



MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

**WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2006
10.00 AM**

HELD AT STAMFORD ARTS CENTRE

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Mike Exton
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Reginald Howard

Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Margery Radley
Councillor Bob Sandall

OFFICERS

Director of Tenancy Services
Service Manager Tenancy & Neighbourhood Services
Service Manager Repairs and Improvements
Service Manager Housing Solutions
Research Officer Housing Solutions

51. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

52. MEMBERSHIP

The Panel were notified that Councillor Mrs Radley was substituting for Councillor Mrs Wheat and Councillor Exton was substituting for Councillor Mrs Smith for this meeting only.

53. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Gibbins.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

55. ACTION NOTES

The action notes for the meeting held on 25th October were confirmed as a correct record.

56. UPDATES FROM LAST MEETING

Nothing to report.

57. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

Nothing to report.

58. LSVT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Conclusion

That the Community DSP membership of the working group to investigate ways in how properties are managed be comprised of Councillor Martin-Mayhew, Councillor Sandall and Councillor Exton. Substitute members of the Working Group to be Councillor Mrs Bosworth, Councillor Bisnauthsing and Councillor Mrs Radley.

Members had been circulated with report TSE015 which concerned issues to be addressed following the no ballot in which council tenants had voted to remain with the Council. There had been a high turnout with 75.6% of tenants voting of which 73.2% had voted against transfer to South Lincolnshire Homes. The transfer process would now stop. There were three main issues facing the Council these were:

- 1) the Tenancy Services's Service Plan and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan will have to be reviewed now that access to the additional resources possible with SLH will not happen;
- 2) the implications for the local affordable housing programme now that the Council will not get a capital receipt from the transfer;
- 3) the opportunity to investigate innovative ways in how properties are managed. A working group to be set up to investigate this with membership from the Community DSP, representatives from the Tenants Working Group and staff representatives.

The Director of Tenancy Services referred to the Extraordinary Council meeting that was being held on 30th November to discuss the way forward following the ballot. One of the recommendations of the report being submitted at the meeting was that the Government be requested to reform the housing subsidy system to enable all the money raised locally (approximately £5m) to be retained locally rather than being sent to central government for distribution.

The focus of Tenancy Services was to work with members, tenants' representatives and staff to identify how the housing landlord service could be improved to deliver a truly brilliant service.

Members then expressed concerns about becoming a brilliant service and referred to various complaints that they had received about workmen failing to

complete jobs satisfactorily. The Repairs and Improvements Service Manager said that unfortunately everyone had a “horror” story to tell but unless the complaints were made to the service concerned changes could not be made. The Director of Tenancy Services spoke of the satisfaction survey which was sent to a sample of 10% of the tenants. This revealed a 90+% satisfaction from the tenants in the work that they have done by the workmen and also a 100% satisfaction with the staff that take the repairs complaint initially. The Service Manager Repairs and Improvements said that fundamental changes would be being made in the near future and changing the “mindset” of people was required. The Director of Tenancy Services agreed and that a more holistic approach was required if a brilliant service was to be forthcoming.

Members then discussed membership of the working group. Permanent members of the working group would be Councillors’ Sandall and Martin-Mayhew. Councillor Exton was willing to be co-opted on to the working group due to his knowledge to which the Panel agreed. It was also agreed that Councillors’ Bosworth and Bisnauthsing be substitute members if required. Councillor Mrs Radley indicated that she would be available as a substitute member, but she was not a permanent member of the Committee but would acting as a substitute for Councillor Mrs Wheat for the foreseeable future.

59. WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Panel that since the agenda had been circulated the Forward Plan had been published for November and there were changes to some of the items. A decision on Wake House Bourne would now not be before January 2007, a decision on the powers to restrict the consumption of alcohol in designated public places would not be taken until March 2007 and Aire Road, Grantham was back on the forward plan with a decision date of not before February 2007. Due to the changes that were having to be made to agendas due to the gateway reviews, the Chairman said that he would have a meeting with the Scrutiny Officer to discuss issues for the panel to discuss at future meetings.

60. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The BVPI’s were discussed by the Panel and the Director of Tenancy Services was happy to report that most of the housing service indicators were shown in the green. He was particularly pleased to report that BVPI 212 was now in the green with the average time to relet council houses down to 29 days. A short discussion on the indicator BVPI 183a ensued which was shown in red and the Housing Solutions Service Manager gave reasons for this.

61. FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that this was a new item that would be on future agendas giving a regular financial update.

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

None.

63. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 10.35am.