

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGENERATION SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 21 APRIL 2008**

Present: Councillor D. Raine (Chair)
Councillors S. Bishop, Mrs. E.M. Connor,
H. High, A.J. Holmes, D.J. Taylor-Gooby and
C. Walker

Apologies: Councillor Mrs. B.A. Sloan and Mrs. S. Forster

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 31 March 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed.

2. **MATTERS ARISING**

**Future of Peterlee Community Hospital
(Minute No. 6 refers)**

A Member queried if progress would be sought on the future of the hospital. The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that he would write to the Head of Strategic Projects requesting further progress to be provided in the coming months.

RESOLVED that the information given be noted.

3. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 8 April 2008, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

4. **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

5. **FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

At the last meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 14 April 2008 the following issue was discussed.

County Durham Overview and Scrutiny Member Network - Review of Public Transport.

RESOLVED the information given be noted.

6. **SERVICE UNIT PERFORMANCE REPORTING - HOUSING SERVICES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Housing which provided Members with performance information in respect of East Durham Homes and Housing Services for the third quarter of the current financial year, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

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The Committee expressed concern that there was no representative from East Durham Homes at the meeting and suggested that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of East Durham Homes.

The Service Support Manager explained that the Council's Housing Service Unit was made up of the following:-

Housing Renewal
Housing Policy and Strategy
Supported Housing
Service Support

There was currently thirty key indicators used for monitoring purposes, five of which were statutory Best Value Performance Indicators for which the Housing Service was responsible and twenty five were local indicators that had been agreed. In summary, two of the thirty key indicators were only calculated annually and of the other twenty eight indicators, there were twenty on target, three within the 5% tolerance and five were not on target. Of the three indicators where benchmarking information was available, two represented upper quartile performance and one represented median quartile performance.

In comparison to performance at the end of the third quarter, there had been an improvement in twelve of the indicators. Performance had remained the same in five and there had been a reduction in five.

A new Housing Strategy had been prepared for the period 2008/2011 and the document had been agreed by District Council.

A Member referred to the Edenhill area and queried what the prices were for affordable homes. The Service Support Manager explained that she would ask a member of the team to contact him with the information.

A Member queried how the Bond Guarantee Scheme worked. The Service Support Manager explained that funding was available and she would ask the Homelessness and Housing Advice Manager to contact him.

A Member queried what would happen with the Housing Revenue Account under Local Government Re-organisation. The Service Support Manager explained that she would ask the Head of Housing to contact him.

The Chair queried how long the Empty Homes Officer had been in post. The Service Support Manager explained that the Empty Homes Officer had been in post since January. The Chair suggested that the Empty Homes Officer be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

AT THIS POINT, COUNCILLOR MRS. E.M. CONNOR AND D.J. TAYLOR GOOBY DECLARED A PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST AND LEFT THE MEETING.

With regard to East Durham Homes, there were eighteen key indicators selected for monitoring purposes which comprised five statutory Best Value Performance Indicators and thirteen locally agreed indicators. In summary, nine of the fifteen indicators were on target, three were within the 5% tolerance and three were not on target. Of the seven indicators where benchmarking information was available, two represented upper quartile

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performance, three represented median quartile performance and two represented lower quartile performance.

In comparison to performance at the end of the third quarter, there had been an improvement in eleven of the indicators and a reduction in four.

In the third quarter, East Durham Homes had received a total of forty complaints of which fifteen were found to be justified. During the same period there were a total of thirteen compliments received. A breakdown of the complaints and compliments were shown by service area in the graphs detailed in the report.

The Chair explained that he had been informed that the Estate Officers were to be made redundant. The Service Support Manager explained that East Durham Homes had undergone a re-structure and she believed that some posts had been deleted but was unsure if some duties had been transferred elsewhere in the organisation.

The Chair suggested that information be sought from East Durham Homes on the current situation with the Estate Officers.

A Member commented that he was concerned about the number of complaints that had been found to be justified. The Service Support Manager explained that the majority of the complaints were repairs but confirmation had been received that services provided by Morrison was improving.

A Member referred to bungalows in his village and explained that there was only one entry and exit point and was concerned regarding access in case of emergencies. The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that he would make enquiries regard this.

The Chair thanked the Service Support Manager for her report.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the information given be noted;
- (ii) a letter be sent to the Chief Executive of East Durham Homes expressing the Committees concerns that no representatives of the Company were in attendance;
- (iii) clarification be sought on the current situation with the Estate Officers;
- (iv) enquiries be made into the fire exits in bungalows.

7. **ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair, following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that following item of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

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8. **DALTON LE DALE BECK (AOB)**

A Member referred to Dalton le Dale Beck and explained that it was absorbing into the surrounding limestone and he was concerned regarding landslip. The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that he would make enquiries.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Support Manager make enquiries regarding Dalton le Dale Beck.

JC/CB/COM/REGEN/080400
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