

# Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel

6.00pm, Wednesday 16 June 2004  
Committee Room 1, The Council House  
Salisbury

## Minutes

### **Present**

Councillor Mrs M I Evans (Chairman), G A N Anderson, F D Bissington, Mrs E A Chettleburgh, B E Dalton, Mrs J A Green, Mrs J M Greville, M J Osment and P V H Paisey

Apologies – Councillor Mrs P Brown, A J A Brown-Hovelt and P J Leo (Vice Chairman)

### **Cabinet Members**

Councillor R Britton (Deputy Portfolio Holder, Community and Housing)

### **Tenants Panel**

Mrs J Fazackerley

Apologies: Mr D Edwards, Mr J Hinnis and Mr D Illsley

### **Officers**

David Crook (Policy Director), Arabella Davies (Democratic Services Officer), Andrew Reynolds (Head of Strategic Housing) and Derek Streek (Head of Housing Management)

### **Minutes**

**44. PUBLIC QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME** – There were no questions/statements.

**45. COUNCILLORS QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME** – There were no questions/statements.

**46. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** –

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and the special meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2004 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

**47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

**48. WORK PROGRAMME 2004-2005**

Panel members were provided with a brief position statement on each of the topics as set out on the previously circulated Agenda. Discussion on each of the potential review topics was as follows:-

**(a) Dual Role of the Enforcement Officer – Abandoned Vehicles and Dog Fouling**

The issues of dog fouling enforcement and abandoned vehicles were investigated as part of the Best Value Review of Street Services, undertaken by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The processes for the removal of abandoned vehicles are well advanced and a new contractor was appointed last year to improve the service.

The Best Value SCIP contains a recommendation that Cabinet consider the revival of dog fouling enforcement and a report on this issue will be submitted to Cabinet.

A recommendation to revive the enforcement service has been made and a report is being prepared for consideration by Cabinet.

The Panel was advised to await this report and the outcome of the Cabinet meeting.

**AGREED** – That should the C & H and E & T Panels be unhappy with the resolution made by Cabinet in relation to this matter, the Panels should jointly call in the decision.

**(b) Community Safety**

Consultants have been commissioned to undertake a review of the future of CCTV, including options for the provision of new equipment and new methods of operation.

**AGREED** – That the Panel should be given the opportunity to consider this report and submit its comments to Cabinet.

**(c) Travellers**

The responsibility for Travellers primarily rests with Wiltshire County Council. The District Council is only responsible for moving travellers off its land and this role is performed by the Private Sector Housing Policy Officer, Legal and Environmental Health Services.

The Policy Director informed the Panel that work was currently being undertaken in relationship to land ownership issues.

**AGREED** – That the above information be circulated to Panel Members in due course.

**(d) Community Funding**

Panel Members noted that a report on this matter was due to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting in July.

**AGREED** – That the Panel await the decision of the Cabinet and call-in if necessary.

**(e) Arts**

The Panel noted that the matter of Arts Funding was reviewed in 2003 and the Cabinet adopted the recommendations of the final report in October 2003.

**AGREED** – That there was no further action be taken.

**(f) Services to Young People**

The Panel felt that this was the most important issue that needed to be scrutinised.

The Head of Strategic Housing informed Members that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment undertaken earlier this year had identified the Council's need to focus on young people. An Officer Working Group had recently been established to develop a comprehensive Young Peoples' Strategy, which could link in with work already being undertaken by Wiltshire County Council.

**AGREED** –

- (I) That the following Members be invited to join the Officer Working Group involved in the development of the Young Peoples' Strategy:-

Councillor Anderson  
Councillor Mrs Evans  
Councillor Mrs Greville (deputy Councillor Mrs Chettleburgh)

Councillor Osment  
Mrs Fazackerley (Tenants Panel)

- (2) That the terms of reference for this working group be developed in due course, with provision for the possibility of visits to other local authorities to investigate their strategies for young people.
- (3) That the findings of the first meeting of the Working Group held on 15<sup>th</sup> June be circulated to C & H panel Members for information.

**(g) Rural Transport**

The Best Value Review of Leisure Services identified the need to consider options to extend sport and recreation opportunities to communities not within easy access to existing facilities.

The matter of rural transport and transport for young people are issues that will be addressed by the Environment and Transport Overview & Scrutiny Panel, but the Panel felt it would be useful if the E & T panel could be asked to look specifically at the issue of transport access to leisure facilities throughout the District.

**AGREED** – that the Policy Director arrange a meeting between the Chairmen of the respective Panels so that E & T Panel is made aware of the concerns of the C & H Panel and can incorporate these into its scrutiny review.

**(h) Housing Repairs**

In light of the excellent CPA rating for Housing, the Panel felt that this topic did not require scrutiny.

**(i) Parking on Housing Estates**

The Policy Director informed Members that a survey had been conducted 6/7 years ago, which identified parking improvements on housing estates. This issue has twice been given a low priority by Tenants when consulted about investment in council housing. Any move to fund improvements to car parking would divert investment away from issues which tenants had identified as having a higher priority.

**AGREED** – That no further action be taken.

**(j) Social Inclusion**

The Policy Director informed the Panel that the CPA Inspectors had identified Social Inclusion as an area of weakness. Although the Council is doing lots of things in relation to this, there is a general lack of cohesion. The Community Initiatives Unit will undertake a review of Social Inclusion later in the year

**AGREED** – That the Panel play an active part in this review, prior to a final report being submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

**(k) Wisecard**

Members noted that there had been a 95% positive feedback in relation to the WISECARD scheme. The Panel was keen to consider the possible extension of the scheme to more people and more services in South Wiltshire.

**AGREED** – That a progress report on the extension of the WISECARD scheme to all residents of South Wiltshire be brought back to the Panel for consideration at its meeting in September.

**(l) Housing Allocations Policy**

The Head of Strategic Housing informed the Panel that the Council had reviewed and amended its Housing Allocations Policy in 2003. The Panel agreed that a reasonable period of time needed to elapse before the impact of this new policy could be assessed.

**AGREED** – That analysis of the Housing Allocations Policy be brought back to the October meeting of the Panel.

(NOTE: In addition to the topics identified for scrutiny above, the current work of the Panel includes the Housing Stock Option Appraisal and the Best Value Review of Balanced Housing Markets & Decent Homes)

**49. UPDATE ON COUNCIL TAX FOR SECOND HOMES AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Head of Strategic Housing informed the Panel that Dorset County Council utilises a Public Service Agreement (PSA) that attracts additional funding to provide additional services. District Authorities in Dorset last year signed up to a PSA for providing a stretching target on delivering more affordable housing. Targets over and above those agreed by each authority were 5% for shared ownership and 7% for social rented housing.

Wiltshire is now considering such a PSA in order to encourage the County Council to put in some additional resources such as land and their element of the Council Tax resources recovered as part of charging higher amounts for second home owners. Bids have to be put in to the Government by the end of July.

A further update on this would be brought back to the next Panel meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm