

SOCIAL INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th April 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Timoney (Chair); Councillors Burnett, J. Davies, Q.Hussain, Malik, Simons and Skepelhorn

16 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Bernard.

17 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2008 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18 REFERENCE FROM PERFORMANCE RESOURCES & ASSETS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PROPOSED SCRUTINY TOPIC (REF: 7.1)

The Democratic Services Officer advised Members that Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 28th February 2008 had considered a report on the 2007 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Scorecard and Direction of Travel. It was noted that Adult Social Care had received a headline rating of 2 stars. The Committee felt that if the Adult Social Care rating could be improved to 3 stars before the next CPA inspection it would assist the Council to achieve an overall 4 star rating.

Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee had therefore requested Members to:

- (i) Scrutinise the lower headline rating received in the recent CPA assessment for Adult Social Care
- (ii) Investigate how to improve the headline rating for Adult Social Care at the next CPA assessment.
- (iii) To report back to Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee on the findings of (i) and (ii) above.

The Chair commented that the CPA would have given feedback as to why ASC had only achieved a 2 star rating and questioned whether the ACS had reviewed its past performances.

The Head of Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) advised that the ASC had an annual review meeting with the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) where an Action Plan and Review Programme would have been agreed. He added that he was meeting with the Social Care

Inspectorate the following week and that the issues and findings raised there could be brought to next meeting.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted (Ref: 7.1)

(ii) That the Adult Social Care (CSCI) Action Plan and Review programme be submitted to the next meeting.

19. REFERENCE FROM PERFORMANCE RESOURCES & ASSETS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SUGGESTED SCRUTINY TOPIC (REF 7.2)

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Performance and Resource Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 28th February, 2008 had considered and discussed the Performance and Finance Report (Quarter 3 2007/08,

Performance, Resource and Assets Scrutiny Committee had noted that the number of homeless acceptances had been capped to 25 per month. They raised concern at the continued number of families being housed in temporary accommodation and were also concerned that the average time to re-let local authority housing was 10% below target.

Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee had therefore requested Members to:

- (i) Scrutinise the number of families in temporary accommodation
- (ii) Investigate the length of time taken to re-let local authority housing
- (iii) To report back to Performance Resources and Assets Scrutiny Committee on the findings of (i) and (ii) above.

The Head of Housing commented that he would be able to present a report on these issues after June 2008.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted (Ref: 7.2)

(ii) The Head of Housing (strategy and Private Sector) be required to report back to the SISC on the 18th September 2008 on:

- (a) the number of families in temporary accommodation, and
- (b) the length of time taken to re-let Local Authority Housing.

20 YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT (REF: 9)

The Service Manager for Looked After Children introduced his report on housing for young people. He commented that the report focused on the support for care leavers and vulnerable young adults. He added that the current document was a work in progress that would be used to compliment the existing Luton Housing Strategy statement 2007-2011. He explained that the issues surrounding care leavers were in the process of being scoped with a view to placing that information into a final strategy. .

The Service Manager commented that a lot of good work had been completed in Luton and a report should be produced to document working relationships between the Council and the private sector to demonstrate that people leaving care can find suitable accommodation

A Member commented that voluntary organisations provide assistance to young care leavers and vulnerable people and should be remunerated sufficiently to do so. He added that the Council should set clear guidelines on what it expects voluntary organisations to provide and pay them accordingly. The Head of Housing commented that the Council were moving towards a more structured approach for its commission services, looking at:

- Clarity of needs
- Clarity of service needs we want to see in place
- Quality of the service provided
- Paying a reasonable rate to ensure safe practices and suitable accommodation

A Member commented that young people in foster care were expected to leave care at the age of 18, which placed both the young person and the foster parents in a difficult situation. She added that it was better that young people had the option to stay with foster carers in the foster home and that the provision of a wide range of care options should be considered.

The Service Manager for Looked After Children commented that legislation was introduced in 2001 to encourage those in foster care to stay in care until they wish to leave. He added that the Government was about to start a pilot scheme to provide foster care to young people up until the age of 21 with an option to extend care provision to 24 and 25 in certain cases. The Council had put in a bid to take part in the scheme.

The Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that the Luton Accommodation and Move on Project (LAMP) had offered to make a presentation of their work to the committee.

The Head of Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) advised that the Council already had a contract with LAMP for a range of services and that they had been consulted on the Homelessness Strategy and would be consulted on the Young People's Housing Strategy.

It was felt that on balance that as LAMP would have an opportunity to have input into the Strategy a presentation would not be necessary, the Chair requested the Scrutiny Officer thank LAMP for their offer.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted (Ref: 9)

(ii) That the Service Manager for Looked After Children be instructed to submit the Young People's Housing Strategy Statement to the meeting on the 18th September 2008

21 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008 (REF: 10)

The Housing Needs Manager introduced his report on the Homelessness Strategy. He commented that the Homelessness Act 2002 placed a statutory duty on local housing authorities to periodically review homelessness within their district and publish a new homeless strategy every 5 years. The due date for the next review was the 1st July 2008.

The Housing Needs Manager gave a short presentation in which he detailed the contents of the Review, which included the following:

- In 2004, 1,024 homeless households were in temporary accommodation, whereas in 2008 798 homeless households were in temporary accommodation,
- The Council had achieved its target to reduce the number of homelessness households with children in Bed and Breakfasts to no more than 4 weeks (exceeding Government targets of 6 weeks); and Provided 271 deposits to assist families and single people to access privately rented accommodation,
- The Council achieved the quality mark for casework from Community Legal Services, formed a dedicated prevention team, introduced and achieved 40 qualifying offers and negotiated good contractual terms for provision of temporary accommodation

He commented that the Council now had 6 objectives within the Homelessness Strategy

- Prevention of homelessness,
- Support of people when they are vulnerable,
- Tackling wider causes and symptoms,
- Sustaining a reduction in rough sleepers,
- Providing more settled homes, and
- Developing more choice based approaches.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 10) be noted.

22 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (REF: 11)

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report on the Scrutiny Work Programme and asked Members of the Committee to note the forthcoming items on their work programme and the Executive Forward Plan attached for their information.

Resolved: (i) That the report (Ref: 11) be noted.

(ii) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to add the following item to the Work Programme for May 2008 in accordance with the Committee's request:

- Adult Social Care CPA Action Plan report back on 18th September 2008,
- the number of families in Temporary Accommodation,
- the length of time taken to re-let Local Authority Housing, and
- Young People's Housing Strategy Statement (18th September 2008)

(Note: The meeting ended at 7:15 p.m.)