

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor Terence Buxton (Chairman),
Councillor Mary Weale (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor James Cecil
Councillor Emma Dent Coad MA (RCA),
Councillor Robert J. Freeman
Councillor Bridget Hoier
Councillor Tony Holt, B.Sc., F.I.Mech.E.
Councillor Matthew Palmer
Councillor Charles Williams

Others in Attendance

Councillor Daniel Moylan (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Housing Policy and Transportation)
Councillor Fiona Buxton (Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Environmental Health)
Councillor David Lindsay (Lead Member for Housing Services, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Environmental Health)
Councillor Julie Mills
Stella Baillie (Head of Adult Social Care)
Celia Caliskan (Housing Initiatives Officer)
Jean Daintith (Executive Director for Housing, Health and Adult Social Care)
Guy Denington (Head of Environmental Health - Commercial)
Suzanne Ellis (Housing Policy Manager (Acting))
Ahmed Farooqui (Scrutiny Development Manager)
Salima Khatun (Housing Policy Officer)
Tim Keay (Head of Environmental Health)
Redmond Lee (Director of Financial Services, Tenant Management Organisation)
Paul Morse (Director for Environmental Health)
Gordon Perry (Chief Executive, Tenant Management Organisation)
Rachel Wigley (Head of Resource Management Housing, Health and Adult Social Care)
Gerald Wild (Chief Housing Officer)
Gareth Ebenezer (Governance Services)

A1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christopher Buckmaster and from Mrs Merz (Social Services Adviser). An apology for late arrival was received from Councillor Robert J. Freeman.

A2 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of Minute A16 (Partnerships and the Role of Overview and Scrutiny) Councillor Freeman declared an interest as a Trustee of Kensington and Chelsea Citizens Advice Bureau.

A3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2006

The Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 24 May 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A4 MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRMANSHIP

The Committee noted the details of its Membership.

A5 THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING DATES 2006/07

The Chairman drew to the Committee's attention its Special Meeting to discuss Edenham to be held on 26 July at the Isaac Newton Professional Development Centre. There would be a Pre-meeting for Members of the Committee at 6pm that evening and it was noted that there were car-parking facilities available at this venue. The views of this Committee would be relayed to the Cabinet meeting on 27 July.

A6 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee noted its Terms of Reference.

A7 HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Councillor Daniel Moylan thanked the Committee for the opportunity to discuss this matter with them. He went through the background factors outlined in the Key Decision Report and updated the Committee that a review of the options listed in this report would be undertaken for the Council's housing stock and CB Richard Ellis had been appointed to advise regarding land values and Tribal appointed to advise regarding financial implications.

Councillor Moylan added that this Council had a long tradition of encouraging tenant management. The matter had been discussed with the TMO Board whose response had been encouraging although some concerns had been expressed about the possible "cherry picking" of the best parts of estates and the maintenance regime.

In subsequent questions from Members of the Committee the issue of density was raised. Councillor Moylan stated it was wrong to

think low-density was good and high-density bad. What was needed was a range and mix of uses, good transport links, and not completely residential use. High-density did not have to mean high-rise, it could be streets of low-rise flats and maisonettes and there was no prejudice against high-density, which could be socially very acceptable. Councillor Weale concurred but it must be good quality high-density accommodation.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor Moylan for attending the meeting to discuss this matter and the approach being pursued. Further reports in due course would be welcomed.

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A8 REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING SERVICES, ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

In respect of paragraph 1 (Allocation Scheme) it was confirmed to Councillor Hoier that special cross-Borough arrangements were in place for domestic violence cases. Councillor Holt commended the additional preference given to local residents in the new scheme.

With regards to paragraph 2 (Introductory Tenancies) the Chief Executive, TMO confirmed to Councillors Dent Coad and Hoier that the TMO had close links with Education, the Youth Service and the Police and there had been successful work done in preventing anti-social behaviour.

Following a question from Councillor Dent Coad on paragraph 6 (Under-Occupation Scheme) the Chief Housing Officer agreed to submit a report to the Committee's next meeting giving further detail of the scheme and some examples.

Action by: Chief Housing Officer

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A9 TENANT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION SELF ASSESSMENT

Reports A9 and A10 were considered in collaboration. The Chief Executive, TMO stated that the presentation to the Audit Commission had gone well and the Commission had also been impressed with the supporting documentation produced. The Chairman stated it was very important that the TMO secured the Three Star Rating in order to give it the necessary flexibilities and freedoms.

Members praised Appendix 2 to Report A10 - The Two Page TMO. The Chief Housing Officer apologised that, in retrospect, it would have been more helpful had Report A10 come before A9.

Following a question from Councillor Hoier the Chief Housing Officer agreed to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the extensive efforts made by TMO and Council officers on intervention strategies and prevention work for tenants in arrears. Councillor Hoier requested that figures on evictions be included.

Action by: Chief Housing Officer

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A10 ARMS LENGTH MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION INSPECTION - INFORMATION DOCUMENT

See Minute A9 above.

A11 REPORT ON TMO PERFORMANCE 2005/6 AND NEW HRA PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2006/7

The Chief Housing Officer introduced the report and reiterated that the TMO had had a positive year with several tangible performance improvements.

During questions Councillor Hoier stated she was concerned about some of the larger Estates being neglected and quoted the example of a lack of security works being carried out at the Balfour of Burleigh Estate. She had visited this estate the evening before and witnessed anti-social behaviour. The Chief Executive, TMO confirmed that security works at this estate were a justified scheme and included in the Capital Programme but unfortunately there was not the budget in the current year to carry out these works. He was happy to report back in due course.

The Chief Executive, TMO undertook to write to Councillor Palmer with further details of the tenders received for works at Balfour of Burleigh.

Action by: Chief Executive, TMO

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A12 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN REPORT 2005/2006

The Head of Resource Management undertook to meet with Councillor Freeman (possibly joined by Councillor Holt) separately to discuss issues contained in the report.

Action by: Head of Resource Management

With regards to miscellaneous comments made on the report Councillor Dent Coad was told individual cases regarding sub-contractors would be investigated if she brought them to attention. The overspend of £41,000 on Carnival last year related to boarding and security works and was expected to be a one-off. It was noted that there was possible scope for the TMO to collaborate further with the Council's Environmental Health Service in respect of pest control.

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A13 ROYAL BOROUGH REVIEW OF NOISE AND NUISANCE SERVICE - FINAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councillor Freeman raised the question of unquantified subsidies currently being given to other Departments. It was agreed that this could be examined but to bear in mind the wider ramifications and, as stated by the Chairman, never to lose sight of the overall aim of protecting residents.

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A14 ROYAL BOROUGH REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND TRADING STANDARDS PURPOSE AND SCOPING REPORT

The Director for Environmental Health introduced this Scoping Report and stressed this would be a fundamental review. There had been some revisions to the report subsequent to agenda despatch to take on board examining possibilities for revenue generation; the Government's 'Consumer Direct' scheme; and the effects of the HMO Licensing Scheme.

The Director added that any obvious simple improvements that come to light during the review would be carried out immediately rather than wait for the full review to be completed. Councillor Freeman praised this scoping report and asked why the Council collected clinical waste and not the PCT. The Director responded that this point would be examined but with sensitivity to the needs of clients.

The Director confirmed to Councillor Palmer that the Department held information on prosecutions of 'rogue traders' that could be given to members of the public.

In closing the debate the Chairman observed that these were very valuable services, very visible to residents and very important for their protection.

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A15 OVERVIEW OF OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICE

The Head of Adult Social Care introduced this report and tabled at the meeting a Borough Wide Map of Accommodation with Care (a copy has been placed on the Minute Book).

A preliminary discussion took place regarding Edenham Residential Home, to be the subject of the Committee's Special Meeting on 26 July, and Members of the Committee notified the information that they wished to see on the agenda for this meeting. The Chairman confirmed that the Committee plus members of the public would have a full opportunity to discuss all of the issues at the meeting on 26 July.

The Executive Director of Housing, Health and Adult Social Care apologised to Councillor Hoier that due to an administrative oversight there had been a delay in responding to an e-mail from Councillor Blakeman.

The Head of Adult Social Care added that overview reports on other aspects of adult social care would follow in due course.

Subject to the above, the report was received and noted.

A16 PARTNERSHIPS AND THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Committee indicated it was happy with the arrangements for scrutinising partnerships falling within its remit included in the report.

***Action by:** Director of Strategy and Service Improvement*

A17 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Paragraph 1 - Rota Visits to Adult Social Care Establishments and Organisations

Members of the Committee agreed it was beneficial, both for themselves and the organisations visited, to carry on with rota visits. A draft schedule of a further round of rota visits would be prepared for the autumn.

***Action by:** Director of Law and Administration*

Paragraph 2 - OSC Advisers

The paragraph was received and noted.

Paragraph 3 - Vacancies on the Scrutiny Steering Group

Councillors Williams and Dent Coad volunteered to join the Scrutiny Steering Group.

Action by: *Director of Strategy and Service Improvement*

Paragraph 4 - 'In-Depth' Reviews within the Committee's Remit

The Committee noted that it would review its Annual Scrutiny Programme at its next ordinary meeting.

Subject to this, the paragraph was received and noted.

Paragraph 5 - The Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The paragraph was received and noted.

ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS

None.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm

Chairman