

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF HOUSING SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2005  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, EPPING  
AT TIMES NOT SPECIFIED**

<b>Members Present:</b>	S Murray (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Chidley, P Gode, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs J Lea, L Martin, Mrs S Perry, T Richardson and Mrs J H Whitehouse
<b>Other members present:</b>	Mrs J Davis, M Heavens and F Maclaine
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	(none)
<b>Officers Present</b>	A Hall (Head of Housing Services), R Wilson (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)), P Pledger (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property and Resources)), Mrs M Pearce (Housing Needs Manager), S Devine (Environmental Health Officer) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Mrs M Carter (Epping Forest Tenants and Leasholders Federation)

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**10. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

The Panel noted that there were no substitute members appointed for the meeting.

**11. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

**12. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Noted.

**13. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Noted.

**14. EMPTY PROPERTIES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

S Devine presented the report. Noted that a more detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting to consider the legal powers, other measures available and also an outline of the issues that should be included in a strategy. Agreed that the staff implications of work be added to paragraph 13 of page 14.

Noted the work the Council undertook with East Thames Group to help those on a low income gain property. Noted that it could be suggested to the Group that under this arrangement they give priority to leasing empty dwellings. Noted that these issues could be incorporated within an Empty Home Strategy.

**ACTION**

S Devine to produce further report for next meeting.

**15. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME**

Marion Pearce presented the report. Attention was drawn to an information booklet produced by Housing Services on the allocations scheme.

Noted the qualification criteria, referral information and priorities for the SAFE scheme. Noted the throughput and new use for Norway House and targets for secure tenancies.

The Panel considered the banding system for the prioritisation of housing applications. Noted that the assessment was based on needs and took into account the length of time an applicant lived in the area. As a result of this priority was given to residents of the District.

The report was endorsed and recommended to the Cabinet on 10 October 2005.

**16. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

R Wilson presented the report.

He drew attention to staff implications, the regional fund for the scheme, Partnership working and schemes at neighbouring Authorities.

The report was endorsed for the Portfolio Holder to consider.

**17. INTRODUCTORY TENANTS SCHEME**

R Wilson presented the report.

The report was endorsed and recommended to the Cabinet on 10 October 2005.

**18. HOUSING SERVICES STRATEGY ON TENANT PARTICIPATION**

P Pledger presented this report.

Members paid particular attention to the actions plans for the strategy and the proposal to set up two new residents associations each year from an agreed list. It was suggested that wards Members should be consulted over this action to seek their views on proposed schemes.

Members proposed that ward members should receive information and be consulted on specific ward issues and Tenant Participation activities.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Housing Service Strategy on Tenant Participation be noted.
- (2) That the Panels comments be incorporated within the Strategy.

**19. BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICES - SIX-MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT ON SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Panel considered the third Six – monthly progress report on the Housing Development Plan together with a summary report which identified the improvements that had been made and those that had yet to be achieved.

**RESOLVED:**

That the third Six – Monthly Progress Report on the Housing Service Development Plan be noted.

**20. HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel considered the latest Six – month progress report for the Key Action Plans contained in the Housing Strategy 2004-07. The progress report set out the proposed actions the Council would take over the following 1-3 years to address housing needs in the District.

**RESOLVED:**

That the latest Six – month Progress Report for the Key Action Plans contained within the in the Housing Strategy 2004-07 be noted.

**21. WORK PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel considered the current position with regard to their work plan incorporating some additional tasks agreed by the Panel at recent meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Progress Report on the Panel's Work Programme 2005/06 be noted.

**22. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no reports to be made.

**23. FUTURE MEETINGS**

**ACTION:**

Z Folley to place an item in the Members Bulletin to identify the Panels preferences regarding the date of the next meeting.