

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle Road, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, DH3 3UT on Wednesday, 25 February 2009 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Geoffrey Armstrong (Chairman)

Councillors:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| D M Holding | P B Nathan |
| J W Barrett | J Shiell |
| L E W Brown | T J Smith |
| R Court | D Thompson |
| M Gollan | A Turner |
| S Greatwich | F Wilkinson |
| R Harrison | A Willis |
| W Laverick | S Barr |
| M D May | |

Officers:

I Forster (Director of Corporate Services), I Herberson (Head of Corporate Finance), G MacCallam (Environmental Services Manager) and S Marshall (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in Attendance: Mr I Broughton (Chief Executive, Cestria Community Housing Association), Mrs L Chambers (Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Cestria Community Housing Association), Mr P Stephens (Director of Housing and communities, Cestria Community Housing Association), Mr P Tinnion (Chair of the Board, Cestria Community Housing Association) and one member of the public.

71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Davidson, P May, J Proud, D Robson and A Turner.

72. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 14 JANUARY 2009

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting of the People and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee held 14 January 2009, copies of which had previously been circulated to each Member, be agreed as a correct record."

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Willis declared a personal interest in Item No7 of the agenda as being a tenant of Cestria Community Housing Association.

Councillor Turner declared a personal interest in Item No7 as being a Member of the Board of Cestria Community Housing Association.

74. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There was one member of the public present at the meeting and the Chairman advised he would invite him to speak at the relevant times during the meeting.

75. CESTRIA COMMUNITY HOUSING - UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed the four members from Cestria Community Housing Association and thanked them for attending the meeting.

Mr Broughton proceeded to outline the report, highlighting the progress Cestria has made in delivering Offer document Promises, in delivering the Staff Pledge and the general performance update from Cestria covering the whole range of service issues. He advised that specific questions raised by elected Members had been addressed and were dealt with in Appendix 4 of the report.

Discussion ensued in relation to the following:

- Plans for new build properties in approximately 2-3 years time
- The types of ICT infrastructure and software invested in over the past 12 months
- The types of complaints received and the time taken to deal with complaints
- Possible partnership working
- Future funding prospects
- Anti-social behaviour and actions taken to prevent it
- The refurbishment of Holyoake Community Centre
- The use of the learning centre at Gibside shops
- The transfer of the remaining communal rooms to Cestria

The Chairman once again thanked those present from Cestria Community Housing Association for the information provided.

RESOLVED: "That the comments made be noted."

Mr Broughton, Mrs Chambers, Mr Stephens, Mr Tinnion and Councillor Turner left the meeting at 6.55pm.

The Chairman advised that Item No.9 on the agenda would be considered prior to Item No.8.

76. RECYCLING - UPDATE

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that there were problems with the current contractor for collecting recyclable materials from households.

Discussion ensued in relation to the problems the company was encountering.

The Chairman queried the payment to charity which had been agreed in the initial contract.

The Environmental Services Manager advised that the company were contractually obliged to pay £2.00 per ton to the Chairman's charity.

RESOLVED: "That the comments made be noted."

77. PEOPLE AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman spoke in relation to the Annual Report of the Committee and advised that this would be the final Annual Report.

He went on to express the pride he felt about the work undertaken by scrutiny over the last five years in delivering a challenge to the services the Council provides. He advised that implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee had seen services improve and attitudes change.

He advised that the three scrutiny reviews carried out during the final year of the Council had been done so in difficult circumstances but it was hoped that the reviews would effect improvement of the futures.

He went on to add his thanks to the Leader of Chester-le-Street District Council and the other members of the Executive for their influence in helping make scrutiny in Chester-Le-Street District Council what it has been.

He also sincerely thanked Shelley Marshall, Democratic Services Assistant, for the excellent work with scrutiny when Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, left the employ of the Council and also Ian Forster, director of Corporate Services, for his patience and support.

Finally he thanked all those present for the tremendous work, help, support and friendship.

RESOLVED: "That the report be agreed by the Committee and the comments made be noted."

Prior to the termination of the meeting, the director of Corporate Services conveyed his thanks for the hard work the chairman had put in to driving scrutiny forward in the authority and making it the success it had become.

The meeting terminated at 7.15 pm