



AGENDA

For a meeting of the
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL
to be held on
FRIDAY, 30 MARCH 2007
at
10.00 AM
in
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM
Duncan Kerr, Chief Executive

Panel Members:	Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew (Chairman) 01400 272896 Councillor Mrs Judy Smith (Vice-Chairman) 01778 422219 Councillor Pam Bosworth, Councillor Yvonne Gibbins, Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Stephen Hewardine, Councillor Reginald Howard, Councillor Bob Sandall 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

PLEASE NOTE DATE, TIME AND VENUE

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 5th March 2007 are attached for information.

(Enclosure)

6. PRIVATE SECTOR FINANCE ASSISTANCE POLICY

Members are asked to bring documents which were circulated for the last DSP meeting.

7. SKDC TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION CHARGING POLICY

An amended equality impact assessment document for the policy is attached.

(Enclosure)

Members are asked to bring the documents circulated at the last DSP.

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

WORKING STYLE OF SCRUTINY

The Role Of Scrutiny

- To provide a “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

Remember...

- 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



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

Strategic Director (Geoff Plummer)
Environmental Protection Officer Licensing
Team Leader CCTV
Service Manager Finance & Risk Management
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Support Officer

Jamie Tomlin Fire & Rescue LCC
Inspector Rob Rose Lincs Police

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. PRIVATE SECTOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE 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. SKDC TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION CHARGING 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.

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PRO FORMA

Section: Housing Solutions		Names of those undertaking assessment: Crystal Dewsbury Kevin Martin	
Name of Policy to be assessed: Temporary Accommodation Charging Policy for bed & breakfast (B&B) accommodation	Date of Assessment: 16 Feb 2007	Is this a new or existing policy? New policy	
<p>1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy: Charge homeless households £15 per night per household for staying in B&B when the Council has an interim duty; Set out the principles of charging and highlight access to the housing benefit system to provide financial assistance for homeless households to cover the charges; Specify the procedure and cost recovery associated with the charges.</p>			
<p>2. What are the key performance indicators? The charging policy is not directly associated with any KPIs; it is most relevant to BVPI183a.</p>			
<p>3. Who will be affected by this policy? The Council – it will impact on the cost of providing B & B accommodation. Homeless households – it encourage households to become responsible for their stay in B&Bs under the Council's interim duty.</p>			
<p>4. Who is intended to benefit from this policy and in what way? The Council – it will reduce the overall cost of providing temporary accommodation Homeless households – the Council will have extra resources to assist more households</p>			
<p>5. Are there any other organisations involved in the delivery of the service? Privately owned B&Bs.</p>			
<p>6. What outcomes are required from this policy and for whom? Reduce net cost for B&B to the Council Encourage homeless households to be responsible during their stay in B&Bs under the Council's interim duty.</p>			
<p>7. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes? Payment collection might not be successful in 100% of the cases.</p>			
<p>8. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy? The Council Homeless households</p>			
<p>9. Who implements the policy, and who is responsible for the policy? The Housing Solutions Team Leader and all the housing option advisors implement the policy. The Service manager, Housing Solutions, is responsible for the policy.</p>			

10. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on different racial groups? If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

11. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on men and women? If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

12. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on disabled people? If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

13. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on the grounds of sexual orientation? If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

14. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on the grounds of age? If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

15. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on the grounds of religious belief? If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

16. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on any other groups of people e.g. those with dependants/caring responsibilities, those with an offending past, those with learning difficulties, transgendered or transsexual people. If yes, please explain. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?

No.

The process and procedures under which homeless households are handled are heavily influenced by legislation. This results in a high level of consistency and similarity as to how homeless households are assessed.

17. Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service e.g. language, physical access?

No.

All information will be provided in other language or other format where required.

18. Where do you think improvements could be made?

Not applicable

19. Are there any unmet needs or requirements that can be identified that affect specific groups. If yes, please give details.

Not applicable

20. Is there a complaints system?

Yes, the Council's corporate complaints system.

21. Do we monitor complaints by race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religious belief?

Yes.

22. Do we have feedback from managers or frontline staff?

Yes.

23. Is there any feedback from voluntary/community organisations?

Yes. Citizen's Advice and Shelter, SKDC Homeless Forum participants

<p>24. Is there any research or models of practice that may inform our view?</p> <p>Many local authorities who have statutory responsibilities for dealing with homeless households have charging policies for temporary accommodation</p>
<p>25. Could the differential impact identified in 8 – 16 amount to there being unlawful discrimination in respect of this policy?</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
<p>26. Could the differential impact identified in 8-16 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy?</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
<p>27. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason?</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
<p>28. Should the policy proceed to a full impact assessment?</p> <p>No.</p>
<p>29. Date on which Full assessment to be completed by</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Signed (Lead Officer):</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Kevin Martin, Service Manager, Housing Solutions Date: 16th February 2007</p>