

Minutes

Meeting of : Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Meeting held in : The Alamein Suite, City Hall, Salisbury
Date : Tuesday 21 August 2007
Commencing at : 6.00 pm

District Councillors:

Councillor J A Cole-Morgan (Chairman)
Councillor B M Rycroft (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs I M Evans, Mrs J A Green, M A Hewitt, D J Luther, C G Mills, I M Mitchell, J King, and M J Osment.

Councillor Clegg, Portfolio Holder for Planning was also in attendance

Tenants Panel:

Mr A Wells and Mr D Edwards

Apologies: Ms J V Broom, Mrs C J M Morrison

Present - Officers:

Tom Bray and Steve Milton (Democratic Services) Andrew Reynolds (Strategic Housing) Jon Gateley and Elizabeth Burt (Forward Planning)

16. Public Questions / Statement Time

There were none.

17. Councillor Questions/Statement Time

Members sought confirmation of councillor membership of the tenant's panel.

Councillor King informed the Panel that he is to present his report on performance management at the forthcoming Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. He suggested that one councillor from each Overview and Scrutiny Panel assist him in highlighting the important information from the performance reports to improve their accessibility to all councillors.

18. Minutes:

Resolved: that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on 20th June 2007 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. Declarations of Interests:

There were none.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



20. Chairman's Announcements:

There were none

21. Salisbury and South Wiltshire – Our Place In The Future consultation:

The Panel considered the previously circulated report of the Forward Planning Officer. In their discussion of the report, the following points were made:

- The consultation documents are well produced.
- The size of the document was a concern for members. Parish Councils are being asked to formulate a parish view but they are experiencing problems with the size of the document.
- Members sought more information about how different stakeholders responses would be weighted. Eg. How would a Parish Council's response be weighted.
- Some of the figures relating to housing and population projections are not accurate.
- The consultation document should be more widely available as not everybody has access to a computer.
- The idea of the creation of a new town was raised that could ease development pressures in rural towns and villages.
- The Panel stressed the importance of the document and encouraged people to respond.
- Members were concerned about the implications of the unitary authority; the forward planning officer assured the Panel that there is a commitment to continue with the core strategy under the Local Development Framework to its completion.

Resolved – That the report be noted

22. Salisbury Vision – To detail the work of Community & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the Vision:

The Panel received a presentation from the Chairman about the cultural aspects of the Vision following the establishment of a sub-group to address this at the last meeting. The presentation outlined the importance of encouraging cultural industries to set up in Salisbury, as they will support both the local economy and the City's culture. Making the most of the existing arts base and schools/colleges in the areas along with its good links to London, the Chairman stressed the importance of the cultural aspects of the Vision. Furthermore, the Vision should celebrate the achievements of the people of Salisbury through the introduction of Blue Plaques. Salisbury also has great cultural attractions for top musicians and craftsmen and this should be capitalised upon through the Vision. Further to this members suggested that sports should be included when talking about Salisbury and its culture, especially with Salisbury City Football Club now a more prominent team in the national game.

At the last meeting a sub-group was also set up to look into all aspects of the Vision from a community and housing perspective. Members raised the issue that many of the Vision's projects in the City centre are residential led and this can have a range of implications on the city centre.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Vision Arts and Culture sub-group continue with their preliminary investigations and report back to the Panel at a later date.
- (2) That the Vision sub-group who are looking at all the community and housing aspects of the Vision meet and formulate their ideas and report back to the Panel at a later date.

23. Update on the Sheltered Housing Review:

The Panel considered the verbal update from the Head of Strategic Housing (summary attached to minutes). In their discussion of the agenda item, the following points were made:

- The Panel acknowledged the good progress made by the officers following the review.
- The Panel congratulated the council on their receipt of accreditation from the The Centre for Sheltered Housing Services (CSHS) under its Code of Practice for delivering a quality service to older and vulnerable people living in sheltered housing schemes.
- There is a need to keep reviewing the care needs and preferences of the elderly.
- Some concerns were raised over the standard of work carried out by maintenance sub-contractors and that the work should be more closely monitored.
- Support officers are now better equipped to reach all sheltered housing in the district.
- There are major problems with the TV Licensing Authority sending payment notices to elderly residents aged 75 and over.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

24. Neighbourhood Policing Team Beat Managers in Salisbury District:

The Panel received the details and the self-selected priorities of Neighbourhood Policing Team Beat Managers in Salisbury District. It was suggested that members of the panel should contact their Beat Team manager to discuss local priorities in context of overall policy targets.

Resolved – that the details be noted.

25. Cabinet Work Programme:

The Panel considered the previously circulated Cabinet Work programme. The Panel selected items of interest from the programme focusing primarily on items with a priority rating of green or amber.

Resolved – that the following items from the Cabinet Work Programme be brought before the Panel in due course:

1. Review of management of leisure facilities
2. The use of the Guildhall
3. Service Charge review for Council housing
4. Gypsy & Travellers Housing Needs Survey
5. Choice based Letting

26. Scrutiny Review Programme:

Members were encouraged to identify issues for inclusion in the programme to be formalised at the next meeting. Some of the ideas were as follows:

- Review the plans for change at the Crematorium.
- Review of swimming lessons at 5 Rivers.
- Review of the effect of extended licensing hours on Salisbury's nightlife.

*Meeting closed at 8.45pm
Members of the Public: 0*

Recommendations and Action Plan arising from 'A Review of Changes to Sheltered Housing Services'

	Recommendation	Proposed Action	Timescale	Who	Progress
1	Any significant matter relating to the management of the Council's sheltered accommodation should in future be classified as a <i>key decision</i> and adequate notice should be provided of the Cabinet's intention to determine any such matter in the Leader's Forward Plan. (Although not formally within the remit of the review, it is also recommended that the Leader's forward plan should be made more accessible to the public - possibly through newspaper advertisement)	<p>The definition of a key decision is set out in the Council' Constitution as a decision that is "significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Authority's area." The definition will be interpreted to include the sort of decisions identified by the scrutiny panel.</p> <p>The Council has introduced a Cabinet Annual Work Programme to supplement the formal Leader's Forward Plan attempting to give as much notice as possible to all future Cabinet items.</p> <p>Items relating to each of the 4 portfolio areas are now routinely included on Scrutiny Panel agendas.</p> <p>Consideration can be given to wider circulation of the Cabinet Work Programme through the Citizen, Internet and Libraries</p>	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>March</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>SA/GG</p>	<p>Actioned</p> <p>Actioned</p> <p>Actioned</p> <p>Actioned</p>
2	That an informal impact assessment be included with each item in the Forward Plan. This may take the form of a simple 1-3 star rating or similar, to enable the public, members and officers to easily identify matters of importance and to guide how such matters are handled.	Agreed. An assessment of the Cabinet Work Programme using the Council's approved Risk Assessment framework will be used to identify the relative sensitivity/importance of Cabinet items	March	SA	Actioned by Chief Executive and Leader
3	That, in order to make it aware of impending decisions, the Leader's Forward Plan be made available to the Tenant's Panel.	A copy of the Community and Housing element of the Cabinet Work programme will be made available to all tenant panel	Immediate	NS	Actioned

		meetings			
	Officers preparing reports that are likely to recommend <i>significant</i> key decisions (identified in accordance with the procedure recommended above) should consult the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer at the earliest opportunity.	Officers preparing reports will be reminded of the need to involve the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer in the preparation of their reports. (See link to 68) Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer to retain the right to advise Cabinet directly	March	DN LPS/FS	Actioned
4	That future reports recommending <i>significant</i> key decisions incorporate a brief consultation statement setting out: who has been consulted; the results of the consultation and the actions taken to address the matters raised during the consultation.	Officers be reminded to complete the consultation statement on the standard report template. (See link to 68)	Immediate	DN	Actioned
5	The Council should ensure that all future reports on matters having a significant impact on tenants of sheltered housing schemes, are first presented for consideration by the Tenant's Panel and the views of the Panel should be incorporated into reports presented to Cabinet.	The Sheltered Housing Forum as well as the Tenants Panel will consider future reports with a significant impact. This recommendation is linked to improving consultation and report planning.	Immediate to Tenants Panel. Sheltered Housing Forum dependant on 88	NS NS	Actioned when required
6	The Council's consultation strategy should be amended to incorporate protocols for consultation with tenants.	Agreed. (See link to 68)	March	SM	To be actioned
7	The Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Head of Democratic Services produce a formal protocol for the guidance of officers preparing reports to Cabinet and Council incorporating the points raised by this report.	Agreed	March	SA/JC/AO	Actioned
8	That the Cabinet be asked to draw up a change management strategy for the Council as soon as possible.	Management Team, Service Units and team leaders have already undertaken training with regard to successful change management. We are seeking to establish best practice strategies to incorporate	May	MT	To be actioned

		into a formal change management strategy for SDC			
9	Those Cabinet key decisions assessed as having a significant impact be accompanied by a project management plan, and that a project management plan be adopted for all significant changes to sheltered housing provision in the future.	Management Team have an approved project management framework, which sets out when, and how formal project plans should be used. Management team will review the framework and advise Service Unit Heads of whether any changes to the guidance is required to meet the requirements of this recommendation. The monitoring and active control of high risk areas will be undertaken as part of the systematic management of the project. The need for further project management training is being assessed.	March May	HF RB	Actioned as part of No.2 Actioned
10	That a communication and consultations protocol be developed for the sheltered housing service, this to include a promise to consult prior to any significant changes to the service, the use of plain English in written communications, the development of an appropriate mix of consultation and communication tools that suit the needs of the clients concerned and a commitment to act on the results of feedback received.	MT will review existing policies to ensure all the communication commitments as set out in the scrutiny review are incorporated into council policies and public statements. A protocol for the sheltered housing service will be drafted for consultation with the sheltered housing forum and Tenants Panel.	March Dependant on 88	DN AR/NS	Actioned as and when necessary
11	Proposals are adopted for the greater involvement of residents in the management of sheltered housing service – through a forum (or other existing body). The forum to include representation from advocacy agencies such as Age Concern and Social Services.	The Head of Strategic Housing Services (SHS) has written a proposed framework for a sheltered housing tenants forum. This is to be considered by the Tenants Panel and then at each sheltered housing scheme meeting. In terms of representation by external agencies, it is important	March 2006 Subject to agreement by Tenants Panel and Sheltered	AR/NS	Proposals for a Forum have been produced. At individual scheme meetings tenants advised of forum and invited to put forward a representative. Proposal to convene first meeting in March 2006. Advert for Officer placed and recruitment in progress.

		that the forum decides rather than the council being prescriptive.	Housing Forum		First Forum meeting scheduled for 11 April 2006. Officer recruited and due to commence at the end of April. July 06 Forum now fully operational having elected a chairman
12	That the individual scheme assessments prepared following the changes be reviewed annually.	Agreed. The individual assessments will be combined with Recommendation 137.	December 2006	AR	Actioned
13	The Cabinet should look again at the provision of housing related support to older people and vulnerable tenants who do not live in sheltered schemes, as anticipated by the 5 year Supporting People Plan for Wiltshire	This piece of work forms part of the Supporting People's Team Strategic Review of sheltered housing services and extra care. The Council, together with the three other main providers in Wiltshire have been identified as pilots to test an approach to supporting people in the wider community. A more detailed report should be available in April 2006.	July 2006	AR	Currently waiting for Wiltshire Supporting People Team to complete strategic review of sheltered housing services – anticipated June 2007. Now subject to a detailed study being commissioned by WCC.
14	The allocation of sheltered housing should be more closely linked to the assessed needs of the individual, even if this decreases the demand for such accommodation.	A review of the allocation process will be undertaken in order to examine our approach and propose amendments to our policy.	May 2006	AR	Actioned
15	The recommendation on the Best Value review to consider 'extra care' accommodation should be re-examined.	The provision of extra care housing is predicated on the County Council being prepared to provide the Care element. To date the County Council has declined to engage as it claims to have no resources to do so. The strategic review referred to in recommendation 126 may provide a way forward but it is clear that until the County Council accept and support the concept of extra care		AR	To be actioned Dec. 06 This is linked to Wiltshire County Council publishing its 'Strategy for Extra Care'. Unfortunately no date has yet been given for its release.

		then it may not possible to action this recommendation.			
16	The practice of allocating younger individuals to sheltered schemes be examined again taking into account the views and concerns expressed by older and more vulnerable residents.	This will form part of Recommendation 127 when reviewing the Allocation Policy.	May 2006	AR	To be actioned July 06 – review commenced with examining good practice. Now linked to county-wide housing allocations policy.
17	That a new appointments service be introduced to avoid residents having to wait for long periods or to miss scheduled visits – where appointments cannot be kept or when someone unknown to the tenants is to visit for the first time a call should be made to inform the tenant.	The council accepts that residents do need the assurance of scheduled visits. The operation of an appointments based system is complex, challenging to implement and may add costs. The current system needs to be reviewed and therefore it is proposed that a more detailed study be undertaken with options put forward for consultation with the tenants panel and Sheltered Housing Forum.	September 2006	AR	With Senior structure now complete this work will commence in January 2007. Fully operational
18	That the geographic teams be reviewed and housing support officers be allocated a primary responsibility for only a single or small number of schemes (no more than 3), but be available to cover other designated schemes during times of absence or sickness. This will reinstate the direct link between a scheme and an accountable person, minimise the number of officers visiting each scheme and reduce travelling costs.	The Head of Strategic Housing Services will be presenting detailed new staffing proposals which address this recommendation to the February meeting of the Community and Housing Scrutiny Panel, Tenants Panel and Sheltered Housing Forum when established.	Feb/March 2006	AR	Review Working Group met in February to consider draft structure. Further meeting arranged in March to finalise structure prior to presenting report to Management Team. Review group has now approved a revised structure. Now waiting for comments back from Tenants Panel. July 06 – Tenants Panel and Management Team approved. Recruitment now underway. Dec.06 Recruitment complete.
19	Targets for the time to respond to an emergency alarm call should be set, published and monitored.	CareConnect operates to rigorous national standards. It is proposed that these will be incorporated	January 2006	AR	Actioned

		within the Performance Management system and published and monitored on a quarterly basis. Monitoring reports relating to CareConnect will be made available to the Tenants Panel and Sheltered Housing Forum.			
20	That the measures and procedures be set in place to ensure that all personal information held by the CareConnect Centre is kept up to date at all times and provided appropriately when required.	CareConnect annually in March undertakes a systematic review of all customers personal details. The new IT system will also enable HSOs to check and update tenants details on a more regular basis, provided that the tenant is willing to supply that information.	Actioned	AR	Actioned
21	That proposals be brought before Cabinet at the earliest opportunity for the comprehensive and systematic assessment of service standards, including the possibility of independent assessments. Reference should be made to the mechanisms adopted by the beacon councils and the Code of Practice for sheltered Housing in developing this framework.	Officers have commenced work on the Code of Practice. A report will be produced that sets out proposed service standards and the timescale on reaching these.	April 2006	AR	The service has now signed up and is working on the Sheltered Housing Code of Practice. This involved staff and tenants in a working group. This is a 12 month project which will then be assessed by an external body. July 06 – Working group meets monthly to progress tasks ready for inspection in November 06. Dec 06 Cabinet to receive a report on service standards. Code of Practice complete and awarded
22	That Council approves the introduction of an Older and Vulnerable Persons Consultative Forum incorporating tenants and representatives of advocacy agencies such as Age Concern, the PCT and Social Services. This forum (or such existing forum as may be appropriate) to report to the Community & Housing Overview and Scrutiny panel.	One possibility is that the council asks if the existing South Wiltshire Older People's Planning Partnership is prepared to extend membership to include a representative from the C&H panel as well as the Chair of the Sheltered Housing tenants forum.	April 2006	AR	To be actioned July 06 – Due to changes within Wiltshire County Council and the Primary Care Trust, there is now a review of the Older People's Planning Partnership. The Council is involved in these discussions and will seek to

		These two representatives can then provide the conduit for information.			ensure that the Chairman has a formal seat on this group. Dec. 06 Chairman has been invited to join a new district group.
23	That the Cabinet investigate the reasons for the high levels of sickness absence among housing support officers with a view to addressing any underlying causes.	Sickness levels have now been addressed and have significantly been reduced. The HSHS proposals on the restructure of the service will take adequate cover from sickness into account.	April 2006	AR	This is incorporated into the review of the staff structure July 06 – There is only one HSO on long term sick. This is due to having a replacement hip operation. Oct 06 report considered by C&H Scrutiny Panel.
24	That Cabinet conduct a full review of the impact the changes brought about by the recommendations contained in this report after 12 months. That review should focus on the views of those directly involved – the tenants and the housing support officers.	Consideration to be given to employing an external person or a Peer Review to undertake this work. However, there may be an additional cost for such a piece of work.	April 2007	AR	Code of Practice review complete and accreditation awarded. New Administration yet to determine timescale of any further review.
25	That Cabinet instructs the officers to revise and reissue all supporting documents provided for tenants. These materials should be subject to approval by the monitoring officer, should be concise, clear, written in plain English and submitted for comments to the Tenants panel.	A detailed review will be undertaken of all documents and re-produced accordingly	March 2006 and subject to the Cabinet Paper completion by October 06	AR	This will be actioned by the new Tenant Participation Officer July 06 – This recommendation is now linked to the Code of Practice and a systematic and comprehensive review of all policies and procedures. Furthermore county-wide group developing a single set of papers.
	Other Issues				
	Outstanding contract issues with Housing Support Officers	All current contract matters have been dealt with. There are, however, still four HSOs living on site who are in the process of being moved, completing the final part of the off-site plan.	March 2006	AR	Work in progress to move remaining HSO's off-site. July 06 – only two HSO's remain living on-site. Dec. 06 All HSOs now moved off-site.
	Concern over security issues at individual schemes	Cabinet report recommends the approval of finances to support the	January 2006	AR	Proposals now being compiled to undertake a range of works.

		implementation of security issues at individual schemes	Security measures implemented over next 6 months		Works in progress.
	Future of floating support	Wiltshire County Council is currently tendering the Floating Support service as a single contract. Following the outcome of this, the Council will work with the new provider to develop the local service.	April 2006	AR	Contract secured by a consortium called Community 4. Alabare are the lead for Salisbury and we will continue to work with them.
	Resources required for speedy but thorough implementation of the proposals	Cabinet report recommends the approval of finances to support the implementation plan	January 2006	AR	Actioned

Strategic Housing Services – Sheltered Housing Programme for Continuous Improvement

Purpose:

This document sets out key areas of improvement for the service. It is a 'living' document and will be monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis.

No.	Task	Purpose	By when	Who	Progress
1	Develop composite training programme and monitoring using the corporate web based Development Zone.	Track, monitor and report on training and development	Dec. 2007	SHM / POD	Pilot programme being developed with POD
2.	Implement revised procedures for visiting prospective applicants for sheltered housing	Improve allocation process	Sept. 2007	SUH / SHM	Draft document produced.
3.	Publish leaflet explaining sheltered housing services	Promote service	Nov. 2007	SHM	Draft document produced.
4.	Prepare detailed programme for completing Starfish reviews including tenant involvement.	Benchmark service	September 2008	SHM	Programme of work under development.
5.	Transfer all Code of Practice information to electronic format to aid future updating and continuous training.	Efficiency to enable electronic updating and information sharing	September 2008		
6.	Review Tenant Participation role.	Cost benefit analysis	July 2007	SUH	Report to October Cabinet
7.	Publish regular sheltered housing newsletter	Improve communications	September 2008	SUH	Draft layout produced, template being designed.
8.	Let single cleaning contract.	Improve consistency of service and raise standards	Nov. 2007	HM	Specification produced, expressions of interest invited.
9.	Develop standard agenda for tenants meetings	Improve feedback and consistency	July 2007	SHM	Revisions to current agenda underway.
10.	Health and Safety	All schemes to have had updated H&S inspections and reports	March 2008	SHM	Programme of work underway.
11.	Disabled access	Ensure all schemes comply with DDA requirements	March 2008	SHM	Programme of work underway.
12.	Support Plan review	Ensure that all support plans are updated in accordance with Supporting People requirements and good practice	March 2008	SHM	County –wide group of providers currently developing revised documentation.
13.	Prepare for Supporting People review	Identify key tasks for ensuring the service achieves Level B	Sept. 2007	SHM	No longer necessary
14.	Diversity and Equality plan	Ensure that service information is user friendly	Jan. 2008	SHM	Link to corporate

Key:

SUH – Service Unit Head

SHM – Strategic Housing Manager

POD – Personnel and Organisational Development

HM – Housing Manager