

**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 19th June, 2013.**

**Present:** Councillors Minhas (Chair), Dar, Malik, M S Mann, Plenty, Shah, Sohal and Wright (Vice-Chair)

**Non-Voting Co-optees:** Terry Conroy (Slough Federation of Tenants and Residents), Naomi Owens (Leaseholder Forum Representative) and Vivianne Royal (Customer Senate)

**PART 1**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Election of Chair**

The nomination of Councillor Minhas was proposed and seconded. There being no other nominations it was:

**Resolved** – that Councillor Minhas be elected Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2013/14 municipal year.

(Councillor Minhas in the Chair)

**3. Election of Vice-Chair**

The nomination of Councillor Wright was proposed and seconded. There being no other nominations it was:

**Resolved** – that Councillor Wright be elected Vice Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel for the 2013/14 municipal year.

**4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 March 2013**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 6 March 2013 were approved as a correct record.

**Resolved** – that Councillor Malik be appointed as the Panel's representative on the Traffic Congestion Working Group.

**5. Member Questions**

There were no Members Questions submitted.

## 6. Beds in Sheds (Slough Sheds)

Ray Haslam, Housing Standards Manager, updated the Panel on the progress of the 'Slough Sheds' project.

In particular, the Panel noted:

- that the thermal imaging flyover had taken place in march 2013, and had produced an enormous amount of data that could now be added to other layers of GIS data to produce an in-depth profile for the Slough area;
- that the Project Group was now meeting, drawing together key partners involved in the delivery of the Project;
- that the new data would enable enforcement action to be effectively targeted at specific properties, and that enforcement would begin in late June, early July;
- that Planning Enforcement would be key to dealing with initial inspections, and reviewed Guidance on this was being produced;
- that in addition to the thermal imaging, Trading Standards would continue to use its enforcement powers for breaches in Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) law, and that this was a robust system of enforcement; and
- that it would be important to recognise that the majority of landlords in Slough are good and they must be championed.

The Panel discussed the use of the new data in recognising properties that had been extended without planning permission and the enforcement powers the council held to deal with these situations such as rebranding of council tax and also the option of reporting landlords to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) where it was believed income from rental properties was not being declared.

The Panel questioned the level of activity that had taken place since November 2012, as no enforcement had taken place. Ray Haslam assured the Panel that the time had been used to gather intelligence, undertake the thermal imaging and mapping exercises, and develop a comprehensive communications plan. Following this enforcement would be begin shortly, based on this comprehensive evidence base. In addition, the Panel questioned whether the £220,000 allocated for this project ensured that the necessary resources were available, and were assured that this would meet resource requirements for the current financial year and into the following.

### **Resolved –**

- 1) to note the progress made on the 'Slough Sheds' project; and
- 2) that Councillor Shah would sit on the Project Board to offer political support and manage the process for feedback of information to the Panel.

## 7. Public Consultation: Waste Strategy 2013-2028

Nicholas Hannon, Waste and Environment Manager, detailed the proposed consultation to gather residents' views on the future of waste and recycling collection services, garden waste and composting.

The Panel noted that:

the results of the consultation would inform the strategic direction of waste management in the borough for the next fifteen years; and that the initial three month consultation would collect views and attitudinal data which would be used to develop the new Waste Strategy which would then be the subject of a further statutory consultation.

Members raised concerns that the consultation would not be run as a top down process, which would only target those already community-minded individuals involved in such groups as Neighbourhood Action Groups. Nicholas Hannon, assured the Panel that a comprehensive consultation communications plan was being developed to reach as many residents as possible, with hard to reach groups being looked at individually to attempt to engage them. The aim was to match, and if possible better, the 750 respondents from the 2007 waste consultation.

### **Resolved –**

- 1) that the Cabinet Member be made aware of the Panel's concern around reaching all residents with the consultation, and their suggestion that targeted door-stepping should be considered in areas where recycling is low or responses to the consultation are low; and
- 2) that the Panel would receive the results and analysis of the initial consultation in January 2014, before the Waste Strategy was published for consultation in February 2014.

## 8. Forward Work Programme

The Panel discussed it's work programme for the municipal year.

**Resolved –** that the work programme be approved as published, subject to the following amendments:

- 1) that the panel accepted the Cabinet request to undertake evidence gathering on the issue of Heathrow Expansion, and that this would be done through an extraordinary meeting in October 2013;
- 2) that reports on Domestic Violence and Street Prostitution be requested for the February 2014 meeting of the Panel, which would be held as the Crime and Disorder Committee; and

**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 19.06.13**

- 3) that Housing and Health be removed from the work programme, with a discuss on the quality of housing stock being included in the November 2013 agenda item on the Management of Houses of Multiple Occupation.

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved** – that the date of the next meeting be confirmed as 19 June 2013.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.10 pm)