



REPORT TO:	HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	21 APRIL 2005	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	OPEN:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	CLLR K HARRINGTON (CHAIR - COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ISSUES	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Provides a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations made in November by the Community Scrutiny Committee in respect of the sheltered housing service
- Notes the Community Scrutiny Committee's planned 'reality checks' in preparation for the Audit Commission inspection of housing stock investment and asset management
- Ensures that the feasibility study for the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme is completed as soon as possible and that the resulting service is provided equitably across the district
- Ensures that the necessary 'paperwork' is in place to prevent future uncertainties over responsibilities for the districts play areas.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide feedback and make recommendations on issues discussed at recent meetings of the Community Scrutiny Committee relating to:

- Housing services
- Proposals for Neighbourhood (Street) Wardens
- The provision and maintenance of play areas

- 2.2 These matters fall within the remit of the Housing & Community Services Committee.

3.0 HOUSING SERVICES

- 3.1 This issue has two aspects - the Sheltered Housing Service and the Best Value Review of stock investment and asset management.

Sheltered Housing Services

- 3.2 In February, the Community Scrutiny Committee received a detailed report on improvements and plans for the Sheltered Housing Service. (This was the same report as that submitted to this Committee.)
- 3.3 Members were unable to determine from the report to what extent the recommendations arising from their site visits in October 2004 had been addressed. These recommendations were included in a report to this Committee on 18 November 2004, a copy of which is attached at Annexe A.
- 3.4 Members had particular concerns about the delay in upgrading the heating system at Pear Tree Court, Etwall (especially as this was delaying the provision of a new kitchen and carpets). They also wanted to highlight the need to set appropriate threshold levels for door replacements.
- 3.5 The Committee would now welcome a progress report on the implementation of its previous recommendations.

Best Value Review - Stock Investment and Asset Management

- 3.6 The current Best Value Review of housing stock investment and asset management is an important component of the Council's CPA Improvement Plan, agreed with the Audit Commission. The Commission has also announced its intention to formally inspect the service in June, which will result in a public report about service quality and prospects for improvement.
- 3.7 Over the next few weeks, the Community Scrutiny Committee will be completing 'reality checks' on the service to assist officers and members prepare for the inspection.
- 3.8 The nature of this work was discussed at an informal meeting of the Committee on the 14 March, attended by Cllr Southern, the Director of Community Services and the Head of Housing. The Committee is focussing on three main areas:
- The development of the housing vision
 - Consultation with internal and external stakeholders (in particular tenants)
 - Repairs and voids
- 3.9 The final report will be presented at the Overview Committee on 16 May, to which

all members of the Housing and Community Services Committee are invited.

4.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD (STREET) WARDENS

- 4.1 In February, the Community Scrutiny Committee also explored with officers plans to set up a Neighbourhood Warden Scheme, which will contribute to the key priorities of the 2005/08 Crime and Disorder Strategy and the South Derbyshire Community Strategy. It was noted that whilst funding is now in place for the start of such a scheme, the issue of how the service would be delivered had still to be resolved.
- 4.2 Members considered that the current feasibility study should be completed as quickly as possible and that this Committee should seek to ensure that the service is based on needs (rather than demand) and that it is delivered equitably across the district.

5.0 PLAY AREAS

- 5.1 The final matter to bring to the attention of this Committee concerns the provision and maintenance of play areas (which was also discussed in February).
- 5.2 The Community Scrutiny Committee has discussed this issue on several occasions over the last two years and is pleased to note the progress that is now being made in terms of new provision and the modernisation of existing sites. The current 'PPG17' study of recreation, sport and open space will also help to ensure that resources are targeted on priorities.
- 5.3 To support the progress that is being made in this area, the Housing & Community Services Committee will need to ensure that the necessary 'paperwork' is in place to prevent future uncertainties with Parish Councils over respective responsibilities for play areas.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This report has been prepared to assist the Committee to further develop and improve the services that it provides for the residents of South Derbyshire.
- 6.2 The Community Scrutiny Committee would like to thank the members and officers who prepared reports and contributed to the discussions at our meetings.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 These will need to be determined in the light of the Committee's response to this report.

