

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
10 April 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor J.E. Higgin (Chairman) and

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, T.F. Forrest, D.M. Hancock, J.P. Moran,
T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, A. Gray,
G.C. Gray, J.G. Huntington, J.M. Khan, G. Morgan, J.K. Piggott, A. Smith
and Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

**Observer
with
Chairman's
Consent**

Councillor M. Iveson

Apologies: Councillors J. Burton, G.M.R. Howe, Ms. M. Predki, J. Robinson J.P and
K. Thompson

Tenants Representative
Mrs. M. Thomson

OSC(2).41/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Members had no interests to declare.

OSC(2).42/06 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February, 2007 were confirmed as
a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**OSC(2).43/06 HOUSING DEPARTMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN -
PROGRESS TO DATE**
Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Housing to provide
an update on the progress of the Service Improvement Plan. (For copy see
file of Minutes).

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Service Improvement Plan
and the progress made.

Specific reference was made to the completion of a number of actions,
including the Tenants Handbook, the conclusion of the review of current
tenant arrears policies, the examination of value for money (VFM) issues
and partnering with Repairs and Maintenance, Call Out and disabled
persons adaptations (DPA) services.

AGREED : That the Committee was satisfied with progress achieved on the Service Improvement Plan.

OSC(2).44/06 HOUSING MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF RENT INCOME AND ARREARS RECOVERY

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Housing detailing the findings of the service review undertaken by the Rent Income Excellence Network (RIEN). (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee was informed that the RIEN was commissioned to support future service improvements to housing income management. The report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses to the current management, which were outlined under the following themes: -

- Customer access, care and service user focus
- Current tenant arrears and former tenant arrears collection
- Debt advice, and
- Value for money

The Committee's attention was then drawn to the Housing Management Rent Income Service Improvement Plan.

It was explained that four actions had been completed at the time of the report.

Discussion was held regarding the length of time it took for debt to be recovered when a tenant was supported by Social Services and the management of current rent arrears. It was explained that the current procedure regarding renting a Council property and its management was currently being reviewed to improve procedures and preventative measures.

- RECOMMENDED :*
- (1) *That the Housing Management Review Rent Income and Arrears Recovery Service Improvement Plan be implemented.*
 - (2) *That further reports be brought in relation to key service improvement areas identified as necessary.*

OSC(2).45/06 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT - REVIEW OF ARTS DEVELOPMENT

K. Banner, Arts Development Officer, attended the meeting to report on progress made on the Action Plan. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that substantial progress had been made on the Action Plan.

- AGREED :*
- (1) *That the Committee was satisfied with progress achieved on the Action Plan.*

(2) *That the Action Plan required no further monitoring by Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2.*

OSC(2).46/06 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AGREED : That the Work Programme be approved.

OSC(2).47/06 DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meetings held on 8th January, 2007 and 1st February, 2007 were considered and noted. (For copies see file of Minutes).

AGREED : That the Minutes be noted.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss S. Billingham, Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4240, sbillingham@sedgefield.gov.uk

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