

# Community & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel

6.00pm, Wednesday 14 July 2004  
Committee Room 2, The Council House  
Salisbury

## Minutes

### **Present**

Councillor Mrs M I Evans (Chairman), F D Bissington, B E Dalton, Mrs J A Green, Mrs J M Greville, M Hewitt (substituting for Mrs P J Brown) and M J Osment (acting Vice-Chairman for the meeting)

Apologies – Councillors P J Leo (Vice-Chairman), G A N Anderson, A J A Brown-Hovelt, Mrs E A Chettleburgh and P V H Paisey

### **Cabinet Members**

Councillor J A Cole-Morgan (Portfolio Holder, Community and Housing)

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

### **Tenants Panel**

Mrs J Fazackerley

### **Officers**

Debbie Dixon (Policy Director), Arabella Davies (Democratic Services Officer) and Andrew Reynolds (Head of Strategic Housing)

Also in attendance were David Goodman (Customer Services Officer - Services to Older People), Sally Johnson (Head Officer, Services to Older People) and Carla Randall (Mere Housing Scheme Manager)

## **Minutes**

### **50. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN –**

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Osment be elected as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

### **51. PUBLIC QUESTION/STATEMENT TIME –** Mr Duller of Essex Square, West Harnham, submitted the following statement to the Panel:-

“ Tonight’s meeting of the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel is to discuss services for Older and Vulnerable People.

The report covers most aspects of housing for the elderly from the Council’s viewpoint as to costs etc. But I am surprised that no mention of Age Concern has been made nor of the Tenant’s Panel as concerned bodies.

Neither has a comparison been made between our Council system and the 16 Almshouses Units in Salisbury. The Chairman and National Chairman of Almshouses, Lady Benson, lives in Salisbury and has over 40 years experience of the elderly.”

The Chairman thanked Mr Duller for his statement..

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

**53. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING –**

**RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the last ordinary meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

**55. FUTURE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO OLDER PEOPLE**

The Panel considered the previously circulated report of the Head of Strategic Housing Services.

During the consideration of this item, the following points were made:-

- The deletion of two Community Scheme Manager posts should be formally “disestablished” from the Council’s staffing establishment list, only at the point of retirement of current postholders.
- The Panel felt that on-site office facilities should not be provided at the expense of guest rooms. Guest bedrooms are an extremely useful facility for visitors, especially in rural areas. The Panel would prefer to see the conversion of other unused rooms to provide office accommodation for CSM’s.
- The opportunity of developing an out of hour’s service should be investigated.
- Concern was expressed in relation to combining the management of schemes and the ability for CSM’s to complete their work within 37 hours.

The Head of Strategic Housing replied that all the schemes had been considered and that it was only practical to combine the management of certain schemes. He added that there was no need to make significant reductions. The mergers instead provided an opportunity to make efficiency savings and represented prudent financial management.

With reference to the 37 hour week, the Head of Strategic Housing replied that he was very confident that CSM’s would be able to manage an increased number of units.

- The Panel queried why it was necessary to develop a programme of moving CSM’s off site.

The Head of Strategic Housing replied that in today’s social climate less people wanted to live on the same site as their workplace. Furthermore, some CSM’s have in the past felt that their private lives were being scrutinised by residents. As a result there was a shift towards CSM’s having their own separate accommodation.

- The Panel asked whether any of the proposals contained in the report would impact on the Council’s Stock Option Appraisal.

The Head of Strategic Housing replied that none of the recommendations should have any impact. In fact, if improvements were made to existing buildings, these could add to the asset value of the existing housing stock.

**RESOLVED** – That the Head of Strategic Housing be thanked for his report.

## **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:-**

- (a) That approval be given for combining the following schemes:-
  - Westfield, Zeals with Lynch Close, Mere
  - Norfolk Road and Suffolk Road
  - Tintern Court and Graham House
- (b) That in light of recommendation (a) above, the deletion of three Community Scheme Manager (CSM) posts be approved, only when current employees leave.
- (c) That CSMs all work a standard 37 hour week.
- (d) That officers be authorised to develop a program of moving CSM's off-site as detailed in Paragraph 10.7 of the previously circulated report.
- (e) That the formation of geographic teams be noted.
- (f) That a more detailed analysis on developing an out of hours service should be brought forward.
- (g) That the development of on-site office facilities be approved, but provided this is not at the expense of guest accommodation.
- (h) That more detailed analysis and feasibility on the provision of extra care housing should be brought forward.

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

The Head of Strategic Housing informed the Panel that Devon County and Devon District Councils pool the council tax raised on second homes to deliver affordable housing. The Chief Executive of Salisbury District Council, together with those of other Districts, has discussed the possibility of doing something similar with Wiltshire County Council but the County Council has indicated that it does not wish to progress this option.

However, what is being developed further at this time are Public Service Agreements (PSA). These in part relate to services to older/vulnerable people and sheltered housing services and how better use is made of these services.

The Head of Strategic Housing added that this was a piece of work that the Council hoped to develop further, including a range of targets that would bring in additional resources over the next few years. Final agreement to this would be needed from the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister.

More detail on the PSA would be brought back to the next Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 29<sup>th</sup> September.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm