

Time Commenced – 6.00 pm
Time Finished – 7.26 pm

Cost of Living Overview and Scrutiny Board

12 January 2015

Present: Councillor Dhindsa (Chair)
Councillors Ashburner, Bayliss, Harwood, A Holmes, Stanton and
Tittley

26/14 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

27/14 Late items

There were no late items.

28/14 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

29/14 Forward Plan published 23 December 2014

The board considered the Forward Plan which was published on 23 December 2014.

Resolved to note the report.

30/14 Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan

A report was presented by the Head of Strategic Housing on behalf of the Strategic Director of Adults, Health and Housing which provided the Board with an updated version of the Homelessness Strategy – Final Delivery Plan 2015-19.

The report contained the Delivery Plan which had been revised, following the last meeting of the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Board when the Board considered the Draft Homelessness Strategy and requested a number of timescales to be confirmed in the Action Plan, along with identification of resources.

The report explained the new Homelessness Strategy had been drafted over the period July to October 2014, it included a Homelessness Review and a full consultation process which had been undertaken with relevant individuals and organisations.

The Strategy set out 3 broad overarching strategic priorities which will shape future actions:

- **Strategic Priority A:** Create and Maintain a City Wide Framework to Promote Effective Partnership Working by all Agencies

- **Strategic Priority B:** Maintain and Improve Measures to Prevent Homelessness
- **Strategic Priority C:** Help Homeless people Back into Suitable Housing and Provide Support to make this Sustainable.

The Head of Strategic Housing confirmed that each action in the Action Plan now had a date or was an on going action.

A member asked if the leaflets in A3 of the Action Plan would be presented to the Plain English Panel before circulation, the Head of Strategic Housing confirmed that everything produced for public information by Adults, Health and Housing goes before the Plain English Panel.

Resolved to note the report and requested that it is brought back to the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Board so they could monitor the progress of the Homeless strategy and discuss it again at a future meeting.

31/14 Housing and Good Public Health Outcomes

A report of the Directors of Integrated Commissioning and Public Health (Adults, Health & Housing), was considered by the Board which was entitled Housing and Good Public Health Outcomes, which aimed to inform the Board of links between health and the standards of housing. The Public Health Speciality Registrar presented the report.

The report provided the Cost of Living Board with:

- The evidence base for housing and health
- Current performance against key housing and health indicators
- What works to mitigate detrimental health impacts of housing
- What we are doing in Derby to address housing & health issues

The report informed the Board of the following:

- There is a body of evidence that supports the view that housing is a key determinant of good health.
- Fuel poverty in Derby is higher than national and regional levels.
- Energy rating of two thirds of homes in Derby fall outside bands A-C energy rating scales.
- Whilst hospital admissions for falls have been increasing in Derby it is not clear whether this is due to inappropriate housing or as a consequence of a greater number of older people in the resident population.

- Good quality, well designed needs led housing can have many benefits on health as outlined in this report and appendix 2.
- Appendix 2 detailed the current actions which were being taken to attain health benefits from housing measures. Considerable further health benefits could be achieved in Derby through additional actions, however current resource constraints preclude their implementation.

The report further stated that housing is a key determinant of health, and growing academic evidence supported this position and provided the Board with examples of factors and statistics relating directly to Derby's current situation.

Members of the Board questioned the Director of Integrated Commissioning, who was also present about the role of Housing Enforcers and what they were equipped to do; the Director of Integrated Commissioning responded by saying that notices were simple to issue but the difficulty lay with checking properties to ensure the work had been done.

Resolved to recommend the following:

- i) **the Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Welfare work with the NHS and related health services and increase funding to expand the Handy Person Service**
- ii) **that future reports for consideration at the Coast of Living Overview and Scrutiny Board contain quantitative data to enable comparisons to be made and identify trends**
- iii) **the Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Welfare to gain cross party support to campaign for a 'Better Deal for Derby' to address Derby's above average levels of fuel poverty**
- iv) **the provision of alternative funds to deliver insulation schemes be investigated due to the reduction of funding for measures through schemes such as the government's 'Green Deal'.**

32/14 Derby Homes Apprentice Strategy

A report of the Strategic Director of Adults, Health and Housing was presented to the Board, by the Change Manager for Derby Homes entitled Derby Homes - Update on Apprenticeship Scheme.

The report provided the Board with an overview of the Apprenticeship Scheme operated by Derby Homes and informed them that Derby Homes current programme had been designed within the National Apprenticeship Programme and was extended in 2013/14 to include opportunities for trade's apprentices, having previously only having promoted opportunities within business and customer service roles.

On 27 November 2014 Derby Homes Board approved an Apprentice Strategy 2014/17. The Derby Homes Board covering report could be found at Appendix 2 (ITEM B4) and the Apprenticeship Strategy could be found at Appendix 3.

At the present time Derby Homes have 36 Apprentices, 19 within the trade's teams and 7 in customer service focussed roles.

The Derby Homes Apprenticeship Scheme had been developed with the support of the Trade Unions. On 18 December 2014 UCATT, UNISON and UNITE signed an Apprenticeship Charter which demonstrated our joint commitment and vision for the scheme.

Board Members questioned the Change Manager at length and sought clarification on the following:

- the processes utilised to select apprentices
- the type of feedback given
- how many apprentices had secured employment

The Change Manager responded, stating the following:

- Open Days, Two day Boot Camps culminating in an interview selected the apprentices
- Written and verbal feedback was given
- Whilst guarantees of employment couldn't be given, to date there had been a 100% record of apprentices gaining employment.

The Change Manager for Derby Homes went on to say that promoting apprenticeships was part of their role, visiting schools which had a large proportion of Derby Homes tenants in their catchments areas and gave examples of Da Vinci and Lees Brook secondary schools. Derby Homes were keen to attract prospective apprentices who were related to or friends of Derby Homes tenants. Addressing the imbalances in gender representation in some apprenticeship trades was also named as one challenge Derby Homes faced and were working to redress.

Resolved to:

- i) note the report**
- ii) acknowledge and commend Derby Homes for the work they were doing facilitating and promoting apprenticeships**
- iii) recommend the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People work with Derby Homes to promote the apprenticeship scheme with Derby Homes tenants.**

33/14 Work Programme and Topic Reviews

The Board is continuing to look at how affordable housing in the city can be increased. The Board is meetign with Planning Officers and the Radleigh House Group to discuss this further and will be concluding its findings in March.

34/14 Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider a resolution to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following items: "that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".

Resolved to exclude the press and public.

35/14 Compulsory Acquisition of Long Term Empty Properties

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of Adults, Health and Housing which had been prepared to be presented to Council Cabinet on 18 February 2015. This report had been prepared by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Welfare, it proposed the compulsory acquisition of long term empty houses; confidential data was included at Appendix 3 of this report.

Resolved to:

- i) note the report**
- ii) support any further actions to compulsorily purchase empty properties**
- iii) remind Councillors to notify officers of any long standing empty properties they have in their electoral wards and promote this in Member Life and via email to all Councillors.**

MINUTES END