

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2006 AT 4.00 P.M.
CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Collis, C. (Chairman)

Hodges, E.J. Morgan, C.W.J.
Meaden, R.G.

Also present: Chase Tenants' and Residents' Federation Representatives: -

Mr. L. Lloyd Mr. R. Wells
Mrs. V. Lloyd Mrs. D. Whitehouse

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. M. Hewitt (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. D. Grice and A. Williams).

15. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

Member	Nature of Interest	Type
Morgan, C.W.J.	Council Tenant	Personal

16. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January, 2006 were approved as a correct record.

Arising from the Minutes the Chairman reported that a survey was carried out last year regarding access issues at polling stations within the District for people with disabilities. He explained that most of the premises identified were frequently used as polling stations and although the owners of the premises received a copy of the survey, the Council was not in a position to stipulate that the premises make the improvements identified in the survey.

17. Disability Services

Christine Graham from Disability Services was not present to talk to Members regarding Disability Services.

18. Access Issues in and Around the Council Building

Marek Frank from the Council was not present to talk to Members regarding access issues in and around the Council Buildings.

19. Information Regarding Equipment Adaptations for people with Disabilities

The Chairman welcomed Nigel Haywood, Tenancy Services Manager and Amanda Whitehouse, Principal Housing Property Services Officer to the meeting.

Nigel Haywood explained that the Housing Allocations Policy states that if an adapted property is identified as being vacant with no suitable person on the waiting list with special needs, Social Services should be contacted to find a person suitable to occupy the property. The property would then be placed outside of the Allocations Policy.

If no suitable person were found in which to allocate the property to, the equipment adaptation would be left in. Nigel Haywood referred to the Allocations Policy and explained that the person who occupies the property with the equipment adaptation would always be asked to leave the equipment in, should there not be a suitable person who requires it. However, in most cases the equipment would be removed.

Some concern was raised regarding the cost of removing stairlifts from properties, which are normally designed with the property in mind. Members discussed the possibility of reinstating stairlifts in other properties once removed.

Amanda Whitehouse explained that adapting stairlifts would be expensive but she would liaise with the Council's repairs section to find out if this was possible. She provided an example of a property with an adaptation which was a 3-bedroom property already equipped with a stairlift and special shower unit, she explained that it would prove difficult for the Council to find a suitable disabled person in which to allocate the property to.

Mr. Haywood reported that under the Council's Allocations Policy an adapted bungalow would only be allocated to a person who was found to be suitable for the property. Equipment would not be removed from a bungalow.

Some concern was raised regarding the stigmatisation associated with disabled ramps that are were removed from properties when people are able bodied. Amanda Whitehouse reported that the Council has recently started to fit plastic disabled access ramps to properties where required and those parts could be re-used.

Amanda Whitehouse reported on the procedure used when referrals are received by the Council from Social Services. She explained that Social Services would contact an occupational therapist and ask that they visit the person to assess the situation, following the visit, a referral would be forwarded to the Council. The referral would be

given a priority rating of 1-2 or 3 of those persons waiting for equip adaptations if a person was given 70 points, he/she would automatically go to the top of the list, where 10 points would be at the bottom of the list based on the priority rating.

Members discussed the possibility of fitting walk in baths into properties for disabled persons. Amanda Whitehouse explained that if a person had suffered a stroke and lost sensation on one side of the body the person would be at risk of scalding, therefore walk-in baths would not be recommended by Social Services.

20. Costs Associated with Retaining/Replacing equipment in Void Properties

Members discussed electrical upgrades and in particular, smoke alarms for the hard of hearing. Amanda Whitehouse explained that 12 special alarms were fitted this year but there was a waiting list of around 20 properties requiring this type of alarm. She commented that smoke detectors for the hard of hearing include a strobe light and a vibrating pad which are hard wired with a lithium battery backup. There is currently a budget of around £300k per annum for adaptations with £5k used for electrical upgrades.

She reported that she would be meeting with a representative from Staffordshire Fire Authority next Thursday regarding smoke detectors.

Members were of the opinion that pressure should be placed on the Fire Authority to use hard-wired smoke alarms rather than the conventional battery type.

Members briefly discussed the following: -

- Carbon Monoxide detection
- Minor Works Budget
- Equipment leasing
- Private sector housing 'means testing'

RESOLVED:-

- (A) That Christine Graham of Disability Services be invited to attend the next meeting of the Social Inclusion and Housing Select Committee on 6 March 2006.
- (B) That Members of the Social Inclusion and Housing Select Committee develop draft recommendations at the next meeting on 6 March 2006.
- (C) That an additional meeting of the Social Inclusion and Housing Select Committee be convened after 6 March 2006 to allow information to be considered from various disability groups.

CHAIRMAN