

MINUTES

Community Services Scrutiny Panel

17th January 2007

Present: Councillors Howarth (in the Chair), Kinghorn, Moderate, Taylor, Walton and Young.

Also Present: Councillors Carr, Kellett, Marsden, Smith and Stoddart.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Griffin, Hopgood, Robinson and Wolstenholme.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th December 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Chairman's Remarks

- (a) Following a question asked at Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Panel's report on Council Garages, the Chair advised Members of the answer which had been given by the Housing Manager.
- (b) It was noted that the next Meeting of the Panel which was due to be held on Tuesday 13th February 2007 clashed with the Mayor's tour of the Cathedral, to which all Members had been invited. Accordingly, it was agreed that the Meeting be re-scheduled to Wednesday 14th February 2007.
- (c) The Chair reminded Members that as the Town Hall was due to close for refurbishment at the end of this month, the Panel's next Meeting would be held at New Acres, Ushaw Moor. Following a request by Members, a location map would be supplied with the Agenda papers.

4. Report on Review of Homelessness

Following discussion, it was agreed that subject to an explanation of the terms DART, DASH and DISC being included, the report was to be forwarded to the Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

Additional information was requested on the 35 cases who had re-presented as homeless, for example whether accommodation had been provided, what assistance had been provided etc. This information would be provided to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in the report submitted to Cabinet.

It was also agreed that the leaflets on domestic violence which were mentioned in the report should be circulated to all Members, and that it would be appropriate to consider the issues surrounding mental health and homelessness in around six months time.

5. Gypsy/Traveller Sites

Consideration was given to the first stage of the draft report on this Scrutiny.

The background and aims as written were agreeable to the Panel, and it was noted that the outcomes and aims would go into much more detail. An additional item considered important to be included in the outcomes was information on gypsies/travellers who travelled for parts of the year and lived in the settled community for the remainder. Members were asked for their views on the

contents of the outcomes, and were requested to forward these to Democratic Services within the next fortnight.

With regard to the suggested recommendations, it was decided to take advice from the County Council as to what constituted a 'small' site, and what a recommended number of pitches would be, and to re-word recommendation no. 2 accordingly. Members also felt that that when recommending the consideration of more innovative ways of providing transit sites, it would be appropriate to do this on a county-wide basis and agreed that the recommendation should be amended to reflect this.

Additionally, two further recommendations were agreed upon. These being:-

- (a) That information on patterns of movement, including peaks and troughs caused by annual events, be requested from the County Council as soon as these are available.
- (b) That procedures with regard to unauthorised encampments and the needs of both the settled and travelling communities be suggested as a future topic for scrutiny.

The report would be considered further by the Panel at a future Meeting.

6. Any Other Business

The Chair advised that the Panel's next topic for Scrutiny was Graveyards, and that the Scrutiny Planning Documents would be circulated shortly.

The Meeting terminated at 6.15 pm