

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

18th April 2013

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Hewlett (Vice-Chairman in the Chair) and Councillors Ford, Harrison, Mrs. Hood, Smith, Watson (substitute for Councillor Lemmon (Chairman)) and Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Murray).

**Labour Group**

Councillors Dunn, Mulgrew, Rhind, Shepherd, Stuart and Tilley (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Heath).

**In attendance**

Councillors Bell and Richards (Labour Group).

HCS/66. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Lemmon (Chairman) and Murray (Conservative Group) and Mrs. Heath (Labour Group).

HCS/67. **MINUTES**

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th March 2013 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

HCS/68. **HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT (HECA) PLAN 2013**

A report was submitted which advised Members that in July 2012, the Secretary of State had issued revised guidance to the Home Energy Conservation Act, which required plans to be drawn up by March 2013 that set out how the Council planned to reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty. The Council was required to publish the plan on its website and send a copy to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. The proposed plan was attached as an Appendix to the report.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Home Energy Conservation Act plan be approved.***

HCS/69. **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2013 - 2018**

The Homelessness Act 2002 required housing authorities take a long-term strategic approach to managing homelessness. Each Authority was required to have a strategy for combating and managing homelessness, based on a

review. This was the South Derbyshire District Council's 3<sup>rd</sup> Review and Strategy.

A review, undertaken with the benefit of consultation with partners, had identified that it would be more beneficial to focus on a small number of key areas for improvement rather than to try and spread resources across a large number of areas. Key issues were itemised within the report. Following this, it was identified that there was a requirement to consult wider with the community and partners on the proposed Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013/2018 which was attached as an Appendix to the report.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the proposed draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy be approved as a basis for wider consultation.***
- (2) That the Head of Housing and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee, be given authority to agree any minor amendments to the draft strategy arising from the wider consultation prior to implementation.***
- (3) That any significant issues arising out of the consultation process be reported back to the Committee for approval.***

HCS/70. **DESIGNATION PERSONS**

A report was submitted which outlined changes in the way complaints about Housing Services were handled following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011. The Localism Act 2011 had introduced the concept of a Designated Person or Panel (DP), which required local politicians and people to act in resolving local complaints and issues. Councillors and MP's were automatically recognised as Designated Persons during their time of office and under the terms of the new legislation, the tenant had the option of approaching either a Councillor, MP or designated tenant panel with their complaint. Tenants within the various current tenant groups had been consulted on how the designated panel should be formed, and it was unanimously agreed that Housing Services current Performance and Scrutiny panel undertake these responsibilities.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the 'Designated Persons' legislation contained within the Localism Act 2011 be noted, and that Councillors and the Local MP are automatically designated persons.***
- (2) That the Performance and Scrutiny Panel be approved as a 'designated panel', for tenants to utilise as an option when they wish to make a complaint about the Housing Service.***

**HCS/71. ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

A report was submitted which, given the high unmet demand, considered the delivery mechanism for new affordable housing in the District. Full details were provided on affordable housing demand which currently out-stripped supply by a multiple of over 7.

In addition, proposed delivery mechanisms for new and additional affordable housing and property acquisition were included in the report.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That phase 1 of a 2 year new build development and acquisition programme for affordable housing be approved, subject to quarterly update reports to the Housing and Community Services Committee.***
- (2) That progress also be monitored through meetings of the Strategic Housing and Planning Group.***
- (3) That an initial new build and acquisition fund of up to £5.37m be established, utilising £1.012m in Right to Buy Receipts, Housing Revenue Account balances of £1.434m, and borrowing approval of up to £2.94m.***
- (4) To note that development opportunities may change and arise within and outside of any agreed programme, and that officers will need to respond to those opportunities, subject to necessary formal approvals.***
- (5) That the intention to enter into subsequent phases of a new build programme to specifically include the possible creation of a separate development company or 'special purpose vehicle', be noted.***
- (6) That this report be forwarded to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.***

**HCS/72. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were asked to consider the updated work programme and review its content where appropriate. It was also requested that the work programme be amended to include a rolling 6-month programme rather than ending at the Civic Year end.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the updated work programme be approved and the future work programme be prepared on a six-monthly rolling basis.***

HCS/73. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

**RESOLVED:-**

*That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.*

**A REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S STUCTURE (Paragraph 1)**

*The Committee supported the proposals submitted relating to the review of the Council's Structure.*

J. HEWLETT

VICE-CHAIRMAN IN THE CHAIR