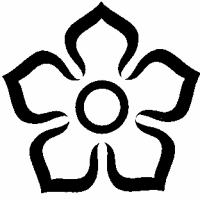


MINUTE EXTRACT



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 19 AUGUST 2004 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Draycott - Chair
Councillor Allen- Conservative Spokesperson
Councillor Smith- Liberal Democrat Spokesperson

Councillor Greenl
Councillor Keeling

Councillor Getliffe
Councillor Westley

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17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they might have in the business to be discussed, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act applied to them.

Members declared the following personal and prejudicial interests in the entire agenda :

Councillor Draycott -	related to a tenant of a Council owned property
Councillor Getliffe -	tenant of a Council owned property and related to a tenant
Councillor Keeling	tenant of a Council owned property
Councillor Smith	tenant of a Council owned property
Councillor Westley	related to a tenant of a Council owned property

The prejudicial interests did not apply under the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct, Paragraph 10(d), and therefore the Members remained in the meeting, and took part in discussion on the items.

24. BEST VALUE REVIEW - HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICE - AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORT

The Corporate Director of Housing submitted a report which presented the

findings of the Audit Commission inspection of the Housing Management Service.

The Commission had assessed the Council as providing a 'good' two star service which had prospects for improvement.

The report explained that the assessment had considered that the Service had:

- * a highly customer focussed ethos which made tenants and residents' concerns a priority;
- * tenancy management services were provided from accessible and local offices , and were responsive to the current and future perceived needs of tenants;
- * It had made serious efforts to ensure that services remained sensitive to the needs of all members of a diverse community;
- * A high priority was placed on sustainability of tenancies, with an emphasis on early engagement with new tenants, and housing related support for the most vulnerable;
- * The Council had demonstrated good tenant involvement and participation in specific initiatives, and within the boundaries of the existing tenant participation structure;
- * trained tenant inspectors performed quality checks on Estates and office environments;
- * the quality of service in dealing with anti-social behaviour, racial harassment and nuisance was high, and complaints were dealt with quickly. The partnership approach to community safety was a particularly positive feature of the service; and
- * value for money was demonstrable in most aspects of the service.

The following action were recommended in the Improvement Plan to address Issues which required improvement :

- * The Tenants Compact was only available in English;
- * systematic customer satisfaction monitoring was very limited, and there was no strategy to involve leaseholders;
- * there was a need to provide more opportunity for tenants to be involved in managing the service performance;
- * former tenants arrears were collected by a separate department, and did not form part of an overall strategic approach to arrears management;

- * there was a lack of robust contact monitoring for Estate services – some communal cleaning contracts were in place, but standards were not currently monitored;
- * there was a lack of clear strategic approach and direction in respect of voids management; and
- * performance against audited indicators was weak in the key areas of arrears and voids.

RESOLVED :

- 1) that the information be received;
- 2) that the action being taken to address areas for improvement be noted; and
- 3) that the areas of good and positive practice within the Housing Management Service be noted.