

Minutes of the meeting of the **SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION)** Committee held on Wednesday 21 July 2010 at the Council Offices, Whitfield on at 6.00pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor G J Hood

Councillors: C M Edwards
A Friend
L A Keen
D R Lloyd-Jones
P A Lodge
S C Manion
V J Revell
R S Walkden

Officers: Director of Housing, Culture and Community Safety
Housing Enabling and Strategy Officer (Minute Nos 130-137 only)
Democratic Support Officer

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J C Record.

130 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

131 EAST KENT (JOINT SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held 30 June 2010 be noted.

132 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There had been no requests to speak at the Committee.

133 ITEMS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

There were no items for consideration at the meeting.

134 ITEMS CALLED IN FOR SCRUTINY OR PLACED ON THE AGENDA BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, ANY INDIVIDUAL NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBER OR PUBLIC PETITION

There were no items for consideration at the meeting.

135 FORWARD PLAN

The Democratic Support Officer presented the Forward Plan to the Committee for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

136 WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Support Officer advised the Committee that a meeting was in the process of being arranged with the South East Coast Ambulance Service in respect of the proposed 'Make Ready' changes.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

137 HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2015

The Director of Housing, Culture and Community Safety presented the report on the Housing Strategy 2010-2015. The Committee was advised that by law the Council is required to produce a strategy every five years although there was no longer a requirement for the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) to approve it.

The strategy was an overarching Housing Strategy was built upon several sub-strategies covering issues such as homelessness and older people and more detail on these points was set out in the sub-strategy documents.

In response to Councillor G J Hood's request that further clarification be provided in on the issue of how the strategy dealt with the accommodation needs of people with learning disabilities, it was stated that the Council was working with partners who had the responsibility for housing such individuals.

- RESOLVED: (a) That the Democratic Support Officer be provided with information on the documents and strategies underpinning the Housing Strategy.
- (b) That the Director of Property, Leisure and Waste Management be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the Council's progress on decent homes status.
- (c) That it be recommended to Council that the Housing 2010-2015 be approved subject to the following amendments:
- (i) That page 31 of the report be amended to provide greater clarity that the 1,489 new affordable homes needed per year is for the Dover District.
 - (ii) That page 11 of the report be amended under Strategy Reference AHDP1.1 to specify the number of new affordable homes needed per year in addition to those delivered.

(Councillor S C Manion declared a personal interest by reason that property in his ownership was being used for sheltered accommodation.)

138 SHARED HOUSING SERVICE UPDATE

The Director of Housing, Culture and Community Safety provided an oral update to the Committee on the Shared Housing Service.

The Committee was advised that since the report to Council in February 2010 there had been some slippage in the timescales due to the requirements of purdah and the consultation was now currently scheduled to conclude at the end of August 2010. The results of the consultation would be compiled during September 2010 in preparation for making a Section 27 application to the Secretary of State. The Council would be required to make a final decision in September or October 2010 based on the results of the consultation.

In the event that the Secretary of State gave approval to the proposed Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) the Council would need to enter into two legal agreements – one between the four authorities and one to create the ALMO as a limited company wholly owned by the four authorities. As the development of the ALMO progressed a client/contractor relationship would need to emerge between it and the four local authorities.

The existing housing staff would be TUPE'd to the new organisation and discussions were underway with Kent County Council to include the ALMO within the Local Government Pension Scheme.

As part of the consultation process the four Councils needed to inform 18,400 tenants of the proposals. This was being undertaken through a variety of methods:

- 13 Roadshows
- 2 paper surveys sent to all tenants and leaseholders
- A booklet explaining the proposals sent to all tenants and leaseholders
- A random sampling telephone survey of approximately 7% of all DDC tenants.

The survey response was within the target of 24-35%, although the roadshows had, as expected, failed to generate a significant turnout.

Although there was no intention to ballot every tenant and leaseholder, there was a question in the survey asking if the respondent was in favour of the ALMO proposal.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm.