

Minutes

Community Service Scrutiny Panel

16th January, 2008

Present: Councillors Howarth (in the Chair) Crooks, Laverick, Lightley, Mavin, Norman, Robinson, D. Smith, Taylor, Walton and Young.

Also Present: Councillor Rae – Portfolio Holder for Environment
Councillor Thomson – Portfolio Holder for Communities,

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Moderate.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

NOTE: 5.31p.m. Councillors Laverick, Marsden and Rae joined the meeting.

3. Draft Report -- Review of Scrutiny of Homelessness

The Chair proposed that two additional recommendations be added to the report at 7.2 and 7.4 and that the original 7.2 become 7.3.

7.2 The Panel considers the prevention of homelessness to be of paramount importance and to that end strongly recommends that the Council make every possible effort to retain the position of Homelessness Prevention Officer beyond the date for which it is currently funded being March, 2008.

7.4 That a copy of this Review Report together with its appendices be sent to the appropriate officers with responsibility for the monitoring and updating of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan.

The Panel agreed that the additional recommendations be included in the report and that the report be sent to Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

4. Scrutiny of Gypsy and Traveller Unauthorised Encampments

The Chair advised the Panel that it is hoped all the guests will be able to attend the February meeting. The Portfolio Holder for Environment advised the Panel that both officers from Community Development and Neighbourhood Wardens should be invited to attend the meeting as they are dealing with the problems of unauthorised encampments first hand.

NOTE: 5.50 p.m. Councillor Smith joined the meeting.

Members discussed various incidents involving unauthorised encampments and how they had been resolved. Members discussed that there should be overnight stops for travellers to park up and stay, but where to place the stops is a controversial issue as most communities would be opposed to having a 'stopover' in their area.

Questions for Guests at the next meeting:-

- Have any areas that may be suitable for overnight stop-overs been identified by Planning?
- Are these areas within commuting distance to schools and shops?
- Who would be first contact?
- Would Members require a hierarchy of contacts?
- Clarification of the interim protocol.
- Would it be possible to have a member of the travelling community to come along to a meeting?

Meeting terminated at 6.10 p.m.