

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
HEALTHY BOROUGH WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Council Chamber, Council
Offices, Spennymoor

Tuesday, 21 October
2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. P. Crathorne, Ms. I. Jackson,
T. Ward and Mrs E. M. Wood

In

Attendance: Councillors V. Chapman, G.C. Gray, J.G. Huntington and B. Lamb

**Observer
with**

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong and W. Waters

**Chairman's
Consent**

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. D. Bowman, J. Burton, Mrs. S. Haigh,
Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, K. Thompson and A. Warburton

Mrs. M.Thomson (Tenant Representative)

H&S.13/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

H&S.14/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September, 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**H&S.15/08 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP- LEISURE CENTRES
CONCESSIONARY PRICING SCHEME - PROGRESS ON ACTION
PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report detailing progress to date on Cabinet's response and Action Plan following consideration of its recommendations arising from the Leisure Centre Concessionary Pricing Scheme Review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Leisure Services Marketing Manager, was present at the meeting to outline progress and respond to any queries.

Members were reminded of the background to the review and recommendations provided by the Review Group, the Action Plan which had been drawn up and suggested timescale.

Details on progress of each action were outlined. It was explained that the Action Plan had been in place for approximately two years. Some areas were completed whilst others were still ongoing.

Specific reference was made to the recommendation relating to concessionary prices remaining at their current level. It was explained that due to substantial rises in unit energy costs modest price increases had been implemented for 2008/9.

The Committee noted that with regard to partnership working and in particular the web-based implementation plan, this had been delayed. Three surgeries in Spennymoor were scheduled to go live in September, 2008. However, the website was still being developed. The Primary Care Trust would be providing information on progress at the next meeting of the Healthy Borough Strategic Working Group.

It was explained that recommendation 6 of the action plan related to the establishment of a focus group to provide a forum for consultation regarding the Leisure Centre Concessionary Pricing Scheme. The Committee was informed that the focus group had not been established. Base campaigns had increased the number of concessionary users registered within the Torex system from 1,557 in 2006 to 8,460 in October, 2008.

The recommendation relating to the promotion of information and advertisement including case study examples on the Concessionary Pricing Scheme was ongoing. Examples were given of promotions including free swim promotions for selected super output areas, zest for life campaign additional activities for over 50's, care home residents and disabled residents.

With regard to the recommendation relating to all members being transferred onto the B:Active Scheme, it was explained that the process was 75% complete as of October, 2007. Capital, however, was not available in 2008 to purchase additional data capture equipment, resulting in the manual compilation of some performance indicator data.

The Committee was informed that with regard to the recommendation on Leisure Services taking account of findings from the reports evaluating initiatives in Wales and Scotland and identifying any further improvements which could be made, expressions of interest had been submitted to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, on behalf of the new authority, to take advantage of free swimming for those people aged 60 years and over and 16 years and under. Confirmation to proceed with the scheme would be made by Durham County Council Cabinet.

During discussion of this item reference was made to the launch of the play rangers programme the following weekend and sessions which would be organised on a weekly basis after school at play areas principally in the eastern area and the need for the programme to be rolled out to other areas within the Borough.

AGREED : *That the Committee is satisfied that the actions following the Overview and Scrutiny Review on Leisure Centres Concessionary Pricing Scheme had been*

implemented or are ongoing and that no further reports are required.

H&S.16/08 PROGRESS ON HOUSING PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS

It was explained that the Director of Housing together with the Head of Housing Property Services, were present at the meeting to outline progress and, to answer any queries. (For copy of presentation see file of minutes.

Members were reminded that at its meeting on 24th June 2008 the Committee had identified progress on housing partnering arrangements to be included within the work programme.

The Committee was informed that the partnering project contract had commenced in February 2008 and included :-

Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service
Housing Capital Programme
Private Properties Group Repair Scheme
New Build Homes
Improvements to Spennymoor Leisure Centre – Arts Resource Centre.

A detailed breakdown of jobs which had been undertaken by the Repairs and Maintenance Service since 2004 and number of jobs issued were identified. The performance of the service since April 2008 in relation to each category of repairs and maintenance was also identified. It was noted that within the service grounds maintenance to the inside curtilage of council properties was included. This was a discretionary service.

Details were given of the void turnaround time and emergency call-out statistics. It was noted that with regard to the voids turnaround time this had decreased since April 2008 from 41.66 days to 10.13 days in September 2008. In respect of emergency call-outs statistics it was noted that repairs transferred from during the day had reduced from 698 in 2007/8 to 186 between April 2008 and September 2008.

The Committee was also informed of the customer satisfaction questionnaire cumulative results from April 2007 to September 2007 compared with the same period in 2008.

Progress in relation to promises made under partnering arrangements was also outlined. Particular reference was made to efficiency savings, energy efficiency, apprenticeships, tenants handbooks and demonstration of continuous improvement. It was explained that the proposal to extend the service beyond 6.00 p.m. was being looked at. There had been a reduction of time in relation to void turnaround, a charter was to be established with Sedgefield Borough Homes and a customer resource centre was being considered.

It was noted that the Audit Commission had commented in relation to the partnership that early indications were that the Partnership was working well with high tenant satisfaction, significantly reduced design tender and

mobilisation periods and a commitment to freeze prices throughout the three years contract.

During discussion of this item a query was raised regarding financing of the repairs and maintenance service and customer satisfaction. It was explained that the majority of people were satisfied with the service. The repairs element of the contract was financed through Council rents and that element of the service would be transferred to Sedgefield Borough Homes. The remainder of the contract including the leisure element which was financed through Council Tax would be transferred to Durham County Council.

A query was also raised regarding sub-contracting and ensuring that standards of work were maintained. It was explained that a specification had been developed and sub-contractors were aware of the standards to be achieved.

Cabinet Members then left the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate.

AGREED : That the Committee is satisfied on the progress being made on partnering arrangements.

Councillor Blenkinsopp requested that it be placed on record that he was not in support of the above decision.

H&S.17/08

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meetings held on 14th July, 2008 and 11th September, 2008. (For copies see file of Minutes).

Members were informed that NHS County Durham (formerly County Durham PCT) were undertaking a public consultation exercise "Seizing the Future" which identified proposals for changes to services at Bishop Auckland General Hospital, Darlington Memorial Hospital and University Hospital North Durham. A number of public meetings were to be held across the County in relation to the consultation. Dates of meetings would be circulated to members.

AGREED : That the Minutes be received.

H&S.18/08

WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for the Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes). An update was given on the progress on the Committee's two Review Groups Healthy Borough Review Group and Strong Communities Review Group.

AGREED : That the Work Programme be agreed.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss. E.A. North, Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4237, enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk