



COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday, 13 July 2017

Time: 6.00pm,

Location: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Contact: Lisa Jerome - 01438 242203

Members: Councillors: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), D Bainbridge
J Brown, E Connolly, L Harrington, J Mead, A Mitchell
CC, C Saunders and G Snell

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 20 JUNE 2017

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Committee held on Tuesday 20 June 2017.

Minutes attached pages 3 – 6

3. FIRE SAFETY - PRESENTATION

To receive a presentation from Housing Officers regarding Fire Safety in high rise buildings

4. APPLICATION OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

To receive a presentation and consider the Scoping Document for the review into the Application of the Housing Allocations Policy

Scoping Document attached pages 7 – 10

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part I business accepted by the Chair as urgent

6. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and

public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent

Agenda Published Monday 5 July 2017

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 20 June 2017

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), J Brown, L Harrington, J Mead, A Mitchell CC and G Snell.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 7:45 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bainbridge, E Connolly and C Saunders.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference are noted.

3. MINUTES – 15 MARCH 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 15 March 2017 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. ROUGH SLEEPERS – HOMELESSNESS

The Committee received a presentation regarding the present position with rough sleepers in the town centre.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- The number of rough sleepers in the town
- Dealing with the possessions of rough sleepers left in public places
- The role of the Haven
- A benchmarking visit to Milton Keynes
- Actions currently undertaken by SBC, and
- The potential impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Committee was advised that some complaints had been received from property owners and tenants in the town about rough sleepers obstructing doorways and fire exits with their possessions, such as bedding.

The Committee was further advised that with effect Wednesday 21 June

rough sleepers' possessions left in public places would be removed within 24 hours of notification being given.

Members suggested that Officers delay implementation pending consideration of the related Communications plan and prior notice being given to all Councillors to outline what action was being taken and why. This arrangement should also outline how the Council will respond to any press enquiries.

The Strategic Director Community undertook to action this with immediate effect.

The difficulty of engaging with the 'non-engagers' was discussed and it was observed that in some cases rough sleeping was as a result of mental health issues and not a lifestyle choice as believed in some quarters.

It was acknowledged that the Council's approach to dealing with rough sleepers differed from neighbouring authorities and in reply to Members' comments the Interim Housing and Homeless Manager advised the Committee that there was currently no 'move on' policy for homeless people in Stevenage which may have in part resulted in the town being attractive to homeless people from other areas.

Additionally it was believed that some residents at the Haven were reluctant to take the next steps towards independent living which resulted in a shortage of suitable accommodation for homeless people within the town. It was noted that the Haven would prioritise local homeless people in times of demand thus providing an incentive for those from outside the area to go elsewhere. The Haven would assist by signposting hostel vacancies outside of Stevenage.

In reply to a question the Interim Housing and Homeless Manager undertook to provide details of the turnover of clients of the Haven.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation is noted.

5. MONITORING OF ACTIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO RESPONSE TO THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Committee received an update of the Executive Member response to the scrutiny review into conditions in the private rented sector.

The Committee was reminded that the purpose of the review had been to foster improved working relations between the Council and private landlords with a view to improving and increasing the available housing stock for residents of the town.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report is noted.

6. COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND DRAFT MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2017/2018

The Committee reviewed its work programme and draft meeting schedule for 2017/2018.

The Committee was advised that the scoping exercise for the proposed review into the Application of the Housing Allocations Policy would be undertaken at a meeting of the Community Select Committee scheduled for 13 July 2017 after which meetings would be programmed to progress the review.

In reply to a Member's request for a review of Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) the Committee was advised that a comprehensive review had been undertaken in 2011. However it was noted that a review of SLL's performance had recently been undertaken linked to a specific review clause within the leisure management contract. The outcome of that review could be put before the Committee if it wished.

In response to a request the Scrutiny Officer undertook to bring forward the review of the recommendations from the Damp and Mould review from its scheduled date of March 2018, and, where possible, would look at making a more even spread of the Committee's meeting schedule.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report is noted.

7. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

In light of the recent tragic Grenfell Tower fire, the Chair raised the issue of the Coroner's Report received after the Harrow Court fire.

The Strategic Director Community updated Members on the activity that had taken place since the Grenfell Tower fire including reassurance communications and visits with residents of tower blocks, checks of fire and emergency plans, key information circulated to all Members, liaison with the MP and information requests from Government and undertook to progress the following questions raised by Members:

- To provide an update on the points raised in the Harrow Court Coroner's Report under Rule 43 (Reports to Prevent Future Deaths).
- To consider any necessary changes to the Council's Emergency Planning arrangements.
- To confirm the position and the Council's responsibilities concerning recent buildings works in the town, especially the conversion of office to residential accommodation.

A Member suggested that the Council could review fire safety precautions in Homes of Multiple Occupation.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required

9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR

Template Scoping Document

Community Select Committee	
Scrutiny Review Title:	Application of the Housing Allocations Policy (linked to Lettings)
Background issues to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	Members raised the issue of reviewing the application of the Council's Allocations Policy when the committee agreed items for the work programme in March 2017. Members were keen to link any work on allocations with allocations into sheltered housing schemes and to see how it is working in practise. Members were also interested with the workings of the flexi care scheme. It was also commented that regarding Lettings, Members could comment on the work of the newly appointed Reconnection Key Worker at the end of the six month pilot.
Is this issue covered by the Future Town Future Council Programme ?	(i) Housing Development - Excellent Council Homes for Life - Increase the number of social & affordable homes in Stevenage & (ii) The provision of high quality, efficient and effective Housing services for our tenants and leaseholders (develop a better Housing Service to our older people)
Is this issue one that raises interest with the public via complaints or Members' surgeries or with Officers?:	This issue is of interest to local people who are on the Housing register. This issue is raised by residents in Members' Surgeries.
Focus of the review: (State what the review focus will be)	<p><i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. Members have previously identified the first two bullet points and officers have suggested the following possible Options:</i></p> <p><i>Suggested areas to cover:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are allocations into sheltered housing schemes working in practise? • Changes to the local connection rules - People on the allocations lists who currently lose 'local residency' points if they take a Private Rented Sector accommodation let outside of the Borough. Could look at introducing a change like a 'five in seven year rule', so residents who had lived for between 5 out of 7 years would still keep their points if they came back to the area in the allotted time period • Review the criteria on sheltered housing to re-introduce home owners. This could include

	<p>home owners wishing to let their property and be rehoused in, more appropriate for their needs, sheltered accommodation. There could be scope for the Council to manage these arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce priority categories for under-occupiers, together with incentives for tenants to bid through the choice based lettings scheme. • What has been the impact of the newly appointed Reconnection Key Worker at the end of the six month pilot (any links to lettings into sheltered accommodation?) <p><i>Some questions that Members may wish to ask:</i> (This depends on which of the above issues Members wish to include in the agreed scope)</p>
<p><u>Timing issues:</u> Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?</p>	<p>Officers will advise at the meeting if there are any timing issues to consider. The review will have to fit in with the timing of the other Select Committee review work programme items.</p>
<p>The Committee will meet on (provide <u>dates</u> if known):</p>	<p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue From June 2017 – Discuss scoping with lead officers for Housing Allocations review 13 July 2017 – agree draft scope & receive presentation from officers Interview witnesses - possible dates? (likely to be quarter 2 and quarter 3, July 2017 – Dec 2017)</p> <p>Agree recommendations & final report - Date to be agreed</p>
<p><u>SBC Leads</u> (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD's Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):</p>	<p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive Portfolio Holder(s) for Housing, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas</i> • <i>Strategic Director Community, Matt Partridge</i> • <i>Assistant Director Housing & Investment, Jaine Cresser</i> • <i>(Draw from other Officers as necessary – Housing Operations Manager, Peta Caine, Empty Homes Manager, Walter Oglina, Housing & Homeless Manager, Theo Addae, and officers from Reconnections Key Worker, Sheltered Housing and Flexicare Scheme)</i>
<p>Any <u>other witnesses</u> (external</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers:</i></p>

persons/critical friend)?:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Critical Friend – Would it be appropriate for this review to invite an officer from another local authority or social housing provider to speak as a “critical friend”.</i> • <i>Members of the public who are on the waiting list (officers to advise suitability)</i>
Allocation of lead Members on specific individual issues/questions: Any other Questions Members wish to cover:	To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. Members will ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews): <u>Equalities & Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&D issues to consider in this review? – The effect of damp and mould on E&D characteristic groups compared with other community groups?
<u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u>	It is not considered that this review would lend itself to a site visit.
<u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u> The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised	<i>To be identified by the lead Member – Cllr</i>
<u>Constraints</u> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):	<i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting 13 July 2017 (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)</i> Any other matters that are not directly linked to the review into allocations should be directed to officers.
<u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review	<i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting 13 July 2017:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

<p><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p>	<p><i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</p>
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