

APPENDIX TO COUNCIL MINUTES: 26TH MAY 2005

MINUTE 35: QUESTIONS WITHOUT DISCUSSION

QUESTION 1

FROM COUNCILLOR TERL BRYANT

Madam leader,

Can the Constitution and Accounts Committee be asked to review our Constitution and find a way to allow the council to reprimand any Councillor who is reported to make outrageous and disingenuous statements that are factually wrong and that could be extremely damaging to the council. A recent example would be where a Councillor is reported to have said that certain actions need not be taken as this council has reserves of £119 Million.

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MRS. NEAL:

Yes.

Councillor Bryant was not present to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION 2

FROM COUNCILLOR TERL BRYANT

Madam leader,

Can the constitution and accounts committee be asked to review our constitution and find a way to allow the council to ignore or refuse to discuss any matter where the member bringing the matter up has been involved in all the due process of decision making from consultation through DSP's, Cabinet, possible scrutiny and taken through the full council and that member has not apparently voiced a single concern and then attempts to reverse a full council decision which he was part of.

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MRS. NEAL:

Yes.

Councillor Bryant was not present to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION 3

FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN HEWERDINE

Does the Council have a policy laid down in stone (writing) saying how many final warnings are given to secured tenants and temporary tenants in our accommodation

as to what time limit they have to stop acting in an anti social manner. If not, will the Cabinet member draw up a more concise policy in the not-so-distant future. i.e. saying three warnings and you are out?

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN-MAYHEW

The Council operates within the Anti Social Behaviour Policy for Housing Management and Councillor Hewerdine will be aware of this as he attended the Community Development and Scrutiny Panel on 29th November 2004 when the policy was discussed and amendments recommended.

It also has to comply with the Housing Act and the Tenancy Agreement

Cases are graded regarding their level of seriousness and it is not possible to state the exact number of warnings a tenant receives before possession proceedings are commenced as each case is judged on its merits.

All cases should either be resolved or have a plan of action agreed or be closed within 28 days from date of initial complaint.

In the case of serious breach where a property is used for criminal purposes including the selling, producing or using illegal or handling stolen goods the Council may apply to the courts for immediately for an eviction order.

In these situations a warning would not be issued but a Notice Seeking Possession would be served.

SUPPLEMENTARY

To Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew, anti-social behaviour is a very important issue just lately. I'm asking on behalf of a couple in my ward, inviting you firstly to stay for a time with them in their home, so you can have first hand experience of what our tenants have to put up with, with loud music, door slammings, etc. We have tenants who are put in temporary accommodation also have issues with anti-social issues down at station roads...isn't it wrong, then, do you think, when certain tenants live in full council properties paying half the rents, having better properties when other people are living in accommodation that is in a lower standard and paying more rent, our priorities seem wrong. Will you take up the offer?

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN-MAYHEW

Thank you Chairman. Yes Councillor Hewerdine, it's a very strange question you're asking me to do here but I think really with the problems we've been having, I think perhaps certain officers could probably take up that offer just to prove anti-social behaviour is going on and we need to grasp, and we need to look at it, so I think you and I should get together and see if we've got an officer that would like to dive down there for three or four days and take into account is that okay with you Chairman, thank you.

QUESTION 4

FROM COUNCILLOR STEPHEN HEWERDINE

In Gloucestershire, the Spa town of Cheltenham could soon have complaints dealt with by bin men on the beat in a crackdown on anti-social behaviour. It is planning to issue refuse workers with hand-held computer devices that can log such nuisances as litter, flyposting, graffiti and abandoned cars. Is this idea being discussed by Cabinet as it would improve the quality of life in our communities?

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MARTIN-MAYHEW

Thank you for your question. I would imagine what you are aspiring to is actually loading further duties onto our own refuse workers. I would imagine the Unions would have something to say about that! Our workforce is expected to work within tight schedules and disciplines to bring about the success of an excellent service.

We also have a problem here in that we have a vast rural area when compared to the compacted area of suburban Cheltenham. As far as I am aware, the Cabinet is not discussing such matters and it has to be said that vast improvements have already been made in the areas of collection and environmental issues leading to a much improved quality of life within South Kesteven.

Areas such as litter, graffiti, flyposting and abandoned cars are being handled in a very positive manner right now without a need to overburden any part of our workforce – but who knows what the future holds.

SUPPLEMENTARY

No Supplementary.