



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Held: THURSDAY, 15 APRIL 2010 at 5.30pm

P.R.E.S.E.N.T.

Councillor Bhavsar – Vice-Chair (In the Chair)

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| Councillor Bajaj (for Cllr Glover) | Councillor Johnson (for Cllr Grant) |
| Councillor Joshi | Councillor Newcombe |
| Councillor Potter | Councillor Senior |
| Councillor Suleman | |

Also In Attendance

Councillor Westley

Cabinet Lead Member for Housing

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187. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Glover and Grant.

188. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they had in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Senior declared a personal interest in Item 6 'Tracking of Petitions – Monitoring Report' as she had been consulted as a Ward Councillor in respect of the petition opposed to the Spinney Hills Schools Cycle Link.

Councillor Senior declared a personal interest in Item 10 'Remodelling of YMCA, East Street, Leicester' as she was a Member of a group that regularly used the room.

Councillor Potter declared personal interests in Item 7 'Youth Justice Planning Improvement Framework 2010-11' and Item 10 'Remodelling of YMCA, East

Street, Leicester' as she was a member of the Safeguarding Children's Panel.

201. DIVISIONAL FEEDBACK ON THE ADULTS AND HOUSING TASK GROUP REVIEW INTO HOUSING REPAIRS

The Director of Housing Services submits a report that provides a response to the Adults and Housing Task Group Review into Housing Repairs.

The Director of Housing Services introduced the report, which outlined progress on the mobile working pilot. He explained that when comparing the first six months of the 2008/09 financial year to the current year to date, the quantity of actual operatives employed on day-to-day repairs had decreased from 121 to 102, with the number of agency operatives decreasing from 42 to 10. The number of jobs FTE operatives had completed had increased from 11 to 23 and the percentage of jobs completed on the first visit had increased from 52% to 82%. This had allowed more resources to be redirected on reducing the number of void properties, which has shown a reduction of 92 (185 down to 93) or over half in the last three months.

Councillor Potter, Adults and Housing Task Group Leader commended the mobile working service, and welcomed the fact that work would only be signed-off when the tenant was satisfied. She did express concern that outdoor work often took place without notifying tenants beforehand. She suggested that the tenant should be informed before any outdoor work took place. The Head of Service (DSO) agreed that operatives should introduce themselves before carrying out outdoor works, and would look at ways of introducing this.

Councillor Westley, Cabinet Lead Member for Housing reported that the number of void properties in Leicester was falling and hoped that this would continue further. He explained that it was vital for properties to be completely safe before new tenants were housed. He further stated that Housing Services had tightened up the regime in terms of prosecuting tenants who leave properties in a state of serious disrepair. Members' welcomed such a regime as they felt that the negative behaviour of a small minority caused unnecessary delays for those who required housing. In response to an additional question, it was also made clear that operatives, wherever possible, worked on properties before a tenancy was to cease in order to minimise the time that a property is vacant.

Members welcomed the decrease in the number of void properties and it was requested that Ward Councillors receive monthly figures on the number of void properties within their wards, and the likely period of time that such properties would remain as empty. In response, Councillor Westley stated that it was very difficult to anticipate the length of time a property would be left void. Furthermore, members were informed that Leicester HomeChoice was to be launched on 21 April 2010 that raises awareness of vacant properties.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Adults and Housing Task Group Review of Housing Repairs along with the divisional response be

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forwarded to Cabinet for their consideration; and

- (2) That officer's look at ways to supply Ward Councillors with information about the number of void properties within their wards.