

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28th November 2005

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Harrington (Chair) and Councillor Bambrick (Vice-Chair).

Conservative Group

Councillor Lemmon.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Mrs. Mead (Labour Group) and Councillors Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Renwick (Conservative Group).

CYS/21. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th October 2005 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CYS/22. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

"Street Scene" – Visit to Derbyshire County Council

The Head of Policy and Economic Regeneration advised Members that a meeting had been held with Derbyshire County Council to discuss the possibility of a joint view of the Street Scene and that details of the meeting would be made available to all Scrutiny Committee Members.

RESOLVED:-

That a copy of the notes of the meeting between Officers of Derbyshire County Council and South Derbyshire District Council in respect of the Joint Review of Street Scene issues be circulated to all Scrutiny Committee Members and that this issue be considered by the Overview Committee at its Meeting on 12th December 2005.

CYS/23. **SHELTERED HOUSING**

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Community Services on the provision of Sheltered Housing Services.

Following the discussions and consideration at the previous meeting, the Committee was advised that following a Best Value Inspection in 2001, the Audit Commission had delivered a report, which was critical of the Council's Sheltered Housing provision. The Council had responded to the report by remodelling its Sheltered Housing Team and service, which was now based on the Community Warden model. Members were informed that many of the critical issues highlighted in the Best Value report of 2001 had now been resolved.

Members were reminded that the Committee had resolved to investigate the provision of Sheltered Housing. As part of the scrutiny process, three sheltered housing schemes had been considered – Peartree Court, Etwall, Unity Close, Church Gresley and Newlands Close, Church Gresley. Responding to a number of questions from Members, the following information was provided:-

- It was confirmed that the shower adaptations had now been provided at Peartree Court.
- In respect of Unity Close, appropriate Fire Evacuation Procedure guidance had now been issued.
- In respect of access at the rear of Newlands Close, that appropriate Disability Discrimination Act works would be undertaken as part of the corporate process and funded accordingly.

The Chair said it was important to ensure that the leaking guttering at Unity Court was repaired and that maintenance work was undertaken as part of an ongoing process. Concern was expressed that some work regarding the provision of heating at Newlands Close had been signed off, but the work had not been completed but the contractor was then being requested to undertake further repair work.

The Head of Housing Services advised Members that the inspection process prior to work being signed off had been improved and that Wardens had been provided with standard forms for completion so that they could report easily any defects.

The Committee was advised that in order to continue to deliver improvements to the Council's Sheltered Housing Service, the following funding requirements had been identified:-

- £350,000 to upgrade warden call equipment to existing customers
- £2,150,000 to carry out physical improvements to ensure that the sheltered housing stock complies with agreed standards and relevant legislation.

Members were advised that the Housing Service was committed to securing continuous improvements in its customer service and that the Sheltered Housing Service could receive up to £888,000 from the sale of Bass's Crescent and Smallthorn Place. The Committee was informed that the sale proceeds would fall short of projected costs, if the Council achieved all the standards contained within the Vision and Standards document. Officers confirmed that a Project Board had been established to prioritise and manage the next phase of service improvements. Members were advised that in terms of progress, it was important to establish how much it would cost to deliver the Vision and Standards process.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That Members note the actions completed in relation to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee site visits carried out and the anticipated plan to achieve compliance with the Sheltered Housing Vision and Standards.***

- (2) That a Gantt Chart, together with any other relevant information (including a timetable for implementation of the Sheltered Housing Vision and Standards document) be forwarded to each Member of the Scrutiny Committee, with a view to the Overview Committee examining the matter at its next Meeting on 12th December 2005.**

CYS/24. **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SCRUTINY VISIT – 4TH JANUARY 2006**

The Chair advised Members that a Visit had been organised to Derbyshire County Council on 4th January 2006 to see the operation of the County Council's Scrutiny Committee. It was confirmed Members would be contacted about the visit to establish their availability so that appropriate transport arrangements could be made.

Members noted the above arrangements.

CYS/25. **WORK PROGRAMME – CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

The Chair advised Members that cross-cutting issues detailed in the Committee's Work Programme would be discussed at the next Meeting of the Overview Committee to be held on 12th December 2005.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee notes that in relation to its Work Programme, cross-cutting issues would be considered at the next Meeting of the Overview Committee on 12th December 2005.

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 4.50 p.m.