

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT TEAM
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, NELSON
ON 20TH OCTOBER, 2015**

PRESENT –

*His Worship the Mayor Councillor N. Ahmed
Councillor C. Wakeford – Chairman (In the Chair)*

Councillors

*M. Adams
K. Hartley
N. McEvoy*

*J. Nixon
S. Wicks*

Also present

Janette Taylor Housing Pendle

Officers in attendance

*P. Mousdale Corporate Director
L. Rowland Committee Administrator*

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Benson, W. Blackburn, A. Mahmood and D. Whipp (representative on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel).)



29. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded of the legal requirements concerning the declaration of interests and that whipping declarations were also required.

30. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th August, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. HOUSING PENDLE

Janette Taylor, Head of Housing Pendle, provided an update on the work of Housing Pendle in the following five areas –

Development

Their current housing stock amounted to approximately 3,300 homes, with a large proportion being bungalows and flats. However, in the past 12 months, a total of 122 new homes had been completed or were close to completion at four locations in Pendle, two of which were in Barnoldswick and two in Colne.

The Together Housing Group, of which Housing Pendle was a part, was committed to developing new homes and would continue to work in partnership with local councils.

Governance Arrangements

In a review of the governance arrangements the Group had agreed to establish one single Board with an Operating Committee. Local Panels would be formed to feed up to the Operating Committee.

Customer Satisfaction

A representative selection of Housing Pendle's tenant base had been invited to complete a customer satisfaction survey. The survey asked the opinion of 50% of their customers on a range of issues. Although the results showed a 93% satisfaction rate, they also highlighted areas where customers were less satisfied. These were areas that would be addressed.

Budget

The Board would be challenged in identifying savings required to offset the impact of the Benefit Cap, Universal Credit and the requirement to reduce rent by 1%. It was expected to cost the Group approximately £51million. Work was ongoing in identifying priority services and the results of the survey would be used to help evaluate the importance of other services.

Welfare Reform

It was anticipated that there would be a £4million impact on rent collection during the rollout of Universal Credit as the collection rate amongst current recipients of Universal Credit was lower than average. This, together with other complex changes to the benefit system, would have a bearing on what services could be provided.

Throughout the update, Janette answered questions from the Team where possible. A response to any outstanding issues would be circulated following the meeting.

33.

REVIEW PLANNING

Council's policies for safeguarding vulnerable people

Further to a review of the Council's policies for safeguarding vulnerable people being included in the Team's work programme, Members considered a briefing note which provided information on recent updates to the Council's Family Support and Safeguarding of Children Policy.

The updated Policy had been approved by Council in July of this year and was submitted to the Team for information.

To ensure that all members of staff had been trained appropriately, a corporate training programme for Family Support and Safeguarding had been introduced. This included Safeguarding Level 1 for all members of staff; Safeguarding Level 2 for front-facing staff with

contact with children/young people and/or parents/carers; the Lancashire Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Continuum of Need (CON) for front-facing staff with contact with children/young people and/or parents/carers; and Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) training for those members of staff identified in the 'contact and communications' section of the Policy (page 15). An awareness raising session had also taken place for elected Members prior to the July Council meeting.

It was reported that Pendle's initial Safeguarding Policy had been for both adults and children. However, further to advice in a Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) audit, the two were now being kept separate. Therefore a new Vulnerable Adults Policy was being developed with Lancashire County Council (LCC) Safeguarding leads and other district councils. This would follow the Lancashire format which had recently been developed, taking into account the legislative requirements of the Care Act 2014 and would be submitted to a future meeting of the Council for approval.

RESOLVED

That the Vulnerable Adults Policy be submitted to a future meeting of Scrutiny Management Team for consideration prior to submission to the Council.

34. REVIEW MONITORING

Town Centres

A monitoring report on the Scrutiny Review of Town Centres was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

That a further monitoring report be submitted to a future meeting of this Team once the Core Strategy had been finalised and national progress had been made on the process of introducing Local Development Orders.

35. EQUALITIES UPDATE

The Housing Needs Manager submitted an update report on the work of the Corporate Equalities Steering Group (CESG) towards meeting the Equality Objectives as set out in appendix 1 to the report. The delivery of a programme of corporate learning and development activities in relation to equalities and diversity was ongoing. It was noted that only a small percentage of Liberata staff had completed the training so far.

A training quiz was soon to be circulated to all Members.

RESOLVED

That Committee Services be asked, on behalf of this Team, to encourage all elected Members to complete the training quiz when invited.

36. POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

Councillor D. Whipp, the Council's representative on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel provided an update on the work of the Panel.

The Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan Performance Monitoring Report had been scrutinised by the Panel at its last meeting and was submitted to the Team for information. Specific reference was made to the 'One Team' approach which would affect policing in Pendle.

Councillor Whipp also submitted a briefing that had been provided to Lancashire's MPs regarding the proposed changes to funding for Lancashire Police and the impact on the Lancashire community. It was reported that Lancashire Constabulary was expected to be one of the worst hit in the funding review.

The Team was also advised that a small task group had been set up in order to scrutinise the work of the Commissioner and his objective of defending frontline policing. Councillor Whipp was a member of this newly formed group.

37. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

The draft minutes of a meeting of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on 22nd September, 2015 were submitted for information.

38. SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Improvement and Communications Plan was submitted for consideration.

RESOLVED

That, in continuing to encourage public participation, a further invitation for suggestions for topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme be made via the press and social media. In addition, arrangements be made for meetings of Scrutiny Management Team to be held at venues other than Nelson Town Hall.

39. 2015/16 WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Waugh had asked the Team to consider including a review on Pendle Council/Liberata's landlord policy with regard to commercial properties in their work programme for 2015/16. The request had originated following concerns over one particular letting in Colne.

RESOLVED

That the Strategic Director be asked to write to Councillor Waugh outlining the current policy and the specific circumstances under which the property in Colne had been let.

40. EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Work Programme and Forward Plan for the four month period commencing 1st November, 2015 was submitted for consideration.

41. WORK PLAN

The Team's annual work plan was submitted for information. It was reported that, at the October meeting of the Council, a decision had been made to oppose any exploratory drilling for shale gas in Pendle. As a result it was agreed that no further work on this topic was required by the Scrutiny Management Team.

RESOLVED

That the Scrutiny Review on Potential Shale Gas Exploration be concluded.

CHAIRMAN _____