that they assume an answer. This technique is poor because it may force the respondent into a false position.

For example, 'I'm sure you were upset about that, weren't you?' or 'Presumably, you agree that this policy will not achieve anything?'

Double-Headed Questions

These ask more than one question at a time and should be avoided as they cause confusion. As a result, only one question is likely to be answered thereby limiting the evidence to be gathered.

Example: 'In your role, is there a responsibility to monitor service performance and how is this communicated throughout the organisation.'

It is better to separate the two questions and indicate to the meeting before hand that you may have more than one question to ask.

Phrasing Questions

Different questions can be used at different stages of an interview or inquiry. These phases are:

1. Exploration
2. Integration
3. Action

1. Exploration

Here, questions should help put the witness at ease, e.g.

'What could the Council do to help you improve your service?'
'Could you tell us a little bit about your general impression as a user of Council services?'

2. Integration

In this phase, questions are used to understand the attitudes, behaviour and views of the witness. Four sub-types of questions are best:

Clarifying – 'How many bedrooms do you have?', 'What do you mean by remediation works?' 'In what way does anti-social behaviour concern you?'

Focussing – 'Let's discuss what's happening at the Youth Centre.'

Redirecting – 'Could we talk about something you mentioned earlier, the commuters' car parking?'

Confronting – 'Earlier you stated that there was no budget. How could you have then agreed to allocate £50,000 to the amenity group?'

3. Solutions

Here questions may help the witness decide what action should be taken.

'How would you like to see the situation resolved?'

'Have you thought about X?'

Holding the Executive to Account

Holding the Executive to account comes in two forms: scrutinising decisions before they are made and scrutinising decisions after they have been implemented. It is vitally important to the success of scrutiny that members adopt a **proactive** rather than reactive approach to this process. This will ensure a good working relationship with Cabinet and Scrutiny Members. It will encourage greater openness and accountability within the decision making process.

Proactive	Reactive
<p>Reading the Forward Plan on a monthly basis and noting items which are pertinent to you as a scrutiny member</p> <p>Such items could be of interest to you because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They relate to an area which is already included in a scrutiny work programme • Scrutiny could add real value to a topic by providing more in-depth policy development or review • You think that there has been insufficient consultation planned prior to the decision being made • You have general questions or wish certain points to be raised <p>If you do identify such an item, there are two courses of action open to you.</p> <p>If the decision is imminent, you should contact the decision-maker to discuss your concerns, in advance of the decision being made.</p> <p>If there is more time, you should discuss this with your DSP Chair to discuss and decide how best to address the issue.</p>	<p>Reactive scrutiny is using the call-in process once a decision has been made.</p> <p>This holds up the decision-making process and diminishes the credibility of scrutiny.</p> <p>Too frequent use of call-in will negate any effectiveness it may have for fundamental key issues.</p> <p>Cabinet may become resistant to sound arguments from scrutiny should call-in requests become vexatious, numerous or political.</p> <p>Call-in, however, does play an important role in scrutiny and can be used effectively if it is supported with sufficient evidence. Remember that scrutiny members are 'critical friends' to the Executive.</p>

Conducting a Scrutiny Review

Introduction

A scrutiny review is a detailed and thorough investigation into a particular issue of concern and each DSP should aim to complete about one or two per year. A scrutiny review will normally conclude with recommendations to the executive based on the considerable amount of evidence obtained. Given the scale of work involved, DSPs may wish to delegate a scrutiny review to a working group comprising three members.

Chesterfield Borough Council has developed a three-stage approach to a scrutiny review, which comprises the following three principal stages:

1. Scoping
2. Development
3. Concluding
4. Monitoring

Scoping

The scoping of a scrutiny review is the very first thing that should be undertaken as it focuses members on the aim of the review and helps members and officers plan the work required. Scoping will aim to identify why the review has been chosen and what it hopes to achieve. Terms of reference will also be agreed.

Issues to consider in the early stages of scoping:

- Do we need to commission a consultant?
- How best will we involve the public?
- How does this review align with the Council's priorities and vision?
- What research is required and who will do it?
- Should we co-opt an expert/representative?
- When and where shall we hold meetings?
- What is the best way of collecting each piece of evidence?
- Is an expert witness required?
- Which aspect of the issue should we focus on?
- How shall we publicise the review?

Members undertaking the scrutiny review should complete the following scoping form. This will be supplied at the scoping meeting by the Scrutiny Support Officer.

SCRUTINY REVIEW SCOPING TEMPLATE

Name of Review			
Lead DSP			
Review Members			
Review Lead Member			
Portfolio Holder			
Scrutiny Support Officer			
Key Issues and Reasons for the Review <i>(include priority alignment)</i>			
Objectives of Review <i>(what should be achieved)</i>			
Indicators of Success <i>(what factors should be present)</i>			
Lines of Enquiry <i>(approach to be undertaken)</i>			
Witnesses/ Experts/Co-optees <i>(Who, when and for what?)</i>			
Documents <i>(Which documents to examine – internal or external)</i>			
Site Visits <i>(Where, when and why?)</i>			
Evidence sources for views of stakeholders			
Publicity Requirements			
Specific resources requirements			
Barriers/ dangers/ risks			
Start date		Draft Report Deadline to DSP	
Meeting dates		Projected completion date	

Development

After scoping, it is time to get on with the bulk of the work. This stage should be as **innovative** and **inclusive** as possible. Remember that one of the key roles for scrutiny is to reflect and voice the concerns of the public. To do this accurately and effectively, the scrutiny review must engage with the public and actively encourage community involvement. Members are encouraged to take a much more flexible approach to meetings. Informality is also much more relevant and appropriate.

Refer to the section on scrutiny techniques whilst carrying out the scrutiny review, especially the pages on gathering evidence, balancing inquiry and advocacy and types of questioning. This will help you collate relevant and effective evidence.

When all evidence has been collated, it will need evaluating. Assess whether or not it is relevant and valuable evidence. It may be necessary to gather additional evidence if there are weaknesses in that already collected or if further issues have arisen. Do not attempt making conclusions or recommendations until all evidence has been collected.

Concluding

The review group should hold a specific meeting to discuss and analyse any findings from the evidence and whether or not it has met the objectives set out in the scoping template. The key message from the evidence should be identified together with the options for any recommendations. Each option should be appraised and recommendations formed from those options that are relevant and achievable. Members should aim to reach a consensus on the recommendations. There should be no need for a vote.

When the recommendations have been agreed, the lead member will draft a report with the Scrutiny Support Officer. The report will include:

- Foreword by the lead member and acknowledgements
- Background to the review and executive summary
- Introduction to the issues and context of the review (national and local)
- List of evidence collected
- Summary of work undertaken
- Key messages that were identified from the evidence collected
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Monitoring arrangements

People who have contributed to the review should always be sent a copy of the draft report and be invited to comment. The final report should be submitted to the relevant DSP for approval prior to submission to Cabinet.

Monitoring

The final scrutiny review report is submitted to Cabinet under its standing agenda item "Matters referred to Cabinet by the Council or the Development and Scrutiny Panels". The Cabinet then has six weeks to consider the report from the date of its submission. If the content of the report has implications for the Council's budget or the policy framework, it is to be submitted to Council after the six weeks. Cabinet is able to respond to the report at the Council meeting.

The role of scrutiny, however, is not yet over. Scrutiny members have an ongoing role to monitor the implementation of their recommendations. As above, the scrutiny review report should include a section on monitoring arrangements. This will stipulate what actions are expected to be taken by whom and by when. If members are not satisfied with the outcome, they may choose to revisit appropriate aspects of the review. This is a vital element of the role of scrutiny members as it reinforces the importance of the scrutiny function in securing continuous improvement for the council. It also shows the Executive that scrutiny members are dedicated to their recommendations.

Key Officer Contacts

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- Probity
- Constitution
- Standards Committee

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- Cabinet
- Full Council

Paul Morrison

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- Scrutiny Issues
- Call-in
- Work Programme
- Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

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- Community DSP
- Yearbook
- Constitution and Accounts Committee

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- Engagement DSP
- Resources DSP
- Standards Committee

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- Healthy Environment DSP
- Economic DSP

Joyce Slater

Training Manager
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- Training

Useful Websites

www.cfps.org.uk - Centre for Public Scrutiny

- Scrutiny reviews and news from “champion” authorities
- Information on events
- Learning resources and publications
- On-line forums

www.idea.gov.uk - Improvement and Development Agency

- Examples of good practice
- Improving services and the Council
- Best Value and E-Government
- Scrutiny Guidance

www.audit-commission.gov.uk - Audit Commission

- Best Value
- Inspections and service assessments
- Publications

www.odpm.gov.uk - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

- Policy and consultation documents
- Community and political leadership
- Improving public services
- E-Government

www.statistics.gov.uk - Office for National Statistics

- Comprehensive national and local statistics

www.lga.gov.uk - Local Government Association

- Information on events and meetings
- Key issues and news
- Publications



REQUEST FOR CALL-IN OF A CABINET DECISION

TO: THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MINUTE/DECISION NUMBER: _____

SUBJECT MATTER: _____

DATE OF DECISION: _____

DATE OF PUBLICATION: _____

I, being the Chairman* [or] We, being 5 members of the Council*
request that the above mentioned decision be called in for scrutiny.

[* delete as appropriate]

I/We certify that none of us has subscribed to more than 3 requests for
call-ins during the current Municipal year.

REASONS FOR EXERCISING CALL-IN:

(i.e. where it is considered that a decision has not been taken in
accordance with the principles of decision making as set out in Article
13 of the Constitution, for example:

- It is outside the budget or policy framework;
- It is outside the delegated powers of the Cabinet;
- It is a key decision which has not been included in the Forward Plan;

Schedule of Call-ins 2004/05

DATE	DSP	TITLE	CALLED IN BY	RESULT
21.6.04	Environment	Car Parking Charges NKD by Cllr Auger	Cllr Waterhouse used his Prerogative as Chairman to call it in on his own.	DSP decided to take no further action but rec relating to past policies
28.6.04	Community	Door Replacement Programme NKD by Cllr Martin-Mayhew	Cllrs Bisnauthsing, Hewardine, Gibbins	DSP decided no further action was necessary
28.10.04	Environment	Star Lane Toilets NKD by Cllr Martin-Mayhew	Cllrs Craft, Fisher, Joynson	Ask Portfolio holder to reconsider decision. Not taken on board by the decision taker.
29.10.04	Capacity and Resources	Star Lane Toilets NKD by Cllr Mrs Neal	Cllrs Kirkman, Conboy, Lovelock	Ask Portfolio holder to reconsider decision. Not taken on board by the decision taker
11.11.04	Community	Newton Court, Colsterworth NKD by Cllr Martin-Mayhew	Cllrs Sandall, Gaffigan, Hewardine	Having heard the evidence, DSP decided not to support the call-in
18.01.05	Environment	Charges for removal of graffiti NKD by Cllr Auger	Request by Cllr O'Hare	The DSP did not support Cllr O'Hare's request

21.01.05	Economic & Cultural	Thurlby Youth Hostel NKD by Cllr John Smith	Cllr Nicholson used chairman's prerogative to call it in on his own	To be reconsidered by Portfolio holder following representations by the DSP
21.03.05	Environment	Grantham Toilet Location, Cabinet Decision NKD by Cllr Martin-Mayhew	Cllr Waterhouse used chairman's prerogative to call it in on his own	Recommend that Portfolio holder reconsider . Decision reaffirming original decision was subsequently issued
05.04.05	Community	Housing Adaptations – To require means testing NKD by Cllr Martin-Mayhew	O'Hare Gibbins Hewardine	The Panel agreed to take no further action and the decision was therefore confirmed

SKDC Vision

To ensure that the residents of South Kesteven are proud of their district and their Council.

Core Values

Promoting Pride in our Communities.

Performing
Respecting
Informing
Developing
Enabling

Category A Priorities

- Anti-social behaviour
- Recycling
- Street Scene
- Town Centre Development and Grantham as a Sub Regional Centre
- Access to Council Services

Category B Priorities

- Affordable Housing
- Business Development
- Vulnerable Persons
- Communications and Consultation
- Diversity
- Planning and Conservation
- LSP and Community Strategy
- Council Tax Collection
- Housing Management
- Car Parks
- Public Toilets

Report to the Community DSP

Subject: Street Drinking

Meeting Date: 18th August, 2005 11.15a.m.
Members Lounge

Present: Councillor G Taylor (Chairman)
Councillor Gibbins

Paul Morrison

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. REVIEW OF GROUP'S WORK

Councillor Taylor began by outlining the work of the Group to date. It had been established in August 2004 "to discuss the effectiveness of byelaws and other powers related to street drinking" and formulate recommendations and proposals to the Community DSP. The Group was of the view that something needed to be done, especially as regards the drinking in St Peter's Hill, Grantham. The advice of the Council's Legal and Licensing Officers had been sought and the Group had also interviewed the then SKDC Community Safety Officer and the Police Officer responsible for Community Safety. The latter had encouraged the notion that a street drinking byelaw was feasible but other sections of the Police did not appear to be so keen on the idea.

At the Community DSP meeting of 3rd March 2005 Sergeant Mark Jones had stated that *"police figures did not demonstrate that there was a problem with street drinking on St Peter's Hill in Grantham.....if people were just sitting and drinking and minding their own business there was nothing the police could do unless they were being intimidating and harassing people or they were clearly drinking underage then drink could be seized. He reiterated that there was not enough evidence to suggest that there was a problem at St Peter's Hill."* (DSP notes 03.03.05). It is therefore unclear whether or not the Police would support a street drinking order on St Peter's Hill.

In the light of this advice the Group had ceased meeting at that point but has reconvened in the light of possible further developments.

Further points:

- Could the Council make an Order on its own
- Perhaps investigations should resume in the light of the new Licensing Act.

- The Group suggests that the new SKDC Community Safety Officer attends the DSP in order to advise on developments within the last six months
- The Group suggests that it or the DSP engages with the new Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee on this issue
- Any discussions should involve Pub Landlords and Managers
- The Group regrets that it has not been able to achieve more progress on this matter.

The meeting was closed at 11.50.

Community DSP - Performance Monitoring 2005/06

Those indicators with a number in the PI column are from the Government's Best Value Performance Indicators suite used by many Councils. The remaining indicators are local to SKDC and may be relatively simple measures/indicators only. The reader is asked therefore to exercise an element of caution when interpreting any data attached to them.

Key: C=cumulative; A=average; N=number; %=percentage; CA=cumulative average; Q=quarterly; blank=monthly

PI	IND Type	Reporting	2004/05 SKDC Outturn	2003/04 Upper Quartile	2005/06 SKDC Target	April	May	June	July	Are We Improving Yr on Yr?	2006/07 SKDC Targets	2007/08 SKDC Targets	Apr	May	Jun	July	
ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR Priority A																	
127				n/a	10	1.50	2.9	4.20	5.82	N	9.5	9					
Local		C			8	0	0	1	1	N/A	6	5					
Local		C			10	0	2	4	10	N/A	12	15					
Local		C			20	N/A	4	7	14	N/A	24	30					
Local		C			100	4	24	47	84	N/A	120	150					
Local		C			60%	75%	82%	81%	79.76%	N/A	65%	70%					
Local		C			10			3		N/A	15	20					
AFFORDABLE HOUSING Priority B																	
Local		C			30	0	4	12	12	N/A	35	40					
Local		C			80	0	0	0	0*	N/A	100	150					
VULNERABLE PERSONS Priority B																	
183a		CA	2.33 wks	1.18 wks	1 wk	0	2.5 days	2.5 dys	2.5 dys	Y	1 wk	1wk					
Local		N			5,850	5,644	5,644	5,580	5,591	N/A	6050	6250					
Local		C			32	N/A	3	3*	3*	N/A	32	32					
78a		A	42.21 dys	31 dys	42 days	N/A	N/A	36.6 dys	36.4 dys	Y	40 days	38 days					
78b		A	5.59 dys	7.2 dys	8 days	N/A	N/A	18.7 dys	19 dys	N	8 days	8 days					
DIVERSITY Priority B																	
Local		C			8	0	0	1	1	N/A	12	20					
Local		CA			180 dys	73 dys	183.67 dys	88.67 dys	110.57 dys	N/A	175 days	170 days					
Local		CA			22 dys	22 dys	13 dys	9 dys	11.10 dys	N/A	21 days	20 days					
HOUSING MANAGEMENT Priority B																	
Local		CA	42 dys		37 days	52.52 dys	49.87 dys	44.32 dys	46.24 dys	N	36 days	35 days					
Local		%			2%	N/A	1.93%	1.93%	1.77%	N/A	1.9%	1.8%					
66a		%	98.3%	98.6%	98.4%			89.3%		N/A	98.5%	98.6%					
Local		C			850	43	113	173	221	N/A	820	800					
Local		C			60%	60.5%	55.7%	54.9%	56.11%	N/A	65%	70%					
Local		%			5%			5%*		N/A	7%	10%					
Local		C			255	8	57	63	101	N/A	255	206					

DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS (DSPs)
WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6
INTRODUCTION

This Work Programme is partly derived from the Cabinet's Forward Plan, but also contains items that have been brought forward by the DSPs themselves. Such items are in italics.

Where the item has appeared on the Forward Plan, the anticipated date of the key decision is listed in the second column. The third column shows the last available date that the DSP can consider this item before the key decision is due to be taken. This does NOT necessarily mean that the item will appear on the DSP agenda, this will only happen if this is requested by the Chairman or members of the DSP. There will also be instances where there is no DSP meeting before a decision is due to be taken; in these cases the next meeting date after the decision date is shown.

As Cabinet meets monthly and the DSPs meet bi-monthly it is not possible for the DSPs to consider every single Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision. Scrutiny members are therefore encouraged to peruse this Work Programme and bring forward items for consideration.

COMMUNITY DSP

<u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	<u>DATE OF KEY DECISION (IF APPROPRIATE)</u>	<u>NEAREST DSP MEETING</u>
Crime and Disorder Action Plan	November 2005	15.09.05
Strategic Housing – Audit Commission report	Full Council received report on 26.05.05	DSP established Working Party on 12.05.05
<i>Difficult to let properties, their location and the number of voids</i>	N/A	<i>Site visits to voids have taken place at Grantham, Stamford and Bourne, working group appointed</i>

**DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS (DSPs)
WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6**

Aire Road Grantham – provision of new affordable housing	September 2005	15.09.05
Stock Option Appraisal – To undertake an appraisal of the Council’s housing stock and recommend options for improvements to service delivery.	Not before September 2005	15.09.05
Large Scale Voluntary Transfer – identification of potential new landlord	Not before October 2005	15.09.05
Capacity and priorities incl preliminary projections for 2006/7 budget	Not before September 2005	15.09.05
Community Strategy	Not before October 2005	Cross DSP Working Group is meeting 15.09.05
Action Plan	November 2005	15.09.05 or 10.11.05
HRA business plan	Not before October 2005	15.09.05 or 10.11.05
SKDC enforcement policy – a generic policy for regulatory services	October 2005	15.09.05
Worth Court Bourne – disposal of site and redevelopment	October 2005	15.09.05
Community cohesion/inclusion strategy	Not before December 2005	10.11.05