

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2015
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 5.30 - 7.01 PM**

Members Present: S Murray (Chairman), Mrs G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, Mrs R Gadsby, J Lea, C Roberts, B Rolfe, Mrs T Thomas, H Ulkun, Mrs J H Whitehouse and W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Federation)

Other members present: D Stallan

Apologies for Absence:

Officers Present P Pledger (Assistant Director (Housing Property)), R Wilson (Assistant Director (Housing Operations)) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

46. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

There were no made substitutions made for this meeting.

47. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

48. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel's Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted.

49. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last Panel meeting held on 9 February 2015 be agreed.

50. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN 2015-16

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director (Housing Property) regarding the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2015-16.

HRA Business Plans dealt with council's plans and performance for the delivery and quality of its housing services to tenants. The Council's Audit and Governance Committee required that all of the authority's Business Plans were completed and published by 31 March each year. Highlights of the plan included the following:

- (a) Updated statistics for 2013/14;
- (b) Updated comments of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation in the latest Business Plan;

- (c) New section on the Council's new Corporate Plan 2015-20 and the Council's Key Strategic Aims and Objectives;
- (d) Review of the Council's Rent Cap for affordable rents; and
- (e) New Key Action Plan.

The Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation advised the Panel that their members endorsed the Business Plan. They did express concern about further budget cuts by Essex County Council.

The Chairman of the Panel requested that a District Council press release should be issued regarding the Business Plan Objectives which set out the new Corporate Plan 2015-20, a framework for policy and decision making over this five year period.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2015/16, incorporating the HRA Financial Plan and the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan 2015/16 be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for adoption; and
- (2) That a press release be issued regarding the Business Plan Objectives and the new Corporate Plan.

51. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN (2014/15) - 12 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director (Property Services) regarding the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan (2014-15) – 12 Month Progress Report.

In April 2014, the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for 2014/14 was produced, incorporating the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan. This set out the Council's objectives, strategies and plans as landlord in relation to the management and maintenance of its own housing stock.

An important section of the HRA Business Plan was the Key Action Plan, which set out the proposed actions the authority would be taking over the following year. One of the Panel's Terms of Reference was to review progress during the year.

A 6 month progress report on the actions contained within the Key Action Plan 2014/15 was reported to the Panel in October 2014.

The Panel noted that the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation were due to view the Action Plan in the immediate future and not, as indicated on the agenda, on 19 March.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan (2014/15) 12 Month Progress Report be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval.

52. HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) regarding the Housing Service Strategy on Anti-Social Behaviour.

The Housing Service Strategies were produced in accordance with an agreed standard framework, regularly updated. In total, 14 Housing Service Strategies had been produced covering:

- (a) Equality and Diversity;
- (b) Housing and Neighbourhood Management;
- (c) Tenant Participation;
- (d) Private Rented Sector;
- (e) Empty Council Properties;
- (f) Anti-Social Behaviour;
- (g) House Sales and Leasehold Services;
- (h) Rent Arrears;
- (i) Rent Collection and Administration;
- (j) Under-Occupation;
- (k) Housing Information;
- (l) Older People's Housing Services;
- (m) Energy Efficiency; and
- (n) Harassment

The strategies were produced to a common format that set out how individual housing services would be delivered. This strategy was considered by the Panel at its meeting in October 2013, they agreed that the strategy should be considered again when the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 came into force, hence the need for the report. There was a legal requirement for the Council to have a strategy and summary.

Members asked for a graffiti phone number hotline to be put in the Bulletin.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Housing Service Strategy on Anti-Social Behaviour be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval.

53. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) regarding Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 3 Performance.

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999, the Council was required to make arrangements for securing continuous improvement in the way its functions and services were exercised. As part of this duty, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were adopted each year. Performance was monitored on a quarterly basis and provided an opportunity for the Council to focus on how specific areas for improvement would be addressed.

A range of 36 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2014/15 were adopted in March 2014, from this municipal year, the existing scrutiny panels were now each responsible for the review of quarterly performance within their areas of responsibility.

Ten of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Housing Scrutiny Panel areas of responsibility. The overall position at the end of the third quarter of the year for those indicators was as follows:

- (a) 10 (100%) indicators achieved the cumulative third quarter target; and
- (b) 10 (100%) were currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year-end target.

The Panel extended its congratulations to the Communities Directorate on reaching all the targets.

RESOLVED:

That the Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 3 Performance be noted.

54. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2015/16 - TARGETS

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) regarding Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Targets.

As indicated in the previous minute item, legislation required the Council to make arrangements for continuously improving its functions and services. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were adopted each year to help facilitate this with monitoring on a quarterly basis.

It was advised that the review of KPIs which fell within the areas of responsibility for the Panel had resulted in the definition to one indicator COM001, being changed. The remaining KPIs were unchanged.

RESOLVED:

That the Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Targets be noted.

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

The Chairman advised that he would give a verbal update report to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Panel's work.

56. LAST MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

It was noted that this was the last ever meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel, from 2015/16 onwards, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed a new system of Select Committees which included the new Housing Select Committee, which would meet five times per year in June, September, November, January and March.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Panel Members, Housing Portfolio Holder and officers for all their support to the Panel and work over the years. The Housing Portfolio Holder echoed these sentiments and said how appreciative he was of the Panel's work and advice around Housing policy.