

MINUTES

Community Services Scrutiny Panel

8th April 2008

Present: Councillors Howarth (in the Chair), Lightley, Norman, Robinson, Taylor, Walton and Young.

Also Present: Councillors Kellett, Kelly, Marsden and Stoddart.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Laverick, Mavin and D Smith.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th March, 2008, were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the undermentioned amendments:-

- (i) It being noted that Councillor Robinson had submitted her apologies for absence.
- (ii) That recommendation 5.3 contained in the Report on Unauthorised Encampments of Gypsies and Travellers, previously approved, now be amended to read:

“That the Travellers Liaison Service contact details and an alternative procedure for contact outside normal working hours be supplied...”

The Chairman advised that the Scrutiny Committee had already resolved to refer this report to Cabinet for consideration, and as the Cabinet papers had now been dispatched, she would clarify whether it was possible to amend this recommendation prior to the report being considered by Cabinet on 16th April, 2008. She would report back to the next Meeting of the Panel.

3. Council Garages – Consideration of Review Report

At the Meeting on 17th March, the Council’s Housing Manager had been in attendance for the review of the previous scrutiny on the letting of Council Garages.

The review report was considered by the Panel and approved for submission to Scrutiny Committee with no amendments.

4. Allocations Policy – Initial Scoping of Scrutiny

Members considered the aims of the Scrutiny, and the particulars areas to be considered.

It was agreed that further information would be needed on the following items:-

- ◆ New Allocations System
 - Why the system had to change;
 - Number of applications made under the new banding system;
 - Details of allocations made;
 - Bands which Officers have difficulty delegating applicants to.

- ◆ Appeals
 - How the appeals system works;
 - How many appeals had been submitted and whether Officers were able to cope with these;
 - Whether there is a procedure and timescale for advising applicants of the outcome of their appeal.

- ◆ Medical Need
 - If the criteria for medical banding have proved controversial;
 - What constitutes medical priority;
 - Who makes the decision to award medical priority;
 - Whether it is possible to move up this list without medical need e.g. through length of time on the list.

It was agreed that initially the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Housing Manager, Homelessness Officer and Special Needs Officer be invited to attend the Panel's next meeting on this topic for further consideration of these matters.

5. Any Other Business

The Chairman advised that the Head of Property Services would be reporting on the Decent Homes Standard to the May Meeting of the Panel. It was agreed therefore that further consideration of the Allocations Policy be deferred to the June Meeting.

Members expressed their disappointment over the refreshments provided for the Meeting, particularly regarding the lack of biscuits and the provision of UHT milk. These comments would be reported back to the relevant Officers for attention.

The Meeting terminated at 6.15 pm