



Minutes of the meeting of the SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2006 at 7.30 PM

Present: Councillor Drewett (In the Chair)
Councillors Edwards, Exon, Hoyle, Snell (substitute for Councillor Carrington) and Pugh

Officers: K Page (Corporate Director Neighbourhood Services), J Holman (Director of Housing), J Bilson (Strategy and Performance Manager), D Beaumont (Partnering Manager), D Siddals (Service Delivery Manager), M Bishop (Asset and Performance Manager) and G Lane (Committee Manager)

Also Present: Councillor I Henderson, E Bobey (Vice-Chair of the Housing Forum), J Baker (Communications Advisor to the Housing Forum) and J Marling (Tenant Representative - Lakes Residents' Association)

Apologies: Councillor Long

Number of Public Present: 3

SC27 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Social Care and Housing Policy Development Committee held on 23 February 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to removal of Resolution 3 (e).

SC28 HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE AND VANGUARD

The Committee considered a report by the Strategy and Performance Manager on improvements to the Housing Repairs Service achieved through the introduction of Systems Thinking.

Members heard that the Systems Thinking approach envisaged services as a process of dynamic interaction between customer and provider, not as a series of routine mechanical operations.

The introduction of Systems Thinking had achieved a better balance between responsive and planned repairs. It had also reduced the need for repeat and supplementary repairs by empowering operatives to exercise greater discretion over repairs on-site.

In addition, efficiencies had been secured through the introduction of long-term partnering contracts and new procurement initiatives.

The co-location of contractors with Hyder Business Services (HBS) staff had also ensured that services became more responsive.

The Committee heard that in order to manage the risk of fire in Council properties, Bucks Fire and Rescue Service had undertaken to supply free smoke alarms to one thousand Council homes.

Members heard that there were opportunities to enhance the energy efficiency of the Housing Service, but it would require a significant investment of labour and resources to achieve only modest gains.

To safeguard against the possibility of fraudulent invoices by repairs operatives, all repairs were recorded and inspected by auditors.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Committee receive a progress report on the performance of the Housing Repairs Service in six months.

SC29

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2006 - 2007

The Committee considered topics for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for the 2006 – 2007 Council Year.

Members outlined the following topics for consideration:

- The Quality of Life Strategy, with particular emphasis on the promotion of cross-directorate working.
- The Health and Social Care White Paper, with particular emphasis on the promotion of client independence, client choice, Direct Payments, and local implementation and joint commissioning with the Primary Care Trust.
- The Housing Needs Survey and Action Plan.
- The promotion of health and well-being for adults, with particular reference to smoking and alcohol abuse.
- The promotion of local accommodation issues, with particular emphasis on the provision of affordable housing, homelessness and management of the Council-housing list.

- The promotion of social inclusion, with particular reference to local minority groups and boat dwellers.
- The promotion of Systems Thinking in the Housing Service.
- The operations of the Drug Action Team (DAT), with particular reference to local alcohol abuse.
- The promotion of the concerns of local domestic carers.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the topics outlined be incorporated into the Committee's Work Programme for the 2006 – 2007 Council Year.

THE VICE-CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.30 PM