

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

SPECIAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER**

WEDNESDAY, 8TH AUGUST 2012 (6.00PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), G W Ballinger, R Bishop, L Davies, N Gale, J Greener, P B Harrison, J A Hart, P V Hayward, H J Martin, D C H McCann, B McFarland, M Price, M Rayner, C Rogers, A M Sewell, J A Shaw, D R Sheppard, S J Williams and G C Yarranton.

Observers

Councillors F M Oborski and J Phillips.

OS.25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Ingham (Vice-Chairman), C Brewer and V Higgs.

OS.26 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor G W Ballinger was appointed as a substitute for Councillor C Brewer. Councillor M Price was appointed as a substitute for Councillor T Ingham. Councillor J A Shaw was appointed as a substitute for Councillor V Higgs.

OS.27 Declarations of Interests by Members

Councillor N Gale declared an Other Disclosable Interest (ODI) in agenda item 5 – Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel, as she is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor J Greener declared an ODI in agenda item 5 – Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel, as she is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor G Yarranton declared an ODI in agenda item 4 – Planning for Infrastructure in Worcestershire - Consultation on Strategic Options (June 2012), as he is a Worcestershire County Councillor, and declared an ODI in agenda item 5 – Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel, as he is a Board Member of The Community Housing Group.

Councillor F M Oborski declared an ODI in agenda item 4 – Planning for Infrastructure in Worcestershire - Consultation on Strategic Options (June 2012), as she is a Worcestershire County Councillor, and declared an ODI in agenda item 5 – Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel, as she is a nominee for The Community Housing Group Annual General Meeting in September 2012 to become a Board Member.

Councillor M Rayner declared an ODI in agenda item 5 – Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel, as she is a nominee for The Community Housing Group Annual General Meeting in September 2012 to become a Board Member.

Councillor H Dyke declared an ODI in agenda item 5 – Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel, as her husband works for The Community Housing Group.

OS.28 Planning for Infrastructure in Worcestershire – Consultation on Strategic Options (June 2012)

The Committee considered a report from the Planning Policy Manager on the Worcestershire County Council’s consultation document entitled “Planning for Infrastructure in Worcestershire – Consultation on Strategic Options to Inform Preparation of Strategy”, which sought Member’s views on the proposed representations to be submitted to the County Council on the consultation document.

Members were led through the report and advised infrastructure was of critical crosscutting importance across Worcestershire as it provided support services that was necessary to ensure sustainable and long term economic and social growth, along with creating quality places where people wanted to live and work.

A debate ensued and Members expressed concern on the lack of commitment to improve road surfaces and transport infrastructure within North Worcestershire. It was felt the document was very loosely worded and vague and Members felt it lacked depth of detail.

The Committee reviewed the proposed responses, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and revised comments were put forward to the Planning Policy Manager. It was the wish of the Committee that a stronger representation be made to convey the Council’s displeasure at the lack of investment in transport infrastructure within the District.

Agreed:

Recommend to the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping that the representations set out at Appendix 2, as amended, to the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8th August 2012 be approved for submission to Worcestershire County Council.

OS.29 Recommendations from the Housing Review Panel

The Committee considered the recommendations from the Housing Review Panel. The Chairman of the Review Panel, Councillor M Price, presented the recommendations and advised Members that the Panel had worked with the Community Housing Group and representatives from the Tenants Federation and Tenants Consultative Committees on the Membership of the proposed Tenant Services Committee.

A Tenant representative, Mr Phil Roberts, addressed the Committee and spoke in favour of the recommendations made by the Panel.

Agreed:

Recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. The five existing Tenant Board Members act in an interim capacity between September 2012 and September 2013 to represent the tenants on the Tenant Services Committee in the new governance structure, during which time a democratically held election be held for the nine positions to ultimately form the Tenant Services Committee from September 2013, where all Community Housing Group Tenants would be given the opportunity to stand and vote at the election. Such election in the first instance to require all tenants to be canvassed for proposed nominations for election, to be followed by an election that gives every tenant the opportunity to cast a vote(s) for their preferred candidate(s).**
- 2. Those persons nominated to stand for election will be subject to normal background checks to ascertain their eligibility to stand for election; the background checks will cover areas such as rent arrears, criminal records and bankruptcy.**
- 3. Community Housing Group to make available a Job Description and Person Specification together with eligibility criteria (as set out at 2 above) to any tenant wishing to consider nomination for election to the Tenant Services Committee.**
- 4. Community Housing group be requested to ensure that there is a uniformed geographic representation of tenants on the Tenant Services Committee from across the Wyre Forest District.**
- 5. A representative from both the Tenants Federation and Central Tenant Forum be involved to oversee the election and appointment process and to act as a scrutiny role throughout the proceedings.**
- 6. Prior to the elections taking place, the Community Housing Group to run 'taster' sessions for any Tenants considering nomination to enable them to gain an understanding of the role and what would be expected of them on the Tenant Services Committee. The sessions could also involve shadowing existing Tenant Board Members if appropriate.**
- 7. Following the election the successful appointees to the Tenant Services Committee to receive training from the Community Housing Group prior to them first taking up their Board role, to enable them to effectively take up their role from September 2013.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 7.05pm.