

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

30TH APRIL 2014

PRESENT:- Councillors Roger Dennison (Vice-Chairman), Mark Bevan, Caroline Jackson, Jane Parkinson, Ian Pattison, Pam Pickles, Richard Rollins (substitute for Joan Jackson) and David Whitaker

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors David Kerr (Chairman) and Joan Jackson

Officers in attendance:-

Chris Hanna	Principal Housing Manager (part)
Julie Beaman	Principal Management Officer (part)
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Democratic Support Officer

49 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2014 were signed by the Vice-Chairman as a correct record.

50 DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DISTRICT WIDE TENANTS' FORUM

The Vice-Chairman welcomed members of the District Wide Tenants Forum, Karen Leytham, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing and Environmental Health, the Principal Housing Manager and the Principal Management Officer to the meeting.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the role of the District Wide Tenants Forum and how it linked in with the Council and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing.

The Chairman of the Forum advised that visits had been undertaken to City Council properties that had been refurbished in preparation for new tenants and a number of concerns had been raised over the repair work that had been carried out. A tick list was used to ascertain what work had been undertaken.

It was felt by the Forum members that the turn around time for a void property could be quicker. It was reported that the timings had improved over the past year from over 50 days to now 46 days. The number of voids had increased over the year but the Council had no extra resources to deal with this increase.

It was agreed that the Committee would undertake a visit to a property that had been newly refurbished and that this would be added to the Work Programme for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

Members also discussed the benefits of the estate walks that took place twice a year.

The Committee went on to discuss with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing the need for a mechanism for the Forum to feed into the scrutiny process. It was agreed that a member of the Committee would be invited to sit on the District Wide Tenants Forum.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the Chairperson and other members of the District Wide Tenants Forum be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That a visit to a newly refurbished Council property be arranged for members of the Committee and added to the Work Programme for the forthcoming Municipal Year.
- (3) That the Cabinet Member for Housing be requested to invite a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit on the District Wide Tenants Forum.

The meeting was adjourned at 18.40pm

The meeting was reconvened at 18.46pm

51 DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR TIM HAMILTON-COX - CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, PROPERTY SERVICES AND CAR PARKING

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change, Property Services and Car Parking to the meeting.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox responded to a number of questions that had been submitted before the meeting relating to financial challenges, the Town Hall vaults, car park charges, the Council's Invest to Save scheme and the suggestion to use Smartwater on the City Council's assets that were seen to be of value.

Further information was requested on the inventory of items kept in the basement at St Leonard's House, Lancaster and the condition of paintings within Lancaster Town Hall.

Members were advised that work was to start on an Energy Strategy for the City Council. There were several options which would result in income for the Council as well as producing energy for Council properties. It was suggested that the draft strategy should be considered by the Committee once it had been produced to enable the Committee to comment prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The Committee went on to discuss the condition of war memorials within the district. It was agreed to request for a report on this issue.

Resolved :-

- (1) That Councillor Hamilton-Cox be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That further information be requested on the inventory of items kept in the basement at St Leonard's House and the condition of paintings within Lancaster Town Hall.
- (3) That the draft Energy Strategy for the Council be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee once it has been produced to enable the Committee to comment prior to consideration by Cabinet.
- (4) That a report be requested on the condition of war memorials within the district.

52 CONSIDERATION OF ANY REQUESTS FOR COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in accordance with the Councillor Call for Action process.

53 CONSIDERATION OF ANY PETITIONS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCESS)

It was noted that there had not been any requests for items to be considered in the accordance with the Consideration of Petitions process.

54 LOCALITY WORKING

Councillor Whitaker updated the Committee on the Three Tier Forum meeting that had taken place recently. The Committee had discussed a number of issues with pot holes in the district being a major concern.

The Forum had also considered the aftercare of people leaving prison or care which was felt to be inadequate.

Resolved :-

That the update be noted.

55 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Democratic Support Officer presented the Committee's Work Programme report.

Members were given an update on the work being undertaken on the Dementia Friendly Communities pilot which had commenced in Bare. Dementia Friends sessions had taken place and there would be a stall at Bare Fest on 7th June promoting the project.

With regard to the 'Beyond the Castle' project that was outstanding on the Committee's Work Programme, information on a Heritage Lottery Fund grant had been circulated to the Committee. It was noted that an update would be provided at the July meeting of the Committee.

The Committee was informed that work on the Public Realm Complaints Informal Task Group was being undertaken and this would be circulated to the Committee once complete.

A briefing note has also been circulated on the stonework of Lancaster Museum.

Members were reminded that a briefing note had been circulated prior to the meeting on works being undertaken on the Council's property. The Committee agreed that a report be requested on this to be presented to a future meeting.

It was reported that the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce had issued a press release regarding the proposed reduction in capacity at Lancaster Fire Station. It was agreed that the Committee would invite the Chamber to the June meeting when this issue would be discussed.

Members went on to discuss the Committee's Work Programme for the coming year. It was agreed that an additional meeting be arranged in June/July to consider the existing work programme items and new issues that would come forward from the annual consultation. It was further agreed that the report on the work on the Council's property be requested for this meeting.

Councillor Whitaker advised the Committee that he had received complaints from members of the public regarding the number of incontinence pads that were being issued to disabled children. The assessment criteria for this appeared to result in children not being issued enough pads each day. It was noted that the Health Scrutiny representative had been informed of this issue and was undertaking investigations.

It was agreed that this issue should be referred to the Health Scrutiny representative to investigate and report back to the Committee. It was further agreed that the Committee would write to the Clinical Commissioning Group and Healthwatch Lancashire to express concern regarding this situation that had been brought to the Committee's attention.

Resolved :

- (1) That an additional meeting be arranged for the Committee in June/July 2014.
- (2) That a report on the work being undertaken on the Council's property be requested for the Committee's additional meeting in June/July.
- (3) That the Committee invite the Chamber to the June meeting when the proposed reduction in capacity at Lancaster Fire Station was to be considered.
- (4) Regarding the issue of incontinence pads for disabled children in the district :
 - (i) That the issue be referred to the Council's Health Scrutiny representative to investigate and report back to the Committee.
 - (ii) That the Committee write to the Clinical Commissioning Group and Healthwatch Lancashire to express concern regarding this situation.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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