

Meeting of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Thursday, 29 April 2021, 2.00 pm

Meeting held virtually, via Skype

Committee Members present

Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
Councillor Sarah Trotter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Amanda Wheeler
Councillor Linda Wootten

Cabinet Members

Councillor Robert Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Officers

Chief Executive (Karen Bradford)
Director of Housing and Property (Andrew Cotton)
Acting Principal Democratic Officer (Shelley Thirkell)
Democratic Officer (Naomi Page)

108. Comments from members of the public

There were no comments from members of the public.

109. Register of attendance, membership and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Exton and the Chairman, Councillor Wootten. Councillor Trotter was chairing the meeting in the Chairman's absence.

110. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

111. Action Notes from the meeting held on 11 March 2021

The action notes of the meeting held on 7 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

112. Updates from the previous meeting

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning confirmed that an update on the areas covered by his remit would be circulated to Committee Members when the pre-election period had ended.

113. Mobility Scooter Policy

Members were presented with the report on the Mobility Scooter Policy. The Policy related to the storage of mobility scooters in the Council's housing stock and had been developed to manage potential fire and health and safety risks. The Policy would require written permission to be granted for owners of mobility scooters by means of a registration scheme. Residents registered to the scheme would be required to comply with the Mobility Scooter Policy.

In response to questions asked by Members, the following points were raised:

- It was planned that the Policy would be implemented within three months.
- Responses from consultation were mostly related to whether residents could continue using existing facilities until the new storage was put in place. It had confirmed that this would be the case.
- The storage made available would be developed to be accessible for residents and secure.
- A service charge review of all charges in sheltered schemes was being undertaken and would include use of mobility scooters.

Members agreed to recommend the adoption of the Mobility Scooter Policy to Cabinet.

114. Fire Safety Management Plan

Members were presented with the report on the Fire Safety Management Plan. The Plan had been drafted with consideration of the latest statutory and regulatory requirements. Due to ongoing Government reform in relation to fire safety, the Plan would be kept under constant review to remain compliant with current requirements and best practise. Regular updates would be given to Members.

Members requested an update in six months' time and further information on the range of information provided to Council tenants on fire safety and risk assessments.

Action

- 1. An update to be added to the Committee's work programme for six months' time**
- 2. Information to be circulated to Committee Members on the guidance provided for tenants on fire safety**

Members agreed to recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the Fire Safety Management Plan.

115. Compliance Update

Members were presented with the report on the regulatory non-compliance notice update, which outlined the new initiatives identified and the progress made in improving the compliance of the Housing Service.

In response to questions from Members, the following points were made:

- There were 45 outstanding gas inspections where numerous attempts had been made to receive permission from tenants to carry out the inspections. Legal summons would be pursued in those instances where permission could not be gained, to allow the Council to meet its legal responsibilities.
- Electrical testing was being undertaken in Council-owned properties, in both individual dwellings and communal areas.

Members wished to thank the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, the Director of Housing and Property and the Chief Executive for their continued efforts in improving the Council's compliance in the required areas.

116. Work Programme

The Committee noted the contents of the work programme and requested that the Empty Homes Strategy be added under 'unscheduled items' for future consideration.

Action

- 1. The Empty Homes Strategy to be added to the work programme**

117. Close of the meeting

The meeting closed at 15:11.