

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 21st November 2016

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Ajaib –
Commissioner for Housing and Urban Renewal

PART I NON-KEY DECISION

REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - GARAGES

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (3rd November 2016).

2. Matters for resolution from Cabinet

The Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel made the following recommendations for resolution by Cabinet:

- That the Panel recommend to Cabinet that a Consultative Commissioning Group be established to improve resident involvement and that the Commissioner for Housing and Urban Renewal lead the Group.
- That the Panel requests Cabinet to support the development and rolling out of community based parking schemes for parking areas on Housing land.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) Priorities

Priorities:

- **Regeneration and Environment:** By improving the quality of Slough Borough Council (SBC)'s parking provision and the options available to residents, the environment in Slough will be ameliorated..
- **Housing:** The creation of a Consultative Commissioning Group will allow residents to feed into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and be involved in the forthcoming options appraisal.

Cross-Cutting themes:

- **Civic responsibility:** By ensuring that residents are able to express their views and participate in the future of housing in Slough, the service will become better placed to respond to the needs of local residents.
- **Improving the image of the town:** By enhancing the quality of parking provision in Slough, the local environment will be improved for residents and visitors.

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The references from the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel also address the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- *There will more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough*

Resident engagement has been built into the governance structure for the new repairs, maintenance and investment contract to ensure that residents have the opportunity to influence and monitor the performance of the new Service Partner. This will allow them to contribute to improving the quality of homes in the borough and influence investment programmes to improve their local environment.

- *Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley*

Engaging with residents will increase officers' understanding of local concerns and issues that impact on residents' safety and ensure the effective and appropriate deployment of resources to address residents' concerns.

- *The Council will be a leading digital transformation organisation*

Using digital media to engage with residents is a cost effective and simple way to engage with a broad range of residents whilst minimising the need for face to face meetings which do not appeal to the majority of residents.

- *The council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised*

The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised by the decommissioning of loss-making assets, returning sites into more productive community use and ensuring correct charges are made for the rental of garages.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

A budget of £72,000 was allocated to resident involvement in 2016/17 (excluding salary costs). Within this, £25,000 was assigned to tenant participation and a further £39,500 to project work which included the cost of the annual resident satisfaction survey.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
None	None	There are no risks, threats or opportunities arising from the report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications relating to the content of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Using digital media to engage with residents as far as possible will increase accessibility to involvement opportunities by avoiding the need to attend face to face meetings. Wherever more in depth involvement opportunities are needed, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out to mitigate any risk of potential discrimination against any of the 9 protected characteristics.

5 Supporting Information

Resident Involvement

- 5.1 The establishment of a Consultative Commissioning Group has been proposed as part of the Housing Service's recent review of co-regulation. Such a Group would consist of members and Council tenants and leaseholders. Its remit would be to review the Housing Revenue Business Plan, the Housing Strategy and to be the lead consultative group on the Options Appraisal for the Council's housing stock.
- 5.2 The Consultative Commissioning Group as proposed would include members of the Resident Forum as well as other residents recruited specifically for the Commissioning Group. The Commissioning Group will be supported; the consultant recently recruited by SBC's Housing Service has been asked to provide this.
- 5.3 Overall, this would be an embedded element within the initial project plan for the development of the Housing Services. This project plan would be flexible and designed to ensure consultation is informed and robust. It would also embrace digital engagement (e.g. Facebook page, Twitter account) and also include an online forum. From the Consultative Commissioning Group offering a high level of involvement, to more informal engagement through electronic communications, SBC would identify the most appropriate methods by which residents could be involved.
- 5.4 The Panel signalled their support for the proposed forms of engagement with local residents. Members specified that traditional forms of communication should not be rendered obsolete as SBC adopted digital methods and were also keen for bodies convened for resident involvement reflected the diversity of the local populace. They also clarified that they wished for the scrutiny function to continue to be involved in the service; the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be deciding as to how scrutiny of the matter should be allocated amongst the scrutiny bodies on 17th November 2016.

Neighbourhood Services – Garages

- 5.5 As part of an item examining the new licensing arrangements for garages between SBC and residents, the Neighbourhood Services team also raised the matter of pressure on parking facilities. With service users encountering difficulties in finding parking spaces, a request has been made by local residents for the service to investigate potential alternatives. In particular, they have asked for the potential introduction of community parking facilities that would be available for the exclusive use of tenants to be evaluated
- 5.6 In response to this, Neighbourhood Services are proposing to work in conjunction with Transport and Highways to identify how both services can co-ordinate the provision and management of on-street and off-street parking on council housing land.
- 5.7 In their discussion of agenda item, the Panel noted that garages required a significant review. The existing stock included sites of variable quality, and also garages built some time ago which were not of sufficient size to store modern vehicles. Given this, the Panel were supportive of the forthcoming review into local garages and also the stated intention of analysing the opportunities for alternative parking provision.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Cabinet is requested to decide upon recommendations outlined in section 2 and discussed in sections 5.1 – 5.7 of this report.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

- '1' - Agenda papers, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (3rd November 2016)