

# Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at Pippbrook, Dorking from 6.30pm to 6:44pm

Present: Councillors David Draper (Chairman), Stephen Cooksey, Rosemary Dickson (as substitute for Malcolm Ladell), Mary Huggins, Paul Potter, Sarah Seed and Patricia Wiltshire.

Also present: Councillors Margaret Cooksey, Duncan Irvine, Howard Jones, Vivienne Michael, Corina Osborne-Patterson and Charles Yarwood.

## 68. Minutes

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 69. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Malcolm Ladell.

## 70. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were declared.

## 71. Refurbishment of Church Gardens, Dorking

The Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing introduced the report by explaining that this refurbishment work was needed at the six flats in Church Gardens, Dorking before they became uninhabitable. The cost of doing the refurbishment works outweighed the cost that Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) would incur should it have to find alternative emergency accommodation, such as bed and breakfast.

The work which was required included new kitchens, new bathrooms, new boilers and re-wiring. The work would be done on a rotation so that only one flat would be refurbished at any one time, this would enable the remaining flats to continue to be used as emergency accommodation for those in need. The cost of the work would be met within the existing budget.

It was explained that the work would be closely monitored as well as the expenditure and this sort of situation would be monitored as and when it occurred. It was questioned whether the £260,000 stated in the report was a basic estimate or whether it accounted for any unknown costs which may make themselves apparent during the works. It was advised that this was just the basic cost and any additional works required would have to be assessed if and when they occurred.

The Committee questioned why the flats had been left to get into the state they were in now and why the work had not been scheduled sooner. The Executive Member explained that Clarion were the Landlords for the flats and therefore their consent was required before any works could be carried out. MVDC had been in communication with Clarion for some time about the work which was needed and Clarion had now indicated that consent would be forthcoming. They had also confirmed that they would replace all the windows for the flats as part of their capital programme. At the moment MVDC was fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, but the work was needed to improve the standard of the accommodation before it became uninhabitable.

Members queried whether the flats were currently occupied and how these works would affect the current occupants. The Corporate Head of Service responsible for Housing explained that all the flats were currently occupied and the works would begin once one of the flats became vacant. This way there would be least disruption to the current occupants of the flats. Once the work had begun the remaining flats would be refurbished on a rotation so that they could continue to be used as emergency accommodation.

Overall the Committee welcomed the initiative and the proposal to do the works on rotation to cause minimal disruption to the occupants of the flats.

**Resolved:** That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be relayed to the Executive during its consideration of the report.

## **72. Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The Executive Member for Planning introduced the report and explained that at this stage they were more concerned with the process rather than the content of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). So far the work which had been completed by the Westcott Village Forum complied with planning regulations and the Forum had carried out 2 consultations with residents which showed they had demonstrated community involvement and inclusivity.

It was questioned what the timescale would be from this point forward. The Planning Policy Manager explained that if the Draft NDP was approved it would enter a consultation period for six weeks where the plans would be made available for inspection and representations would be invited. After the consultation period had ended the NDP would be examined by an independent examiner, who would also view any representations that had been received. The examiner would determine whether further work would be required on the NDP or whether it could proceed to referendum stage.

**Resolved:** That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be relayed to the Executive during its consideration of the report.