

# ***Report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel***



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

***Date of meeting: 21 July 2005***

**Subject: Information Evening and Basic Housing Law Briefing for Housing Scrutiny Members**

**Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall, Head of Housing Services (ext 4004)**

**Committee Secretary: Zoe Folley (ext 4532)**

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## **Recommendations:**

- 1) That consideration be given to a Housing Information Evening being held for members of the Scrutiny Panel and other members;**
- 2) That consideration be given to the Head of Housing Services holding a Basic Housing Law Briefing for Housing Scrutiny Panel and other members and, if agreed, that consideration be given to a date.**

1. Members will be aware that this is the first-ever meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel. Although some members of the Panel will have an awareness of housing issues and the work of Housing Services, Environmental Services (private sector housing) and Finance (housing finance) – perhaps through past involvement with the former Housing Committee – many will be new to dealing with housing issues.

## **Housing Information Evening**

2. Therefore, it is suggested that an informal Housing Information Evening be held, which could include:

- a short tour around the Housing and Environmental Services (private sector housing) accommodation at the Civic Offices
- an opportunity for Housing Scrutiny Panel members to meet senior officers of Housing and Environmental Services and Finance
- short, informal presentations from senior officers about the work of their sections and the main issues they currently face
- a short presentation on basic housing finance

3. The Housing Information Evening could commence at 6.30pm, after a light buffet in the Members Room from 6pm. It is envisaged that it would end around 8pm. Invitations could also be extended to other interested Members of Council.

4. The Panel is asked to consider whether there would be sufficient support for such an arrangement.

## **Basic Housing Law Briefing for Housing Scrutiny Members**

5. The Head of Housing Services has developed a training session on Basic Housing Law for Front Line Staff. The objectives of the training session are:

- To provide information on housing law relating to common issues; and
- To highlight the inter-relationship with Council policies

6. The training session lasts around 3 hours (with a 15 minute break) and covers the following:

- The Council's homelessness duties
- The Council's Housing Allocations Scheme
- Homelessness reviews
- The Housing Appeals Panel
- Right of secure tenants:
  - *Background*
  - *Security of tenure*
  - *Right to exchange*
  - *Right to repair*
  - *Right to compensation for tenants improvements*
  - *Right to Buy*
  - *Other rights*
- Succession – The law
- Succession – Council policy
- Repossessions
- Anti-social behaviour

7. If the members of the Panel were interested, the Head of Housing Services could present the training session in the form of a Basic Housing Law Briefing for Housing Scrutiny Panel Members one evening. Again, an invitation could be extended to other Members of Council. On the basis of a commencement at 6.30pm (with a light buffet at 6pm), it is envisaged that the Briefing would end around 9.30pm.

8. The Panel is asked to consider whether there would be sufficient support for such a Briefing Session and, if so, to agree a date.