

ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10th February, 2022

Present:-

Councillor Flood (Chair)

Councillors	Caulfield	Councillors	Snowdon
	Coy		Brittain
	Hollingworth		

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

24 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barry Dyke and Liz Cook, Service Director for Housing.

26 **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING - PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING
UPDATE**

The Private Sector Housing Manager presented a report to the committee updating them on the progress of the team since the last scrutiny review in July 2019.

The committee heard that a stock condition survey in 2019 found 16% of Chesterfield residents were living in private rented accommodation and approximately 26% of those properties failed to meet decency standards. Private sector housing formed part of the Council's overarching Housing Strategy which aimed to ensure that anyone wanting to live in Chesterfield could live in a quality home they could afford.

In order to successfully prosecute landlords that failed to meet the required standards, it was acknowledged that more resource was needed in the enforcement team. A Senior Environmental Health Officer (EHO) had been recruited and would deal with the more complicated cases and associated legal obligations. A second position, that of an additional EHO, had not yet been filled but the role had been reviewed as part of the overall Housing restructure and it was hoped that this would attract internal applications.

The team had been working on a number of policies designed to reflect new legislation and bolster existing enforcement tools. The policies would enable the team to take appropriate action against landlords in relation to poor private rental properties and also to give clear guidance to landlords and tenants.

The Private Sector Housing Manager gave an overview of the draft policies and the and the key points for consideration as follows;

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Policy

- The policy set out options available to landlords, to ensure they were compliant with the legislation which had been delegated down from Derbyshire County Council Trading Standards.
- It listed the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of homes.
- It detailed the Council's ability to enforce financial penalties for non-compliance.

Fees and Charges Policy

- The current fees and charges were introduced in 2019 and were due to be reviewed.
- Any charges would need to reflect current resourcing costs.
- The Council was keen to ensure transparency and fairness

House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Amenities and Space Standards

- The policy would set out the minimum amenity and space standards of HMOs in order to protect tenants and ensure that national standards were adhered to.
- Authorities had been given the option to set their own standards locally and it was important that these should avoid exposing the Council to any legal challenge.

Park Homes

- There was a requirement for two new policies relating to Park Homes; one to review and revise the fees and charges and a second to introduce an assessment for park home site owners, to determine whether they were fit and proper persons.

The Private Sector Housing Officer welcomed the opportunity to work with scrutiny on the policy reviews in order to secure the best possible outcomes. Discussion took place around some of the key issues relating to these policies and it was agreed to circulate information to the committee on; the current enforcement policy, a definition of non-decent properties and a list of the 29 separate hazards that properties are assessed for.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a review of the new Private Sector Housing policies be added to the work programme for 2022/23.

27 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Committee considered the Scrutiny recommendations monitoring schedule.

An update was provided on the site of the former Queen's Park Sports Centre and the committee acknowledged the difficulties in providing detailed statistics due to the pandemic.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.
2. That the monitoring of the site of the former Queen's Park Centre be concluded and removed from the monitoring schedule.

28 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan for the four month period 1 March, 2022 to 30 June, 2022 was presented for information.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

29 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The 2021/22 Work Programme for the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee was reported for information.

RESOLVED –

That the work programme be noted and updated to include the decisions of the current meeting.

30 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

The Minutes of the meeting of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 2 December, 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

