

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 27 February 2012

Present:- Councillor M Olszewski – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Beech, Boden, Cairns, Clarke D, Gilmore, Loades, Miss Olszewski, Richards, Taylor K-N and Wilkes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Hailstones and Holland.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5 January 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Council's Asset Management Strategy, which had been brought to the previous meeting, had been agreed by Cabinet.

On 7 March 2012, the Strategy would be discussed by this Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning, Councillor Studd, had been invited to attend to receive feedback.

Resolved:- That the information be received.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest stated.

5. STRATEGIC TENANCY POLICY

Members received a presentation from the Council's Head of Housing on the Strategic Tenancy Policy. A handout of the presentation was given out at the meeting.

Members queried the fixed term of five years for a tenancy and whether there was any flexibility. There was no flexibility but the tenancy would be reviewed and renewed for a further five years. Members requested that the fact that a tenancy was reviewed be added into the Policy.

In addition, if tenants were not adequately maintaining the premises, eviction proceedings may be taken for breach of tenancy conditions.

The Policy did not refer to existing tenancies and this should be put into the Policy.

Tenants could exercise their right to buy but this would effectively remove a property for occupation by a family in need.

Once children have grown up and left home the parents would be asked to move into a smaller property to free up a family home.

Members queried what the allowance was which was paid by the Council. Last year, for a three bedroom house the allowance was £67.77.

Councillors Boden and Gilmore queried whether they should declare an interest as Aspire tenants. As the item was for information only, no such declaration was felt to be necessary.

Members felt that the Policy should read that the Council only dealt with Registered Social Landlords.

The following comments were made:-

- The Fixed Term Policy of five years should be made clearer.
- Reference should be made to the figures for the local housing allowance
- Extra wording should be included referring to the homeless.
- Reference should be made to existing tenancies not being affected.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the four comments listed above be included within the Policy.

6. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

A further presentation was given by the Head of Housing on the Housing Allocations Policy. Handouts were again provided.

Members queried the local connection theory – i.e. living in the Borough for six of the last twelve months or three of the last five years. Also a person could be working in the Borough or have family here.

Special circumstances could exist if someone from outside of the area required urgent assistance. In addition, people with no local connections could choose where they want to go.

Resolved:- (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the changes proposed in the draft Policy be highlighted.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Economic Development Strategy had been before the Committee last year and comments fed back to the Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Manager.

There had been a nine week consultation period to enable more people to have time to contribute.

An amended Appendix A was handed round at the meeting and a selection of questions and responses were discussed.

Resolved:- (a) That the draft Strategy be amended as outlined in the report at Appendix A.

(b) That the Cabinet give further consideration to any other improvements/modifications which Members wish to see made to the draft.

(c) That the modified (final) version of the Strategy be reported to the next meeting for approval.

(d) That the final version of the Strategy be accompanied by a first year action plan demonstrating in more detail timescales, lead bodies and resource implications.

(e) That the approved version of the strategy be reformatted with plans and photographs added and printed for wider distribution.

M OLSZEWSKI
Chair