

# Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 26th February, 2013.

**Present:** Cllr Ken Lupton(Chairman), Cllr Miss Tina Large(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Mick Stoker, Mr Richard Amir

**Officers:** Margaret Waggott, Judith Trainer, Graham Birtle, Michael Henderson (LD); Debbie Hurwood (R)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey,

## **1 Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Lupton and Councillor Johnson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in item 8 entitled 'Teesside Pension Fund Investment in Tobacco Companies' as they received pensions from the scheme.

Councillor Gibson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in item 8 entitled 'Teesside Pension Fund Investment in Tobacco Companies' as he served on the Teesside Pension Fund Board.

Richard Amir declared a personal non prejudicial interest in item 7 entitled 'Scrutiny Review of Quality and Sufficiency of Childcare - Final Report' as he had a relative who worked in a nursery.

## **3 Minutes for Signing - 23rd October 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2012 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## **4 Minutes of Previous Meeting - 18th December 2012**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2012.

AGREED that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2012 be approved.

## **5 Review of Empty / Abandoned Properties**

Members were provided with a report, produced by the Executive Scrutiny Committee, relating to its review of Empty/Abandoned Properties.

Members considered the report's recommendations at length, including an

amended recommendation 1. Discussion of the report centred on the following areas:

- Council Tax and Empty Properties
- legislation allowing officers to Enforce Sales of properties to recover debts exceeding £1000.
- the effects the recommendation may have on Registered Social Landlords
- Funding of costs associated with financing and recouping the costs of work to bring properties back into use.
- Relief/exceptions - the Committee was particularly concerned that residents, already suffering as a consequence of being unable to live in their home, because of flood or fire, would suffer further hardship as a result of potential charges made under the proposals. Members referred to areas in the Borough where flooding had made homes uninhabitable and some properties had been empty for many months. The Committee noted that each application for hardship relief would be considered on its merits and applications for relief, because of flooding and fire, were likely to be looked upon favourably. It was suggested that the arrangements for charging Council Tax on empty flood and fire damaged properties be reviewed as the impact of the new charges became clearer.

Members noted that the report would be submitted to Cabinet in March 2013.

AGREED that the report be presented to Cabinet.

## **6 Scrutiny Review of Quality & Sufficiency of Childcare - Final Report**

Members were provided with a report, produced by the Children and Young People Select Committee, relating to its Review of Quality and Sufficiency of Childcare.

Members discussed the recommendations and noted that the report would be submitted to Cabinet in March 2013.

AGREED that the report be presented to Cabinet.

## **7 Teesside Pension Fund Investment in Tobacco Companies**

The Committee considered a report that presented a referral from Council:

'The issue of the investment in tobacco companies by the Teesside Pension Fund be referred to Housing and Community Safety Select Committee as part of its review of tobacco control'

The Committee agreed that the referral be passed to the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee for consideration.

During discussion it was noted that the Select Committee could chose to include it as part of its current piece of work, or do a separate piece of work, outside of its current Review.

AGREED that the issue of the investment in tobacco companies by Teesside Pension Fund be referred to Housing and Community Safety Select Committee as part of its review of tobacco control.

## **8 Report on Chairs Updates**

Members were provided with an update, from each Select Committee's Chairman, on current and future review topics.

AGREED that the Chairmen's updates be noted.

## **9 Forward Plan**

Members were presented with the Statutory Forward Plan from 1 February 2013 to 31 May 2013.

AGREED that the report be noted.