

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

5th June 2008

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Lemmon (Chairman), Councillor Grant (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Atkin, Harrison, Hewlett, Murray, Mrs. Patten and Roberts.

Labour Group

Councillors Dunn, Shepherd and Wilkins (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Gillespie).

In Attendance

Councillor Jones (Conservative Group).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Lane and Rhind (Labour Group).

HCS/1. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th April 2008 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/2. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (1ST APRIL 2007 – 31ST MARCH 2008)**

A report was submitted to detail performance levels and achievements for the year ending 31st March 2008, in relation to this Committee's contribution to the four key strands of the Council's Performance Management Framework. The detail of the report looked at the key achievements made during the last quarter relating to the Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan. Actual/out-turn performance was reported, again for the Corporate and Improvement Plans, together with the Community Strategy Action Plan and Best Value Performance Indicators.

With regard to Neighbourhood Wardens, a Member asked that his thanks be passed to Nathan Bull who had responded several times on the Goseley Estate. The Chairman added his thanks to the efforts of officers of the District Council for their many achievements, including gaining both the 'Green Flag Award' at Rosliston, and also the ROSPA Gold Award.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the key achievements and performance for the year ending 31st March 2008 within the Committee's area of responsibility be noted.***
- (2) That Members note where performance has failed to achieve the specified target and accept the responses submitted.***

HCS/3. **SERVICE PLANS 2008/09**

It was reported that Service Plans were a key part of the Council's Performance Management Framework, acting as an important link between high-level plans and strategies and personal performance objectives established through the employee review and development scheme. The form and content of Service Plans had been reviewed and minor changes made, to capture a number of cross-cutting themes such as value for money, outcomes and linking priorities to budgets. Details were provided of the sections contained within each plan. The Service Plans reflected the current themes and priorities within the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy. These would be reviewed when the new plans were published in 2009. For this reason, the plans covered a one-year period and monitoring reports would be provided on a quarterly basis.

Members were invited to ask questions following presentations.

RESOLVED:

That Service Plans for Housing Services, Leisure and Community Development and Environmental Services, be approved as a basis for service delivery over the period to March 2009.

HCS/4. **EXERCISE REFERRAL SCHEME – OUTREACH COMPONENT**

Members were advised that Active People results published late in 2006, illustrated that within Derbyshire, only 20.9% of the over 16 population were regularly involved in moderate intensity sport for at least 3 times of 30 minutes a week. Over 50% of the adult population had no involvement in physical activity.

The District Council's Exercise Referral Scheme had been operating for a number of years at Green Bank Leisure Centre, Swadlincote. However, due to staff turnover and the qualification needed to deliver exercise specific to health populations, the scheme required a review to meet the quality standards required in South Derbyshire.

The Council had been allocated £51,000 in order to develop the exercise referral scheme. This was initially for one year, but had the potential to be mainstreamed, following successful evaluation. A decision had been made to split this funding to provide the gym based sessions at Green Bank Leisure Centre (80%) and to develop a new and innovative outreach programme (20%). Thus, funding of £10,200 would be allocated to the outreach component. The outreach component would be managed by South Derbyshire Get Active in the Forest project, with additional support from the Healthy Lifestyle Officer. In addition, the District Council contribution would be the use of an existing 'drop in desk' within the Leisure and Community Development Service.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's involvement in the South Derbyshire Exercise Referral Scheme Outreach Component be approved.

HCS/5. ATHLETICS AND NETBALL COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

Members were advised that proposals had been developed between South Derbyshire District Council, South Derbyshire School Sport Partnership, Derbyshire Sport, England Netball, Derbyshire Netball, Derby Athletics Club and England Athletics to appoint a Netball Community Sport Coach for 8 hours a week and an Athletics Development Officer for 16 per hours week, to develop the two sports across the South Derbyshire District.

Full details of these projects and targets to be included within the programmes were detailed within the report.

The cost of the Netball proposal was £5,000, of which £2,000 would be provided from the Council's existing 'Get South Derbyshire Active' budget and £3,000 from Derbyshire Sport. In addition the contribution from the District Council would make use of an existing 'drop in desk' within the Leisure and Community Development Service.

The cost of the Athletics proposal was £6,000, of which £2,000 would be provided by the South Derbyshire School Sport Partnership, £2,000 from Athletics England and £2,000 from the District Council's existing 'Get South Derbyshire Active' budget.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's involvement in the Athletics and Netball Community Programmes be approved.

HCS/6. DRAFT REVISED EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2008 - 2016

Members were asked to consider a response to the draft revised East Midlands Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) 2008–2016. This document had been published by the East Midlands Regional Housing Group, and the closing date for responses was Friday 27th June 2008. The RHS set out 7 objectives and the report looked at each theme in relation to South Derbyshire. A suggested response formulated by the Housing Strategy Manager in consultation with the Planning Policy Manager and the Core Strategic Housing Group was also included within the report.

Members were made aware that the Regional Housing Strategy set out where future investment funds were to be focused, which might have implications for meeting local objectives.

Members questioned the definition of 'affordable housing'.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the proposed comments on the draft revised East Midlands Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) 2008-2016 be noted and approved.***
- (2) That a response be prepared by officers in consultation with the Chairman of Housing and Community Service Committee using the comments indicated in the report.***

HCS/7. **TENDERING STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTS**

Members were provided with an update on actions that the Housing Service was undertaking. This was to ensure that the Decent Homes programmed and on-going maintenance contracts were procured in accordance with EU legislation and the Council's procurement rules, and completed with the efficient use of resources and value for money, whilst delivering high specification installations.

An action plan for future procurement of contracts was included as an Annexe to the report, which detailed the tendering requirements to replace the existing contracts that expired at the end of March 2009. These external contracts were:-

- External planned maintenance.
- Kitchen replacement.
- Heating replacement.
- Bathroom replacement.
- Gas servicing and replacement.

Details were also provided on a new contract required for electrical rewiring.

RESOLVED:-

That the Procurement and Management Strategy for Contracts undertaken by the Housing Services be adopted.

HCS/8. **CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

Members were advised that at the Meeting of the Housing and Community Services Committee in April 2008, the draft new Allocations Policy had been approved in principle, subject to the findings at a range of consultation events. These consultation events had now taken place and the findings were available.

Further background details were given within the report and a full explanation of the consultation process was given. The findings of the consultation events were also listed.

Promotional material in the form of a booklet entitled 'Your Guide to a Proposed New Allocations System in South Derbyshire' had been sent out to all applicants on the current waiting list, asking for their comments.

At the April Meeting, the Committee had discussed the percentage figure of allocations that would be placed through the sub-regional scheme with Derby City Council. It was now proposed that initially 5% of properties could be opened up to bids from both the South Derbyshire and Derby waiting lists (subject to a reciprocal arrangement by Derby City Council). It was then proposed that a report be submitted to this Committee in June 2009, with the results of this pilot arrangement.

A Member requested that on page 32 of the South Derbyshire Homefinder proposed Housing Allocations Policy document, email addresses also be included for registered social landlords.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the final version of the proposed new Allocations Policy be approved.***
- (2) That Members note and instruct officers to take account of the comments arising from the consultation process, as detailed in the report, regarding how the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme is operated.***
- (3) That when the new CBL scheme is introduced (scheduled for 1st December 2008), initially 5% of allocations be opened up for sub-regional bidding.***

HCS/9. SHELTERED HOUSING VISION AND STANDARDS

It was reported that in November 2003, Members had accepted a baseline physical standard that had been established as the criteria for the sheltered housing stock. This baseline was, most recently, costed and presented to the Committee in February 2007, with some revision. This revised standard and progress summary was attached as an Annexe to the report. Details were given of the internal and external works completed at all bungalow schemes.

The report included information on option appraisal on bringing non-sheltered bungalows into the sheltered stock and the declassifying of sheltered stock.

RESOLVED:-

That progress be noted with regard to the implementation of the Sheltered Housing Vision and Standards.

HCS/10. DISABLED PERSONS' PROPERTY ADAPTATIONS

A report was submitted advising Members that the demand for disabled persons' property adaptations both in the private and public sectors continued to outstrip the budget available. The report identified an additional £200,000 required to be committed immediately, to ensure that qualifying residents in need received the necessary works to improve their quality of life.

It was confirmed that a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), was a mandatory grant for adaptations to private sector homes. The Government's grant for this year was £225,000, supplemented by £66,000 from the Council's own resources. Individual grants to residents were means tested.

In the public sector there was no government grant and the local authority should fund the works through the HRA and/or Major Repairs Allowance (MRA). In 2008/09 the budget for adaptations in the public sector was £286,000. Works in the public sector were also means tested.

In the current year, the PCT had announced that it would make over £1m available across Derbyshire, to supplement private sector adaptation work. However, the resources had not yet been allocated to the District and City Councils and might be inadequate to meet the current need. Adaptations in

the private sector in South Derbyshire had currently come to a halt as available resources had been exhausted. Full details were given on the current financial position with regards both to the public sector and private sector work, and the total overall demand.

Further details were given on prioritisation of need, and it was recommended that officers continue to work with Social Service colleagues to agree an effective prioritisation system, to ensure that those in most urgent need were not disadvantaged.

It was proposed to utilise £200,000 of HRA monies to fund the adaptations highlighted in this report, split equally between public and private sectors. This should be considered against the need to balance the overall HRA over the 10-year business planning period. Further details were given on the final budget out-turn for the HRA, although a decision could only be taken in principle at this stage, pending the Finance and Management Committee Meeting on 26th June 2008, when the out-turn figures for 2007/08 would be presented.

Members expressed concern over the lack of funding from Government for these needs, and it was requested that officers write to the Director of the PCT and also Derbyshire County Council seeking to gain a release of funds as soon as possible.

Officers also confirmed that lobbying of Government was also taking place at ministerial level, however, results were disappointing.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Finance and Management Committee be recommended to approve that £200,000 be utilised from the Housing Revenue Account 'supplementary fund' to allow disabled persons adaptations work to continue in both public and private sectors.***
- (2) That officers continue to work with Social Services colleagues at the County Council to agree an effective prioritisation system to ensure that those in most urgent need of adaptations were not disadvantaged.***

HCS/11. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th April 2008 were received.

REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICES GARAGE SITES (Paragraph 3)

The Committee approved that three former garage sites be offered for sale, and that further feasibility work on the development potential of twelve further sites be carried out.

J. LEMMON

CHAIRMAN