

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT:  
Councillors

Foley, D. (Chairman)

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Bernard, Mrs. A.F. | Johnson, J.P.   |
| Burnett, G.        | Kraujalis, J.T. |
| Cooper, Miss. J.   | Preece, J.T.    |
| Hardman, B,        | Witton, P.T.    |
| Hoare, M.W.A.      |                 |

Also in attendance –

Councillor F.W.C. Allen, (Housing Portfolio Leader - Observer)

Councillor Mrs. M.A. Davis, (Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader – for matters related to Social Alarms - Observer)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss. J. Christian and Mrs. D. Grice.

Councillor M.W.A. Hoare was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Miss. J. Christian.

**2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members**

| <u>Member</u>   | <u>Nature of Interest</u>                    | <u>Type</u> |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| Kraujalis, J.T. | Previously employed by a Housing Association | Personal    |
| Preece, J.T.    | Council tenant                               | Personal    |

No further declarations were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests.

**3. Scope and Functions of the Housing Scrutiny Committee**

Rob Lamond, Policy and Performance Manager provided Members with a

presentation which gave an overview of the scope and functions of the Housing Scrutiny Committee. The presentation covered the following:-

- Support for the Committee
- Background to Scrutiny
- Purpose of Scrutiny
- The Committee's Role and Remit
- Performance Management
- Types of Work Programme
- Example of Scrutiny Work
- The Priority Delivery Plan (PDP)
- Work Programme 2015-16

#### Priority Delivery Plan 2015-16 More and Better Housing

##### Strategic Objective: Planning for the housing needs of the District

Janet Baldasera, Acting Head of Housing referred to the Priority Delivery Plan 2015-16 More and Better Housing and reported that under this Strategic Objective a number of actions would be complete by March, 2016.

A Member asked if the Council was on track to achieve the Actions listed.

The Acting Head of Housing indicated that the Council was currently on target; however she advised that the Committee would receive appropriate updates through the quarterly performance report.

Clare Eggington, Planning Policy Manager referred to the Actions and in particular the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and advised Members that the document was due to be published towards the end of September. She also assured Members that the Council was on track towards meeting its outcome for making sure sufficient land was available to meet the areas housing needs.

Members discussed the requirement for updates with regard to the SHLAA and combined authorities on working with neighbouring authorities on housing matters.

##### Strategic Objective: Increasing the supply of affordable housing

The Acting Head of Housing referred to this Strategic Objective and indicated that the construction of the Green Lane Housing Scheme in Rugeley would see the first dwellings complete by May, 2016. She also indicated that invitations to tender for the former garage sites and other areas of Council owned land were about to commence.

##### Strategic Objective: Improving the Council's social housing stock and raising standards in the private rented sector

With regard to this Strategic Objective it was hoped that the improvement works

provided through the 2015-16 HRA Capital Programme to improve Council properties would be completed by this financial year. It was also reported that if Members were mindful to do so they may wish to include as part of the Work Programme a visit to see the improvement works on site once completed.

The Acting Head of Housing then went on to discuss with Members the roles of the Housing Service which were managed through 3 teams. Those teams were the Housing Property Services team, the Housing Maintenance team and the Strategic Housing and Tenancy Services team.

#### **4. Work Programme 2015-16**

Prior to discussions around the Work Programme, Members raised the matter of the frequency of meetings for the Committee and were concerned that there may not be adequate time to carry out the work of the Committee depending on what may form part of the Work Programme.

The Chairman indicated that additional meetings could be convened and working groups set up by the Committee as the programme required.

The Chairman then opened up discussions with regard to the Work Programme for 2015-16.

##### Work Programme Discussions

##### Supporting People Fund – Bromford Housing Group/YMCA

A Member indicated that both Bromford Housing Group and the Cannock YMCA were facing challenges next year in terms of funding. It was reported that both organisations were very supportive and provided excellent services to vulnerable people.

Janet Baldasera reported that the support offered currently was via the Supporting People Fund which was co-ordinated through Staffordshire County Council. She advised that discussions were currently ongoing with providers concerning what services or provisions may be put in place when the funding ceased.

Members of the Committee then discussed the introduction of Universal Credits and the implications in terms of how payments were made to tenants when this was introduced. It was noted that there would be implications for both the Council and tenants.

Members of the Committee agreed that this item be placed on the Work Programme.

##### Voids Standards

A Member highlighted the problems with the lack of checks being carried out on void properties. He explained that if in-depth checks were carried out, it would eliminate the need for further time and resources being used.

Janet Baldasera explained that the process of making a void property liveable was fairly lengthy particularly if repairs were required, checks would then be made in order that new tenants could move in.

A Member discussed with the Committee how rent collectors in the past would visit a property and note the condition it was in. However due to the need to reduce spending, this service ceased. He also pointed out that private landlords inspected their properties on a regular basis noting the condition.

Members of the Committee agreed that this item be placed on the Work Programme.

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CHAIRMAN

(The meeting closed at 4.50).