

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8th May 2006

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

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

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Renwick.

**APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence from the Meeting was received from Councillor Lemmon.

CYS/32. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th March 2006 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CYS/33. **LOW FREQUENCY NOISE**

The Committee considered a report on the issue of low frequency noise [LFN]. The report outlined a definition of LFN, the number of complaints received by the District Council and how such complaints were dealt with by the Council's Environmental Health Service. Members were advised that LFN could generally be considered to be noise at a frequency lower than 150hz. Such noise could travel long distances and was difficult to insulate against as it could travel through sound insulating materials.

The Committee was advised that LFN complaints were often complex and difficult to resolve as the source of the noise was not readily identifiable, due to the distance it could travel and the masking effects of other noises. The sources of LFN noise were many and varied and could include pumps, fans, boilers, major road networks and electrical installations.

Members noted that LFN could cause severe distress to a relatively small number of people and the number of complaints received in the District were relatively low, being six at present. In a number of cases (approximately 80%) no environmental sound source could be identified for the sufferer's reaction. It was noted that LFN was a nationwide issue and not something specific to the South Derbyshire District.

The Committee was advised that the six reported cases of LFN were presently under investigation by the Environmental Health Section. The process for dealing with LFN cases was as follows:-

- Upon receipt of a noise complaint, both the complainant and the person responsible for the noise alleged (if this was ascertainable at that stage) would be contacted in writing. The complainant would be asked to

supply written evidence in the form of completed log sheets which included when the noise occurred and its effects.

- If a person responsible for the noise was identified at the beginning of the investigation, they would be made aware of the noise problem alleged by the Investigating Officer and asked to take all reasonable steps to minimise any disturbance they might be causing. Officers would use sound level metre equipment to measure whether the noise amounted to a statutory nuisance.

Responding to a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that at the present time, Officers did not need any additional scientific equipment to detect potential sources of LFN.

**RESOLVED:**

**(1) That the Committee revisits the issue of Low Frequency Noise in twelve months to receive:-**

- **Further information on whether the number of cases has increased from the present number of six.**
- **Details of the outcome of cases investigated by the Environmental Health Section.**

**(2) That a short note providing information for Members on Low Frequency Noise be included in the Members' Bulletin.**

CYS/34. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were reminded of the work undertaken on the Sheltered Housing Service, a report on which had been presented to the Housing and Community Services Committee on 16th March 2006.

The Committee noted that at its last meeting on 27th March 2006 Members had requested that Primary Care Trust issues and liaison between the Primary Care Trust and the District Council together with the development of Primary Care Trust services in the District be included on the list of agenda items for future consideration. Members had also requested that details on revenue funding arrangements for the new Swadlincote Primary Care Trust site be included on the list of agenda items for future Meetings.

Details of the Scrutiny "Get Together Event" held on Monday 30th January 2006 were circulated to Members.

Responding to a question from a Member, it was agreed that Officers undertake research on the current position in respect of any proposals for Post Office closures in the District, including information on the phasing out of Post Office cards for pensioners. It was agreed that a briefing paper on this matter be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:-**

**That the following items be placed on the Committee's work programme with a view to Members receiving future reports/presentations:-**

- ***Primary Care Trust issues, including liaison between the Primary Care Trust and the District Council, the development of Primary Care Trust services in the District and information on the revenue costs for the new Primary Care Trust premises in Swadlincote.***
- ***Research on the current position in respect of Post Office closure proposals in the District and the phasing out of Post Office cards for pensioners***

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 4.30 p.m.