



MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 5 MARCH 2007 10.00 AM

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Yvonne Gibbins
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Stephen Hewerdine
Councillor Reginald Howard

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

OFFICERS

(none)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

(none)

77. MEMBERSHIP

Members were informed that Councillor Mrs Radley was substituting for Councillor Mrs Wheat for this meeting.

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

79. ACTION NOTES

The action notes from the meeting held on Tuesday 16th January 2007 were agreed.

80. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that the issue raised at the September DSP had been reissued and he was still awaiting a response.

81. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

Nothing to report.

82. SKDC TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION CHARGING POLICY

Conclusion

That the proposed Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy 2007/08 – 2008/09 document needs to be more user friendly with more clarity and categorisation.

Members had been circulated with a report which was being discussed at

Cabinet that morning. The report dealt with the introduction of a policy to target any financial assistance available from the Council to relevant areas. The grants would be subject to means testing in accordance with the council's policy. The report listed those areas where grants would be available. Members were unhappy with the document and the short time scale given in which to scrutinize the document. Members felt that more work was required to make the document more user friendly and better categorisation was needed.

83. PRIVATE SECTOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Conclusion

That the DSP expressed concern with the document in its present form and the short timescale given to scrutinize the document and recommended that more work was required before a decision to adopt the policy was made. The equality impact assessment form should also be revised.

The Panel had been circulated with a further report which was to be discussed at Cabinet that morning which concerned a charging policy for temporary accommodation relating to the provision of bed and breakfast under homelessness legislation. Again concern was expressed about the short notice given the Panel to enable them to scrutinize the policy. The Panel were also unhappy about charging a section of the community that contained vulnerable people. Although the Strategic Director who presented the report informed the panel that the majority of costs would be recouped through the benefits system members were still not happy that a charge was being sort from vulnerable members of society who did not have the money to pay. Concern was also expressed about the questions contained within the equality impact assessment document appended to the report .

84. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

The Director of Tenancy Services gave a brief overview of the work that had been carried out to date by the options working group. Housing Quality Network (HQN) had been appointed to carry out the shadow inspection of Tenancy Services.

85. EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Panel were introduced to Jamie Tomlin from Lincolnshire County Council who was part of the Fire and Rescue section that dealt with Emergency Planning and Mark Jones who was Team Leader CCTV and part of the district councils emergency plan team. The Council held a service level agreement with the County Council for emergency planning. A presentation which contained video footage of two major emergencies then followed which gave an overview of the work involved in emergency planning and the issues that surround major emergencies and the need for public services to work together including local radio stations which help disseminate vital information to a wide audience.

86. RESTRICTING THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IN DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES

Conclusion

That the issue of restricting the consumption of alcohol in designated places be looked at again at the April meeting of the DSP.

An officer from the Environmental Protection Section gave a brief overview of work carried out to date. Following the consultation only 27 letters had been received of which only seven supported the proposal. He referred to the 15 areas which had been defined and briefly highlighted them. Maps of the define areas in Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings were available if any member wished to view them. A letter had been received from the police that morning and Inspector Rod Rose was in attendance. Two issues had a rose and these concerned displacement and the costs of signage. Although there was a lot of anecdotal information concerning drinking and anti social behaviour there was not enough evidence available that linked the two and that would stand up in court. Further work was required to gather tangible facts and figures. It was felt that a lot of the disturbance was down to a lack of standards. It was suggested that licensees should be required to pay a precept in the areas where anti social behaviour caused by drinking occurred, however Inspector Rose indicated that licensees would argue that they already did this.

87. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The Director of Tenancy Services informed the Panel that this would be the first of many equality impact assessments. An equality steering group had been established last year and a list of strategies had been compiled these had been given low, medium and high ratings. Each equality impact assessment was done on a standard format. The Director of Tenancy Services together with the Energy Officer then went through the assessment attached to the agenda.

88. WORK PROGRAMME

Conclusion

That the Service Manager Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services be asked to attend a future meeting to discuss the allocations policy also Data Protection Policy.

The Scrutiny Officer indicated that the two items discussed at the being of the agenda would be added. Concern was expressed about the allocation policy and Members asked that the Service Manager Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services be asked to attend a future meeting to discuss the allocation policy.

89. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Conclusion

It was agreed that a revised report showing the significant variances be submitted to the next meeting of the DSP.

The Service Manager Finance and Risk Management referred to various

caveats that the Panel needed to take into consideration when looking at the figures contained within the report, one of which was the lack of profiling behind the figures. He indicated that from April 2007 profiling would be included in the report.

90. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 12.55pm.