

## HOUSING PANEL (PANEL OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

**Thursday 3 April 2014**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Smith (Chair), Sanders and Hollick.

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT:** Linda Hill (Co-optee)

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mathew Metcalfe (Democratic and Electoral Services) and Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer)

### **51. APOLOGIES**

The Panel was informed that Councillor Stuart McCready had resigned as a City Councillor. The Panel wished to send its thanks to him for his support and work for the Panel.

### **52. WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received an updated forward work programme and a report detailing the outcome of the county Council budget setting process with regard to the Adult Homeless Pathway.

The Panel received a further update on the Adult Homeless Pathway that the dates detailed in paragraph 4 of the report had changed while the County council, city Council and other parties developed further a paper for consideration which was being developed internally at present. The aim was for this paper to be ready for the next meeting of the Oxfordshire Chief Executives on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014 and then to proceed to the Health Improvement Board on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014. Because of this the timetable for re-commissioning had been put back further with wider consultation with stakeholders and provider not likely to start until June 2014 at the earliest.

The Panel agreed to note the updates.

### **53. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - OXFORD STANDARD SCOPE**

The Panel received a draft scope (previously circulated, now appended) for the partnership review for setting an Oxford Standard for Council Housing.

Councillor Smith welcomed this piece of work and felt that it was a good way to work with and obtain the views of tenants. Pat Jones added that this would also raise the tenants' profile.

Simon Ward said that this was one of the most important topics for tenants. He said that the Tenants group worked well and some joint working with the Panel would enhance this. However he acknowledged that there was still some further development work to be undertaken with tenants.

Councillor Seamons, Board Member for Housing said that this was an innovative way for scrutiny to work.

The Panel agreed to support the scope for the partnership review for setting an Oxford standard for Council housing.

#### **54. PARKS SATISFACTION LEVELS**

Councillor Mark Lygo, Board Member for Parks and Sport attending the meeting.

Councillor Smith said that the Panel had been surprised at the low satisfaction levels with parks despite the extra funded that had been provided. The Panel also wished to know how the consultation was being conducted.

Councillor Lygo said that he was happy with the 81% satisfaction rate even though this had dropped from the previous level of 91%. However when the 91% was achieved it had been a particularly good year when the investment had taken place and the weather had been better. He added that Blackbird Leys Park had been awarded a Green Flag and the Council had won Britain in Bloom. In response to comments on other parks he agreed that Gillians Park did need improvement.

Stuart Fitzsimmons from Parks said that the result from the Talkback Survey (81%) was the figure that was used for the Corporate Plan. Parks used Residents Associations and Friends Groups to gain a better view of satisfaction levels. He added that the latest Talkback result had increased to 82% which was the second highest rated service in the Council.

Linda Hill said that people preferred to use Bury Knowle Park rather than the parks in Barton as these catered more for children above the age of 9 years.

The Panel agreed:

- (a) To thank Councillor Lygo for attending the meeting;
- (b) To welcome site visits to good and not so good parks in the city;
- (c) That using the Talkback Survey was not the answer to obtain good feedback on satisfaction levels with parks;
- (d) To request that the Panel receive the results of other surveys/consultation undertaken by Parks Services broken down by park so as to understand better the results and trends.

#### **55. HOUSING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT - PROPOSED PANEL VISIT**

The Panel agreed that a visit to another housing provider would be beneficial especially to one that had a good satisfaction level from tenants and that officers in liaison with the Chair develop further a proposed scope for the visit.

## **56. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager attended the meeting. He informed the Panel that a group had been formed and that work continued to maintain their enthusiasm and not to rely on the same people all the time.

Councillor Sanders said that there had in the past been some Tenants and Residents Association which were not very representative of their community and asked how this was now being overcome.

In response Bill Graves said that a Welcome Pack had been developed for people thinking of starting a TRA. He added that the Council supported TRA's which met the Council criteria and provided funding.

Councillor Seamons said that it was worth looking at the internet again to see how this could be better utilised and maybe to have a KPI on this issue. He said that a report would be going to the City Executive Board in the autumn and that there should be a section in the report detailing how the tenants had been involved.

The Panel agreed to pre-scrutinise the report prior to it being considered at the City Executive Board.

## **57. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Panel approved the notes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

## **58. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Panel noted that it would hold a special meeting on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at 5.00pm to consider a report on the De-designation of Stock Programme.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.10 pm**

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