



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 26 APRIL 2004 at 6.00 PM at the Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT:

Councillor Kim Humphreys (Chair)
Councillor Linda Manchester (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Friary
Councillor Barrie Hargrove
Councillor Gavin O'Brien
Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor Neil Watson
Councillor Anne Yates (Reserve)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Paul Bates
Councillor Mick Barnard
Councillor Fiona Colley
Councillor Nick Stanton (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Ian Wingfield

OFFICERS:

Chris Brown – Head of Housing Management
Keith Broxup – Strategic Director of Housing
Shelley Burke – Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Glen Egan – Assistant Borough Solicitor
Ian Hughes – Head of Corporate Strategy
Peter Roberts – Scrutiny Team

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no interests notified or dispensations declared.

NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMED URGENT

There were none.

RECORDING OF MEMBERS' VOTES

Council Procedure Rule 1.17(5) allows a Member to record her/his vote in respect of any motions and amendments. Such requests are detailed in the following Minutes. Should a Member's vote be recorded in respect of an amendment, a copy of the amendment may be found in the Minute file and is available for public inspection.

The Committee considered the items set out on the agenda, a copy of which has been incorporated in the minute file. Each of the following paragraphs relates to the item bearing the same number on the agenda.

1. **CALL-IN: EXECUTIVE DECISION [ITEM 13, 13/094/04 "AREA HOUSING FORUM CONSULTATION AND CHANGES TO TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER COUNCIL CONSTITUTIONS"]** [see pages 1 - 36]
 - 1.1 The Committee received deputations from Tenants Council, Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO), Southwark Black & Ethnic Minority Tenants & Residents Organisation (SBMETRO) and from Taplow Neighbourhood Forum.
 - 1.2 The key concern of the deputations was that consultation on proposed constitutions had been inadequate and had not provided sufficient opportunity for tenants' and residents' input, especially in respect of the number of delegates on Tenants Council. The deputations felt that the new area management structure should be in place before Neighbourhood Forums were dissolved and Area Forums established. The deputations also felt that the Executive decision in December did not enable any action to be taken to dissolve Neighbourhood Forums and that action taken by Officers to date was not legal and affected the current membership of Tenants Council. Taplow Neighbourhood Forum raised particular concerns about the impact of dissolving the Forum.
 - 1.3 Members who had requested the call-in expressed concern at the lack of legal advice to the Committee with regard to the implications of the December Executive decision. They felt that the current structure needed to remain in place in order to allow proper consultation on the proposed changes.
 - 1.4 The Head of Housing Management stated that the December decision to move to Area Forums empowered Officers to dissolve Neighbourhood Forums. The Executive in April responded to tenants' concerns about the timetable and agreed that all Neighbourhood Forums be dissolved before Area Forums were established in June/July. Consultation on constitutions had been limited to minor changes in wording with the intention that Area Forums, once established, would have the opportunity to consider any further changes. In response to Members' questions, the Strategic Director of Housing stated that Area Forums would receive support from appropriate senior housing managers until such time as Area Housing Managers were in post.

- 1.5 The Leader of the Council indicated that proposals for the new constitutions had been circulated to all Neighbourhood Forums and their comments had been reported back to the Executive. The new constitutions were based on those of the Neighbourhood Forums. He confirmed that the change to the timetable had been in response to tenants' concerns and that inaugural meetings of Area Forums should still be taking place in June/July. Area Forums would then be consulted on the housing management structure. He felt that the Executive had consulted tenants and residents throughout the process.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Executive immediately suspend the dissolution of Neighbourhood Forums and work with tenant representatives to achieve a smooth transition to Area Forums in September when the new Area Managers will be in place; and
 2. That the Executive review the status of the recently dissolved Neighbourhood Forums in the light of 1 above.

The meeting finished at 7.50 p.m.

CHAIR:

DATE: