



MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2007 10.00 AM

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Mike Exton
Councillor Yvonne Gibbins
Councillor Reginald Howard

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

OFFICERS

Director of Tenancy Services
Housing Solutions Manager
Management Accountant
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Support Officer

64. MEMBERSHIP

Members were informed that Councillor Mrs Radley was substituting for Councillor Mrs Wheat and Councillor Exton was substituting for Councillor Sandall.

65. APOLOGIES

None.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

67. ACTION NOTES

The Action notes from the meeting held on 22nd November were agreed.

68. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

None.

69. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

Conclusion

That the Scrutiny Officer follow up the DSP's recommendation to Cabinet and enquire to the reasons behind the dates on the forward plan being deferred.

Members were concerned that the recommendations made at the meeting in September to Cabinet had not been responded to. Also why the dates for decisions on the forward plan had been deferred until later on in the year specifically the issue relating powers to restrict the consumption of alcohol in designated public places. The Scrutiny Officer replied that he would seek feedback from the Cabinet.

70. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Nothing to report.

71. CREATION OF WORKING PARTY

Conclusion

That the following panel members be on the Strategic Working Party, Councillors Exton, Howard, Mrs Smith and Martin-Mayhew. As one place was still out standing on the working group a letter be sent to Councillor Bisnauthsing asking if he wished to be a member, or if another member from the Liberal Democrat Group wished to be involved in the process.

Members had before them a briefing note from the Director of Tenancy Services. He referred to the DSP held in November and the Council meeting held at the end November at which the Council had agreed to set up a working party. The working party would consist of 15 participants, five tenant representatives, five staff representatives and five members. Both the tenant and the staff representatives had been chosen and the Director of Tenancy Service listed them.

One of the main work areas in Tenancy Services for the next financial year was the preparation for an inspection by the Audit Commission. The Council's landlord housing service had never been inspected and the Audit Commission had indicated that an inspection would take place after the outcome of the LSVT ballot was known. The Director of Tenancy Services informed the panel that he expected an inspection to take place between September and December 2007. A member asked if this would impact staff during budget preparation time to which the Director of Tenancy Services replied that it would.

In order to prepare for the Audit Inspection a "Shadow Inspection" (SI) was being prepared by an external organisation before April. The intention was that the SI would be as close to a real inspection as possible with an indication of the services' 'Score' against the Audit Commissions Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's). The Director of Tenancy Services gave a brief summary of what was meant by KLOE's. An action plan would then be agreed and implemented. It was proposed that the newly created working party would be actively involved in preparing for the SI and in the actual inspection itself. The working party would be able to participate in the review of the options for the management of the housing stock with a view to Tenancy Services strengths and weaknesses and where improvement work needed to be carried out. Tenancy Services would also complete a self assessment which together with the KLOE would

give a reality check on where the service currently stood.

It was proposed that the working party meet over the next three months to discuss the various issues and these were highlighted in the briefing note. There was a lot of work to be undertaken and the Chairman reminded members that if they were to be part of the working party they needed to be able to commit the necessary time. The Chairman put himself forward as a candidate and also Councillors Mrs Smith, Howard and Exton put themselves forward. It was suggested that as Councillor Bisnauthsing was not present that he be asked if he wished to join the working party or if not another member of the Liberal Democrat Group. Councillor Gibbins indicated that although she would like to be a member she could not commit the time required but she would ask if anyone within the Labour Group was interested in joining the working party.

The first meeting of the working party had been arranged for Friday 26th January at 9.30am and an agenda and papers would be distributed shortly. One of the items on the agenda was the appointment of the outside consultants to carryout the SI and the working party would be fully involved in the process.

72. WORK PROGRAMME

Conclusion

That the following items be included on the next agenda: Initial Equalities Impact Assessments and a presentation by the Housing Solutions Manager on Disabled Facilities Grants – consultation on a priority system for SKDC?

The Scrutiny Officer referred members to the work programme which was attached to the agenda. As the Forward Plan had just been published he highlighted some changes to the dates when decisions were scheduled to be made on some of the items included in the work programme. The Housing Solutions Manager flagged two items for the DSP to look at one was the Lincolnshire County Homeless Strategy which would be available in May and also the Private Sector Finance Assistance Policy which would be later in the year. Consultation regarding disabled facilities grants would be an item on the next agenda. The Director of Tenancy Services informed members that he would have some initial equality impact assessments for the DSP agenda to which the Housing Solutions Manager replied that he too would have some of these items. Concern again was expressed over the length of time that some of the issues on the forward plan were taking for a decision to be made specifically the Aire Road site and the powers to restrict alcohol. The Director of Tenancy Services briefly outlined to the panel what the current situation was with regard to the Aire Road site.

73. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Report noted.

74. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Nothing to report.

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

None.

76. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 10.45am.