

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Friday, 30th March, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Falvey, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack, G. A. Russell and Whysall.

Apologies were received from Councillors Hughes and Steele.

**160.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**161.       QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.**

There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting.

**162.       GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS**

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny and Policy Manager, submitted an update on Government Consultations over the past six months including those responded to by the Council.

A total of sixty Consultations had been invited since September, 2011, of which six were still live and fifteen had been responded to. The Department of Education had the highest number at twenty-four.

It was noted that Select Commissions aimed to consider and respond to strategic Consultations. The majority of the Consultations that had not been responded to were of an operational nature.

Reference was made to the work programmes and capacity of the Select Commissions.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised: -

- A number of Consultations had not been responded to that related to some key policy areas for the Council;
- Some key consultations that had the potential to impact on Council functions had not been responded to.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Scrutiny and Policy Manager follow-up why certain Consultations had not been responded to.

**163.       SCRUTINY REVIEW - REGENERATION FUNDING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL**

Further to Minute C175 (Scrutiny Review Regeneration Funding and Neighbourhood Renewal) of the Cabinet, held on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, it was noted that this report had been deferred for further information.

Resolved:- That consideration of this report be deferred until further information has been received.

#### 164. SCRUTINY REVIEW - PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR - UPDATE

In accordance with Minute C131 (Scrutiny Review of the Private Rented Sector) of the Cabinet Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2012, consideration was given to the submitted report presented by Paul Benson, Private Sector Housing Officer, Housing and Neighbourhood Services, in relation to the action plan to meet the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review undertaken by the Former Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel.

Of the Review's eight recommendations, six were accepted and two deferred until cost benefit analysis work had been carried out to identify whether it was appropriate to support schemes that would contribute towards meeting the recommendations. Additional work would need to be undertaken to identify alternative sources of funding to deliver any schemes identified as providing value to the Council.

Specific consideration was given to the two deferred recommendations that were: -

- Number two: To ensure that sufficient resources were aligned to the delivery of the action plan and that working practices across relevant teams were co-ordinated to support it.
- Number four: That there should be a re-launch of the Private Landlord Accreditation scheme built on the best of the models developed by other authorities.

In scoping the necessary requirements to the deferred recommendations, specific targeted work would consider:-

- Engaging landlords, tenants and Councillors;
  - A recent inaugural meeting of a Landlords' Forum had shared information in relation to improving standards.
- The Council using its enforcement powers to assist in bringing empty private sector properties back into use;
- Targeted work to take place in the eleven most deprived areas of the Borough;
- Working with external partners, including energy companies, to ensure that available affordable warmth and sustainable schemes were accessed in appropriate properties;
- Property inspections following complaints from tenants, neighbours and other agencies in relation to poor standards within rented accommodation.

Continued support would be offered to local agencies that assisted vulnerable adults to access private rented accommodation through the provision of affordable loans, guarantee bond schemes, assistance and advice.

It was anticipated that the additional works to be undertaken in support of the potential roll-out of the deferred recommendations would take three-months.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board: -

- Correlations with issues relating to Fuel Poverty.
- Linkages to external partners' schemes relating to Affordable Warmth and Keeping Warm in Later Life (KWILLT).
- Targeting and engagement of private rented accommodation that was not located in the borough's most deprived areas but nevertheless suffered from poor conditions.
- Communication of message to tenants that there are reporting and complaint mechanisms in relation to private rented accommodation.
- Use of Census (2001) information to record properties that had recently become private rented accommodation.
- The risks and benefits of the enforcement tools 'Empty Dwelling Management Orders' and Enforced Sales to manage empty properties that were causing problems within communities, compared to lower-level preventative work.
- Issues in relation to houses in multiple-occupancy and correct management of this growing trend.
- The other Landlord Accreditation models that operated within the Sheffield City Region.
- Tracking of clients that had been evicted from Council housing and support provided through assured fixed-term tenancies.
- Link between poor housing conditions and increased health inequalities.
- Councillor Goulty, Adviser to the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, had recently been agreed as Champion for the Private Rented Sector.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and it's content noted.

(2) That, following the implementation of the recommendations, the issue be referred to the Improving Places Select Commission determine how often they should be monitored by that Commission.

(3) That a Members' Development Seminar be held to appraise all Elected Members of the issues in relation to the Private Rented Sector and associated support for tenants, including Housing Benefit and Council Tax Relief.

#### **165. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES.**

Reference was made to Minute 155 (Youth Cabinet / Young People's Issues) of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in relation to the referral the Youth Cabinet made regarding the condition of parks and anti-social behaviour.

Resolved: - That an update be provided to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the progress that had been made within Neighbourhood and Adult Services in responding to the Youth Cabinet's referral.

#### **166. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16TH MARCH, 2011**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

**167. WORK IN PROGRESS (CHAIRS OF SELECT COMMISSIONS TO REPORT)**

**Improving Lives Select Commission: -**

- Additional meeting to consider Government Consultation in relation to safeguarding data to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2012.

**Improving Places Select Commission: -**

- The meeting of this Commission that had been planned for 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, had been postponed to 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2012, out of respect for Vince McNeely's funereal.

**Health Select Commission: -**

- Next meeting to be held with the Health and Wellbeing Board and public health colleagues.
- An informal workshop held on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, had covered issues in relation to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Prevention and Early Intervention and Poverty themes.
- Hospital visits to inspect ward and outpatient accommodation, voluntary sector display and engagement space, and hospital food had taken place.

**Self-Regulation Select Commission: -**

- Budget process interviews were continuing.

**168. CALL-IN ISSUES - TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES REFERRED FOR CALL-IN.**

There were no formal call-in requests.