

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Communities Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday, 24 March 2004

Present:

Councillors:

Mrs P A Stott (Chairman)
R C Peachey (Vice-Chairman)

Miss V Ash	D R H Hull
Mrs K J Bamsey	D R A Key
P W Burrows	Mrs A E Liverton
B H Clark	T G Reeves
D J Cox	Mrs L A Roden
Mrs C E Drew	Mrs B O Taylor
Mrs P Graham	Mrs E E Wragg

Also Present:

Councillors:

Miss J M Elson
A T Moulding
A J Wilkinson

Ms M Wallage – Tenant Customer Panel

Apologies:

Councillors:

Mrs M L Hardy
H J Jeffery
A S Pascoe

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and terminated at 8.00pm

*33 **Minutes**

The minutes of the special meeting of the Communities Overview Committee held on 4 March 2004 were confirmed and signed as a true record, subject to Councillors B H Clark and Mrs P A Graham being removed from the list of those present.

*34 **Item to be dealt with as a matter of urgency**

Additional meetings

Members were asked to agree to monthly meetings being scheduled into the calendar for the next Council year. The Corporate Director – Communities advised that he had identified at least 12 significant issues that would need considering, some of which could take up a whole meeting.

RESOLVED

that monthly meetings of the Communities Overview Committee be scheduled into the calendar of meetings for 2004/05 which would be referred to the annual meeting of the Council for approval.

*35 **Community Safety Best Value Review report**

Consideration was given to the report of the Policy Manager that outlined the findings of the Best Value Review team with respect to Community Safety. The CPA inspectors had found that the Council had not integrated community safety principles into the planning of its services, therefore putting the sustainability of its current good performance at risk. The review recommended that a Community Safety Champion be nominated within each service and greater efforts taken to record the good work carried out. Members considered whether a Member Community Safety Champion should also be nominated. However it was felt that it was more appropriate to make best use of the local Action Groups and their local knowledge rather than having one Member representing the whole district.

Discussion took place on the role and funding of the Community Support Officers.

- RECOMMENDED**
1. that a Member Champion for Community Safety be not appointed.
 2. that a review of the effectiveness of the Community Support Officers be carried out prior to the current funding arrangements running out.

*36 **Best Value Review of Housing Services**

Consideration was given to the report of the Policy Manager and a presentation by the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion with respect to the Best Value Review of Housing Services. The Review, which took over a year to conduct, looked at Housing Services from a strategic angle rather than an operational one. It was proposed that the overall aim of the Service was to ensure that a good quality affordable home was available to all households in the District and that each home was adequate in size and was suitably located for the occupants.

The policy objectives flowing from the Review were to provide sufficient homes which were affordable and suitable; to achieve the 'decent homes' standard across all housing sectors; and to ensure a range of housing choices which met environmental, economic and community interests. Members were advised that the Improvement Plan included as a key part of the Review was ambitious but realistic and would act as a template for future service improvements and would make a significant difference to customers.

Concern was raised about the number of people on the Housing Register and priority transfer list. It was noted that the Review identified the need to break away from looking solely at Council housing stock as the answer to housing problems, and also to look at the wider housing market.

Members were advised that additional housing problems could occur during the next financial year as the government had reduced the funding available for disabled adaptations to assist people to stay in their own homes.

It was suggested that the link between the housing and planning services should be strengthened. In future Section 106 agreements would be drawn up with the intention of providing more accommodation available for rent reflecting the housing needs of the community.

*36 **Best Value Review of Housing Services (Cont)**

- RECOMMENDED**
1. that the recommendation of the Best Value Review Team set out on page 12 of the report, arising from the Best Value Review of Housing Services, be approved,
 2. that the Committee be presented with a progress report at every meeting on the steps taken to deliver the Implementation Plan and the Best Value Review objectives.

*37 **Enforcement Policy for Environmental Health and Health Equalities**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Environmental Health and Health Equalities and the accompanying proposed Enforcement Policy. The policy embraced the principles of the Enforcement Concordat – a code of practice by the Cabinet Office that set out what businesses and others could expect from Enforcement Officers in terms of standards, the provision of information and consistent and proportionate application of the law. The Policy sought to help businesses comply with the law rather than get caught out by it.

RECOMMENDED that the Enforcement Policy be adopted for the Environmental Health and Health Equalities service.

*38 **Travel and Transport Task and Finish Forum – Terms of Reference**

Members considered the Terms of Reference drawn up by the Travel and Transport Task and Finish Forum. The Forum would take into account the views put forward by the Parish Council representatives at the annual meeting of Parish Councils held on 18 March 2004. It was noted that the Forum was on a fact finding exercise. If the facts indicated that travel and transport was less of a priority than previously thought then the matter would be pursued no further.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Travel and Transport Task and Finish Forum be adopted.

*39 **Sports Field Strategy Task and Finish Forum – Terms of Reference**

Consideration was given to the Terms of Reference drawn up by the Sports Field Strategy Task and Finish Forum.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Sports Field Strategy Task and Finish Forum be adopted.

Chairman Date