

Minutes of: POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 13 January 2009

**Present: Councillor G Morris (Chair)
Councillors Cheetham (substituting for H Steen), Evans,
Farrington, Forshaw, May, C Pilling
Philip Ham, Co-opted Member**

**In Attendance: Stephen Jackson, Head of Regeneration
Philip Mephram, Environmental Health Manager
Emma Hussain, Policy Officer
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer**

**Also Present: Councillor Graham, Portfolio Holder, Communities and
Neighbourhoods
Councillor Neal**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor H Steen.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 5 November 2008 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

No urgent items were raised under this item.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised by members of the public.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and asked Members and Officers to introduce themselves.

He informed Members that a further update on the Core Strategy would now be presented to the March meeting, although a copy of the update which was being presented to Cabinet was circulated to Members at the meeting for information.

7. HOUSING AND REGENERATION BILL - UPDATE

The Head of Regeneration presented an update on the Housing and Regeneration Bill, which had now become an Act.

The two proposed agencies; the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and the Tenants Service Authority (TSA) had now been established and became operational from 1st December 2008.

The Homes and Communities Agency was a national housing and regeneration agency for England, with an annual investment budget of more than £5bn.

The Tenant Services Authority, although had been established, had yet to implement all requirements of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 in order to be fully operational. This would likely be achieved towards the end of 2009.

The Tenants Services Authority had taken over the role of the Housing Corporation and would monitor and inspect all housing companies across the Country.

Members raised a number of questions, which the Head of Regeneration responded, these include:

- Elderly People Supported Housing
- Pennine Lancashire – individual authority or sub regional level
- Money received through different programmes (Housing Market Renewal, North West Development Agency, Housing Associations)
- Evaluation and monitoring of other Housing Associations, including Green Vale Homes
- Social Affordable Housing

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

8. DRAFT ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY AND POLICY

The Environmental Health Manager presented a report on the draft Enforcement Strategy, including the Enforcement Policy, for consideration by Members.

The Council adopted an Enforcement Policy in March 2007, with an update being considered in September 2007. Since then a considerable number of developments had occurred in relation to enforcement, requiring the reconsideration of the Policy. In addition, as the Policy related to the approach the Council would take to enforcement, the Policy was better included within the Enforcement Strategy, which would describe how the Council could use enforcement as a tool for achieving outcomes.

The purpose of enforcement was to ensure that preventative or remedial action was taken to protect public health and the environment by ensuring compliance with regulatory systems. Whilst the Council seeks to ensure full voluntary compliance with relevant legislative requirements wherever possible, it would use its enforcement powers where necessary.

The Environmental Health Manager indicated that the Council still needed to develop appendices which interpret the Policy for each individual service and recognise the differences between services in the application of the overall Policy. There was a documented system for taking legal proceedings.

Members raised a number of comments, which the Environmental Health Manager responded, these include;

- Need to ensure that the Council consider enforcement at different levels within the different departments with the need for detailed discussion to ensure the Council get these right
- Need to be clear about giving fixed penalty notices to under 16 year olds
- Need for the Committee to have sight of the appendices to the report which would be produced during the coming months.

Enforcement training would be provided for all relevant Officers, and Members asked if they could attend these training events, as observers only, to help them understand as and when there was a need for enforcement.

Members thanked the Environmental Health Manager for such a detailed and readable report.

Resolved

1. That Policy Overview and Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet the approval of the revised Enforcement Strategy and Policy.
2. That the Committee receive for information, a copy of the final report which would include the appendices of each individual area and how they intend to approach enforcement.

9. FORWARD PLAN - 1st January 2009 – 30th April 2009

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed the Committee that the Rossendale Market Report and the Hot Food Takeaway Report would be presented to the next meeting and asked members to consider any additional reports they would like to be presented.

Resolved:

That the information be noted.

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date

