

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2005

Present: Councillor A Burnip (Chair)
Councillors B Burn, A Collinson, Mrs E M Connor,
C Patching, R Taylor and P G Ward

Also Present: Councillor D Myers – Executive Member for
e-Government and Scrutiny Liaison

Apologies: Councillors Mrs S Mason and D Armstrong

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 13 September 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed subject to the following amendment: -

Community Centres (Minute No 5 refers)

Councillor C Patching referred to Minute Number 5 entitled “Community Centres” and to the question he had asked regarding the costs associated with community centre repairs. He confirmed that D Clarke, Head of Asset and Property Management had indicated that the costs in relation to Wheatley Hill Community Centre were discounted ie they were not counted rather than reduced at cost.

- 2 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 20 September 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

- 3 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

- 4 **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY**

S Gwilym, Scrutiny Support Manager advised that an article detailing the work of the four scrutiny committees had appeared in the September edition of Infopoint. It was intended to publicise the valuable work being undertaken by the scrutiny committees with similar articles in future issues.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

- 5 **SUPPORTING PEOPLE**

The Chair welcomed L Ogilvie, Care Services Manager, who was in attendance at the meeting to provide an update on the Supporting People Initiative.

Members were advised that Supporting People had prepared a five-year plan, which detailed the future strategy for Supporting People. The plan outlined the future delivery of all services including Community Alarms and Value for Money. It had previously been agreed to make savings of £200,000 from the Community Alarms Budget this financial year.

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It was explained that the Partnership had been successful in securing a Value Improvement Bid for Community Alarms, which would have a life span of approximately 18 months.

The Commissioning Body would be negotiating changes to contracts, however, as yet no firm decisions had been made. Changes would be phased in over a 3 to 5 year period and would be completed by 2008 when it was likely all services would be put out to competitive tender.

Following the Audit Commissions inspection a working party was established to investigate the issues around Value for Money. The report was expected to be completed by December 2005 and would include 3 options for consideration. The review was being carried out in line with the Value Improvement review to ensure continuity.

In addition, L Ogilvie advised that the rewiring of six aged persons units, financed through the Capital Programme, had commenced in January and was scheduled for completion in March.

With regard to the Handyman service two additional posts, jointly funded by Social Care and the PCT had been created. It was explained that the work undertaken by the Handymen was related to accident prevention and not routine maintenance work. A Member queried if it was intended to review the duties of the Handymen. L Ogilvie advised that their role was flexible and the service was continually improving and developing.

In relation to charging it was pointed out that there had never been any financial assistance for owner-occupiers, however this had been rectified and through fairer charging an additional 68 clients, who were owner-occupiers, now had their support charge paid for via Supporting People.

Councillor Mrs E M Connor queried how the security systems in warden controlled complexes had been financed. L Ogilvie advised that the scheme was financed through the Capital Programme and the current systems were compatible with all types of monitoring systems.

Councillor D Myers queried what consultation and publicity had been undertaken in relation to the proposed changes. L Ogilvie advised that all clients had received a letter outlining the proposals for the service. Approximately 800 responses were received all of which had been very positive about the service. On average 93% of replies had stated they would like the service to remain as it is. A further newsletter was being prepared which would keep clients up to date with the current position.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

6. **ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair, following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that the following item of business, not shown on the agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

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7. **BUS SHELTERS (AOB)**

Councillor A Collinson queried the position in relation to the cleansing and maintenance of bus shelters throughout the district and particularly in Haswell.

S Gwilym, Scrutiny Support Manager, advised that the Scrutiny Management Board had previously considered a briefing paper, prepared by P Penman, Environmental Services Operations Manager. The briefing paper outlined that there had been problems which had resulted in an underspend but monitoring processes were now in place to ensure the situation was not repeated.

Councillor Mrs E M Connor advised that the cleansing and maintenance of bus shelters had been discussed at length at the Coastal Area Forum.

S Gwilym suggested that P Penman be invited to attend the next meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that P Penman, Environmental Services Operations Manager be invited to attend the next meeting of the Resources Scrutiny Committee to discuss the cleansing and maintenance of bus shelters.

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