

## COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 9 NOVEMBER 2010

*Councillor Mrs C A Baron (Chairman)*

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

Mrs M Bowen	P M Rowlands
D J Bowyer	D J Skelland
E T Cartwright	A H Stafford Northcote
Mrs A P Edgeller	Mrs J E Tabernor
T J Reeves	

Also in attendance:-

P M M Farrington Cabinet Member - Community Portfolio

### CS18 **MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010 submitted and signed.

### CS19 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr T Harris had submitted an item for consideration by the Community Scrutiny Committee in accordance with paragraph 2.6 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure rules to the Cabinet Member for Community.

"When Stafford and Rural Homes was established, the make-up of the Board was designed to reflect an equal partnership of stakeholders.

Equal numbers, five from each sector of the Council, Tenants and those with experience in the field of social housing went to make up the board.

Indications show Stafford and Rural Homes has provided a good service, so it seems clear that this fair and balanced arrangement of the board has worked well.

The proposed change reduces the number of tenant and council board members to two each, thereby changing the balance fundamentally."

Councillor P M M Farrington, Cabinet Member, Community Portfolio replied that Stafford and Rural Homes had achieved all the targets set by the Borough Council when the housing stock had been transferred.

However, SARH was now looking to expand and as part of this had undertaken a wide ranging Governance Review. One of the recommendations arising from that review is that the number of local authority representatives on the Board be reduced from five to two.

He added that although the number of Board Members had been reduced to six, the proportionality of the Board had not changed.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the response of the Cabinet Member be noted.

## CS20 **MEMBER'S ITEM**

Councillor P M Rowlands had submitted the following item under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

“I should like the Committee to consider the provision of social housing in Stafford Borough.”

Councillor Rowlands advised the Committee that she was concerned that under the Government proposals the funding for social housing was being cut which would affect families and single people needing social housing. She also referred to the possible introduction of ‘tenancy reviews’ and the impact of the proposed reduction in housing benefit.

Councillor P M M Farrington replied that the provision of social housing was an important issue and outlined the ways in which the Council was working with Registered Social Landlords, the County Council and developers. He also mentioned the enabling role of Parish Councils in the provision of affordable housing in rural areas

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the response of the Cabinet Member be noted.

## CS21 **THE PEOPLE'S PANEL**

This matter had been published in Digest No 147 of 17 September 2010 and had been called in to this Committee by Councillors P M Rowlands, S O'Connor and G O Rowlands for the following reason:-

“I wish the Committee to give full consideration to Citizen Consultation in the Borough”

Councillor Rowlands was concerned that merging the People's Panel with the Police Citizens Panel would undermine the Council's ability to consult with the public and whether the members of the Police Panel were representative of the community.

The Head of Policy and Improvement advised the Committee of the savings that would be achieved by using the Police Citizen's Panel and the how the consultation using this Panel would be achieved. He also gave a detailed breakdown of membership of the Panel by age, gender, ethnicity and economic background.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet as set out in Minute No CAB34/10, be noted.

**CS22 POLICE BOUNDARIES**

Superintendent A Bloor, Inspector M Steventon and Inspector J Omer attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the changes to Staffordshire Police boundaries within the Borough. (A copy of the presentation is available on request).

The changes were as a result of the comprehensive spending review. Staffordshire Police had to make 20% savings over the next 3 years and the Officers outlined the ways on which this would be achieved.

The Committee asked a number of questions and the Police replied accordingly.

RESOLVED:- that the Police representatives be thanked for their presentation.

**CS23 YOUTH INITIATIVES**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**CS24 PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN STAFFORD BOROUGH**

Considered the report and associated presentation of the Head of Policy and Improvement (a copy of the presentation is available on request from the Head of Law and Administration).

The Members raised a number of issues and the Head of Policy and improvement responded accordingly.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report and associated presentation be noted.

**CS25 WORK PROGRAMME – COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Considered the report of the head of Law and Administration.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee the report be noted.