

## MINUTES

### HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 29 2014

#### Present:

#### Councillors:

|                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Adeleke        | Killen                  |
| Bassadone      | Mahmood (Vice-Chairman) |
| Conway         | Marshall (Chairman)     |
| Flint          | McLean                  |
| N Hollinghurst | R Sutton                |

#### Co-opted Members:

M Cook                      Tenants & Leaseholders Committee

#### Also Attended:

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Councillor Griffiths | Portfolio Holder for Housing                         |
| Councillor Harden    | Portfolio Holder for Residents & Regulatory Services |
| Gordon Glen          | Tenants & Leaseholders Committee                     |
| Barry Newton         | Tenants & Leaseholders Committee                     |
| Andrew Suzmeyan      | Dacorum Resident                                     |

#### Officers:

|                 |                                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Julie Still     | Group Manager, Resident Services  |
| Joe Guiton      | Team Leader, Neighbourhood Action |
| Isabel Connolly | Team Leader, Strategic Housing    |
| Sarah Pickering | Officer, Strategy and Policy      |
| Clare Thorley   | Officer, Member Support           |

The meeting began at 7:30 pm

#### **OS/034a/13 MINUTES**

The Part 1 minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2013 were agreed by the Members present and signed by the Chairman.

#### **OS/035a/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Adshead. Councillor Organ was absent.

#### **OS/036a/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **OS/037a/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Chairman:

The Chairman introduced A Suzmeyan to the Housing and Community OSC committee as he wished to ask a question about Dacorum Borough Council's housing allocations policy regarding the priority given to those who had pre-existing connections to villages.

A Suzmeyan said that the policy appeared to be negatively affecting some individuals in areas such as Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted who wished to move to the villages. A Suzmeyan explained that applicants who had lower points than other people waiting on the allocations register appeared to be given priority if they had a personal connection to the villages. A Suzmeyan said that he had contacted Dacorum Borough Council for their view on this aspect of the policy and they had said that it was in place to preserve 'the unique character of the villages'. In addition he had also contacted his local councillor; Fiona Guest, who had said that the policy was in place to ensure that the 'death of the villages' did not occur. A Suzmeyan stated that he did not feel the policy supported Dacorum Borough Council's aim to provide equal opportunities and access for all within the borough.

The Chairman thanked A Suzmeyan for his question and explained that the new Housing Allocations Policy had come into effect in November 2013 and that it had been closely scrutinised by members and officers alike prior to implementation. The Chairman explained that it had always been a policy of the Council to give preference to applicants from or with connections to the villages and that this was an approach supported by successive Governments. The Chairman assured A Suzmeyan that the policy was not designed to be unfair to those in areas such as Hemel Hempstead but was instead meant to maintain the communities of villages. The Chairman said that there was normally a severe shortage of social housing in villages which made it hard to sustain village communities and so the policy was designed to give the advantage to those who had a pre-existing connection with the area in an effort to stop the decline of the community.

The Chairman said that she accepted A Suzmeyan's point regarding equality and that it was important that policy of preference for villages was not too dominant. The Chairman also advised that the policy would be reviewed later in the year.

Councillor Hollinghurst added that he supported the Chairman's comment and that it was important to preserve the housing stock and character of the villages. He pointed out that this was threatened by the ever increasing cost of houses generally in the villages and that if the Housing Allocations Policy was not in place then the economical makeup of the villages would be very skewed in the favour of only those who could afford such high prices.

Councillor Mrs Bassadone asked the officers, in respect of the Homelessness Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy, where homeless individuals are given vacant properties to live in as a means of immediate housing, what the stance of the Housing Department is if the vacant council property in question was in a village. Did the homeless individual therefore bypass the village waiting list? I Connolly said that in line with government guidelines, people were placed in the next immediate and suitable property available and that sought after village properties would probably not fit this suitability criteria and so those individuals would remain in temporary accommodation until a more suitable option was found.

Councillor Griffiths also added that the Housing Allocations Policy stated that people could only apply to the specific village with which they had a connection and that having a local connection to one village did not mean they were given priority to any other village within the Dacorum area. Councillor Griffiths also pointed out that there was a greater housing supply in areas such as Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted and that as well as there being a shortage of stock in villages there were also other restrictions stopping the Council acquiring more stock in these areas such as planning and issues around buying and selling.

The Chairman then thanked A Suzmeyan for his time and question.

Chairman:

**OS/038a/13 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO A CALL-IN**

There were no matters referred to the committee in relation to a call-in.

**OS/039a/13 NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION REPORT**

J Guiton introduced the report and explained that it focused on recent Neighbourhood Action projects and gave feedback on the consultation process of these projects and comments received by the residents.

The Chairman thanked J Guiton for the report and said that, whilst members had heard nothing but praise for the work carried out, members needed to know the cost. J Still explained that it was difficult to outline the budget within the report as the budget itself was sourced from many areas but that approximately it was around £400,000. N Harden reiterated this, explaining that a lot of the officers involved in the Neighbourhood Action work were multi-tasking officers working on a variety of projects and so it was hard to quantify the exact cost of their engagement on Neighbourhood Action projects specifically. The Chairman asked for members be provided with an estimate of the cost after this meeting.

Councillor Mrs Bassadone asked how much the 'Love Your Neighbourhood' project in Woodhall Farm cost and how many consultations were sent out if only 87 came back. J Guiton said that overall 857 consultations went out and that the event was ran during regular officer working hours and as such there was no additional cost. J Guiton added that it was a multi-agency event involving the fire service, police and housing associations.

Councillor Mrs Bassadone said that if only 10/11% of people in the area had responded how did the Neighbourhood Action team have a realistic view of what people wanted. Councillor Mrs Bassadone also enquired what the follow up was to the consultation process.

J Guiton explained that the consultation questions were designed by different departments within Dacorum Borough Council and so were specifically tailored to provide feedback for these specific areas ensuring that deliverables were set for each department following the feedback gained from the questions.

Councillor McLean said that the work done by the Neighbourhood Action team was highly commended and that it would be a shame for the budget for it to be cut especially as the work helped deal with common issues raised by residents such as youth work and targeting anti-social behaviour.

Councillor N Hollinghurst added that he agreed with Councillor Mrs Bassadone's point that a 10%-11% response rate was not necessarily representative of the ward.

Councillor N Hollinghurst also raised the issue of information presentation within the report. Councillor N Hollinghurst said that the format of the histograms at first glance implied there was a bigger problem in regards to issues such as burnt-out cars than there actually was. The Chairman agreed with this point and drew attention to figure NA02 on page 7 of the agenda and asked why there was a higher attendance rate in September 2013 and what the usual rate of attendance at these meetings was. J Guiton said that 200-300 attendance was normal and the high numbers were often due to the meeting being a public one whereas others were normal steering groups. The Chairman then asked why attendance in December was so low. J Guiton said that he would have to check the cause of this. The Chairman explained that the graph would be misleading if not every Neighbourhood Action Group met every month and there was no indication in which months public meetings are held.

Chairman:

Councillor Mahmood asked why there appeared to be a move towards day time neighbourhood action meetings instead of evening ones, as, in his own constituency, he is now unable to attend on a regular basis. J Guiton explained that this was in order to reach a broader cross-section of the community and that typically the evening meetings were for those people who were working and that the day meetings were more accessible to individuals such as mothers and the elderly.

In reply to the Chairman's question, J Guiton said there are eight Neighbourhood Action Groups and they were in; Adeyfield, Gadebridge/Warners End/Chalden, Grovehill/Woodhall Farm, Highfield, Markyate/Flamstead/Great Gaddesden, Bennetts End, Hemel Town, and Bourne End/Felden/Box Lane.

The Chairman asked if there was an issue with duplicating the work of Parish Councils in areas where there was both a Parish Council and a Neighbourhood Action group. J Guiton said that this did not appear to be an issue.

The Chairman then asked how Dacorum Borough Council selected which areas would have a Neighbourhood Action Group. J Still said that historically the groups were formed in areas with high levels of deprivation but that now the groups were often formed to target specific needs in specific areas. J Still pointed out that often, in the case of areas with a Parish Council, Dacorum Borough Council's Neighbourhood Action group took more of a facilitating role rather than encroaching on the work of the Parish Councils.

The Chairman asked what the vision for the Neighbourhood Action plan was for 2014 and how the team envisaged extending the project. J Guiton said that the team would aim to look at specific areas of deprivation within the borough and target resources to those areas perhaps rolling out similar programmes to the 'Love your Neighbourhood' project in Woodhall farm, and that potential areas in Tring had been highlighted as having issues with deprivation.

Councillor N Hollinghurst said that thorough research into these areas would need to be done and that, for projects to be truly effective, the Council should liaise with the relevant independent groups in the area. J Still said that thorough evidence based research would be carried out to correctly identify need and ensuring that there is no duplication of work being already done by other agencies. J Still pointed out that successful partnership working was key during the delivery of these projects.

Councillor Flint said that she recognized the Neighbourhood Action team was doing great work but that she felt through her interaction with Gadebridge Youth Club that clearer signposting for young people's services and the relevant events needed to be provided. J Guiton said that the Neighbourhood Action team would be sending out literature to promote these things.

The Chairman asked which Cabinet Member was responsible for Parish Councils. N Harden responded by saying it was within Councillor Williams' (Leader & Community Leadership, Planning and Regeneration) remit. The Chairman said that she did not understand the need for Neighbourhood Action Groups within areas that had Parish Councils unless it was to deal with a short term problem and, once a solution had been found or established, the Group should cease and the Parish/Town Councils take over.

Further, long established Neighbourhood Action Groups not covered by Parish/Town Councils may be sufficiently stable to continue on their own without the considerable support of the Council. Councillor Griffiths said some of the Neighbourhood Action Groups were set up some years ago as part of a pilot scheme. The Chairman said that potentially this needed to be looked at and perhaps for budgetary reasons it maybe was time to minimise resources in some areas and/or divert resources to new areas.

Chairman:

Councillor Harden said the Neighbourhood Action Groups were formed to better facilitate the needs of residents and that initially groups like this were subject to a lot of complaints and negative feedback but that over time the groups and residents had developed a beneficial way of working together that had resulted in the success of the 'Love Your Neighbourhood' project in Woodhall farm.

The Chairman asked how much involvement of councillors there was in the project. J Guiton said that there was involvement of both county and borough councillors and that their involvement was integral; they provided a point of contact and also chaired meetings related to the delivery projects.

Councillor Killen said that in her personal experience of involvement with her ward that had both a Parish Council and a Neighbourhood Action group, she recognised that each group operated on a different model. Councillor Killen acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Action group provided a liaison role and that the two groups offered each other mutual support when it came to delivering initiatives in the area.

The Chairman said that the action vision for 2014 was a good statement of current activities but asked what were the future aims and goals of the Neighbourhood Action team. The Chairman thought that perhaps a more detailed report with better statistics and details of potential areas of overlap with the Parish Councils could be provided as potentially resources could be better used in the areas without a parish.

Councillor N Hollinghurst said that the Neighbourhood Action team did some great work but that Dacorum Borough Council must be careful to not get in the way of the work of Parish Councils and that Dacorum Borough Council must play a facilitating and enabling role. Councillor Harden wanted to clarify that when the concept of 'resources' was being discussed in this context, it was important to recognise that this referred to officer's time and that the question was around how best officer time was spent. The Chairman said that she recognised this but perhaps there were some long established Neighbourhood Action groups which could operate independently, albeit still consulting and seeking support from officers at Dacorum Borough Council when necessary.

Councilor Mahmood said that he was not particularly enthused about the 'Love Your Neighbourhood' scheme and that he felt that 'Your Neighbourhood Matters' would have been a better slogan in his opinion.

Councillor Griffiths said that she acknowledged Councillor Mahmood's point of view but that she felt that any title or branding of a scheme that promoted discussion within the community was a good one. Councillor Griffiths said that she attends the Neighbourhood Action Groups in the area in which she lives and that she found the meetings very useful but that there did need to be clarity around the work the Neighbourhood Action Groups did in order to ensure there was not unnecessary duplication.

Councillor Adeleke commented that he felt that the Neighbourhood Action Group had been hugely beneficial for his area. Councillor Adeleke then asked if the team were looking at targeting new areas in 2014. J Guiton said that they would be adopting a target specific approach; individually tailoring approaches per area. The Chairman thanked the Neighbourhood Action team for their report and suggested there could perhaps be an updated report in 6 months' time with more detail around specific costings and future work.

#### Outcome.

The report was noted.

Chairman:

Actions:

Budget information to be provided in the next Neighbourhood Action report.

**OS/040a/13 YOUTH PROVISION BY DBC 2013**

J Still introduced the report and said that it was an update on the work Resident Services had carried out over the last 12 months with young people and followed a presentation at Full Council by Dacorum Youth Forum. J Still said that work was progressing well and the Forum's priorities are being achieved, For example a meeting with the Police Commissioner in March and a litter campaign later this year.

J Still said that the Youth Forum had a number of projects coming up in 2014; a project targeting anti-social behaviour with the Police and Crime Commissioner, a litter campaign and a number of cultural activities that were being run at the Old Town Hall., J Still said that there were currently four youth clubs in Hemel on a Wednesday night in Bennetts End, Grove Hill, Chaulden and Adeyfield.

J Still said that Youth Connexions are also running initiatives in the area but had not been as successful and there had seen been some issues around damage to property during those sessions.

J Still also highlighted that anti-social behaviour amongst young people was down 35% due to the successful targeted approach the Council was adopting.

The Chairman asked for the cost of the service.. J Still said that the budget was again difficult to quantify for the purposes of this report as the work involved was funded from a number of different services but that she would endeavour to bring figures to the next meeting.

The Chairman queried the Berkhamsted Ideas Delivered (BID) participatory budgeting project at paragraph 3.10 of the report and asked what this was. J Still explained that the project involved Berkhamsted Youth Council deciding which local sports organisations would benefit from the funding provided by the section 106 agreement. J Still explained that locals voted for their favourite organisations and this was the same as the event run in Adeyfield a year previous.

The Chairman said that in March Youth Connexions would be presenting to the Housing and Community OSC and, with this in mind, asked J Still to clarify what Dacorum Borough Council funded and what Youth Connexions funded within the Dacorum Borough.

J Still said that Youth Connexions was run by Hertfordshire County Council and specifically targeted young people between the ages of 13 and 19 and provided 'universal services' aimed at providing advice around education and careers. J Still said that among the services Youth Connexions offered they had a 1 Stop Shop offering careers advice, a Youth Council and two youth clubs. She explained that the Youth Forum is different to the Youth Council. The Youth Council is run by Youth Connexions in Dacorum and fed into the County Council youth service and the Youth Parliament.

Councillor Harden pointed out that Dacorum Borough Council's youth provisions sought to provide services to young people in the borough that were not being provided by Youth Connexions.

Councillor N Hollinghurst said that in Tring there was a Tring Youth Project youth club on a Friday and a Youth Connexions club on a Thursday and there were marked differences

Chairman:

between the two. Councillor N Hollinghurst said that the Dacorum Borough Council youth club appeared to be more popular and enjoyable for the young people whereas the Youth Connexions' club focused on issues such as unemployment and that the subject matter and method of delivery might be a bit 'heavy' and therefore off-putting to the young people. Councillor N Hollinghurst said that while he recognised the issues covered by the Youth Connexions club was important, it may be worth them revising their format in order to attract higher levels of attendance.

Councillor Adeleke asked if members had been invited to the Local Democracy week that was run in 2013. J Still said that some members had but not all. Councillor Adeleke asked if next time the invite could be extended to all members.

Councillor Adeleke then commented that there had been an emphasis on youth work in 2013 and asked what the vision for work in this area was in 2014. J Still said that there are a number of projects planned for young people in 2014 and that these were outlined in Appendix B on page 27. J Still did point out however that this programme of work may have restrictions as the projects were being implemented by the same officers involved in Neighbourhood Action work and so projects would have to be prioritised according to the need in both these areas.

Councillor Harden also highlighted that there was no additional budget for the work being carried out with young people and so it was important for members to have input over what they thought should be prioritised and that successful projects in this area should be highlighted and commended in order to facilitate potential budget raises.

Councillor Griffiths said that the Dacorum Youth forum had consulted with Housing on a number of proposals and there was now a Council tenant representative on the Youth Forum.

Councillor Mrs Bassadone asked how Dacorum compared to other boroughs in the county in regards to the spending associated with work with young people. J Still said she did not have those figures but that she was aware that Stevenage spent a considerable amount but many other district councils in the county had cut the spending in this area right back. Councillor Mrs Bassadone then asked what the contribution by private organisations was as outlined in paragraph 3.12 and how Resident Services were looking to tackle the problem of 'boredom' with young people. J Still said that private organisations were being encouraged to contribute to the costs of running the entertainment events and that plans for tackling boredom in the borough were currently with the relevant members, Councillor Harden (Portfolio Holder for Residents & Regulatory) and Councillor Williams (Leader & Community Leadership, Planning and Regeneration) and they and the team were looking at how to tackle this with pre-existing resources.

Councillor Adeleke then asked if the Youth Connexions Leader was accountable to Dacorum Borough Council. J Still said that Mohamed Fawzi reported to HCC as funding for Youth Connexions is from HCC.

The Chairman added that Youth Connexions was due to attend the Housing and Community OSC in March and asked members of the committee to forward her questions for Mohamed Fawzi of Connexions over the next two weeks.

### **OS/041a/13 OLDER PERSONS HOUSING STRATEGY 2014-2020**

S Pickering introduced the strategy and explained that the results of the over 50's housing needs study was used to develop key objectives and to make recommendations. S Pickering stated that 1,064 surveys were completed by residents aged 50 and over, across all housing tenures.

Chairman:

S Pickering explained that from the results of the survey, the Housing team were able to gain a thorough understanding of residents' current housing situations and future housing intentions.

S Pickering said that around a quarter of the Council's housing stock was either category 1 or 2 sheltered housing. The sheltered housing asset review completed in 2012 indicated that a number of sheltered schemes fell below current expectations for older persons' housing. S Pickering said that the new strategy had used the stock appraisal information to identify where improvements could be made to existing sheltered housing stock.

S Pickering explained that following the study four key objectives were set:

Key objective 1: To provide older people with easy-to-access high quality advice on the housing options and support available to them so they are able to make informed decisions about their housing options.

Key objective 2: To make the best use of existing housing stock designed specifically for older people and adapted general needs properties.

Key objective 3: To ensure the borough offers a range of suitable, high quality housing options for older people, including specialist housing for those who need extra support.

Key objective 4: To allow older people to live independently in their homes for as long as they choose or it is safe to do so.

S Pickering said that to achieve key objective 1, the Housing team would look to increase the availability of information for over 50's through adding a specialist housing advice webpage on the Council's website and holding events specifically for that age group. To achieve key objective 2, the Housing team would be reviewing the effectiveness of the housing allocations policy at allocating older persons housing and would be looking at making improvements to existing stock, to achieve key objective 3 the strategy would feed into the HRA business plan and phases 2 and 3 of the New Build programme to ensure that the development of new accommodation was suitable for older people. S Pickering said that finally, to achieve key objective 4, Dacorum Borough Council must develop partnerships with organisations, such as Age UK Dacorum, to increase the support available to residents who chose to remain in their own homes. The Chairman pointed out that Age UK Dacorum is not the only organisation serving the elderly in the district. For example, there are several lunch clubs and also the HH Day Centre for the Elderly.

The Chairman then asked if during the enhancement of existing sheltered accommodation the Housing team were reviewing the hardware of the alarm systems used by residents of sheltered housing. I Connolly said that this was part of an ongoing project by D Chandarana (Supported Housing, Team Leader) but that this issue could potentially be covered by key objective 2 concerning existing housing stock.

Councillor Adeleke commented on key objective 1 and said that he noticed that the Council was proposing to provide information via the Council's website, Councillor Adeleke said that he had concerns that some elderly people in the borough would have difficulty accessing the website and were the team proposing to distribute hard copies of the information as well? I Connolly said that this had been taken into account in objective 1 but that the team were also looking at how to better engage older people with the Council's online facility via their forthcoming Digital Inclusion strategy.

Chairman:

I Connolly stated that key objective 1 is to ensure that people were thinking about their housing options at around a similar time to devising retirement plans in an effort to ensure viable options and solutions were found prior to people developing a desperate need for sheltered housing.

Councillor N Hollinghurst commented in relation to objective 4 that he could not see any mention of the Hertfordshire Community Health Service who can facilitate people remaining in their own homes longer. Councillor N Hollinghurst commented that adaptations to people homes could sometimes take a long time to implement due to a lack of resources.

I Connolly said that, in drawing up the strategy, adaptations to people's homes had been considered. There is a corporate project specifically looking at minimising the delay in implementing necessary adaptations and the Council's working with occupational therapists.

Councillor Conway said that she was aware that in some circumstance housing officers would visit older people in their homes to discuss their needs. I Connolly said that this was invaluable to devising an effective older person's strategy.

Councillor Bassadone pointed out that there may be significant barriers for older people when accessing online information including arthritis and poor eyesight and that this should be a consideration.

Councillor Bassadone also enquired as to what the 'range' of housing stock mentioned in objective 3 was. In addition Councillor Bassadone queried point 3 on page 51 regarding the redevelopment of sheltered housing schemes on existing sites. S Pickering said that in regards to the range of sheltered housing stock provided by the Council, the housing team is looking at examples of best practice within this area and how to incorporate those methods into the housing stock. I Connolly said that the redevelopment plans would be outlined in a scheme that would come before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee later in the year but that each potential redevelopment site would be looked at on a site by site basis.

Councillor Killen then asked if there is a cap on the grants that could be claimed for older residents who required adaptations to their homes. I Connolly said that as far as she was aware there were caps but that these grants were handled by the Environmental Health team but that she could arrange for a copy of the policy to be distributed to members if they wished.

Councillor N Hollinghurst left the meeting at 9.20pm

Councillor Mahmood said that he felt that the 'everchanging' aspect to the needs of the elderly needed acknowledging and he queried what was being done in regards to minimising the void times of sheltered housing. S Pickering acknowledged that the current average void time for Dacorum was 52 days and said that the team was looking at conducting a study into finding out exactly what type of housing was needed to avoid the high number of refusals that were being received which were contributing to the high void numbers. I Connolly said that under the new Housing Allocations policy individuals were only allowed 3 refusals for property and any subsequent to that would result in the applicants being placed on the deferred housing list.

Councillor Mahmood said that there was a potentially some stigma around the phrase 'Sheltered' housing and that perhaps a rebranding strategy might help this issue. I Connolly said that this is an issue that had been recognised by the team and that efforts were being made to improve this.

Councillor McLean made a comment in relation to the proposal to re-model existing sheltered accommodation. Councillor McLean stated that from his experience of

Chairman:

sheltered housing for the elderly the biggest problem was that there was not enough space for guests to stay over. Councillor McLean pointed out that isolation and loneliness was a serious problem for the elderly and there should be the flexibility with their living spaces to allow friends/family to visit and stay if necessary. I Connolly said that flexibility in living spaces was highlighted within the objectives in the report.

The Chairman queried the data in the table at paragraph 4.6 of the report and asked whether the figures referred to homes provided by DBC, Social Landlords and/or private providers. S Pickering said she would get that information to the members.

Councillor Mahmood asked if the sheltered homes that qualified for remodelling had yet been identified. I Connolly said that work was currently going into this and there would be more detail regarding this in the HRA Business plan that would come later in the year to the OSC.

Councillor Griffiths explained that the funds for remodelling would be available in 4-5 years but that this would provide enough time for identification, planning and decanting tenants. Councillor Griffiths said that a balance needed to be struck between accurately assessing needs and resources and ensuring that void times did not rise. I Connolly said that this was an issue that was being looked at in the housing bidding process and measures to avoid this would be implemented in March. I Connolly stated that there was a specific officer within the Council responsible for this.

Councillor Mahmood said that the retirement age had gone up so why did the strategy signpost 50 as an age to start considering sheltered housing option plans. I Connolly said that the age limit for sheltered housing was 60 (unless there was a specific medical need) but that the Council was trying to encourage people to adopt a pre-emptive mind-set to ensure that decisions regarding housing could be made before a move became less manageable as people got older. I Connolly said that the likelihood of moving significantly decreased when people were in their 70's-80's.

M Cook then asked why there appeared to be a low number of applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds to sheltered housing. I Connolly said that the Housing team thought that this may be due possible language barriers or people not being aware of the Council's sheltered housing offering. M Cook asked what was being done to reach out to these individuals. I Connolly said that this was being looked at over the next year or so. I Connolly highlighted that there was a Corporate Deprivation Group led by Shane Flynn (Assistant Director, Performance & Projects) within Dacorum Borough Council that had done some work into this area and had identified particular groups that applied to and subsequently were putting together action plans to tackle this. Isabel Connolly said that these projects were overseen by the Programming board which included Councillor Griffiths and Councillor Williams.

Outcome:

The report was noted.

Actions:

I Connolly to circulate details on the grants available for older residents to make adaptations to their homes.

S Pickering to provide a breakdown of the sheltered housing units that are Council – owned, privately – owned and Housing Association owned.

**OS/042a/13 WORK PROGRAMME**

Chairman:

The Chairman said that there were various recent additions to the Work programme to be considered soon, such as Housing Total Asset Management Procurement, Housing Energy Strategy, Housing Appeals and the Housing Business Plan. Due to the volume of items, she suggested that it would be advisable to plan an additional meeting in March/April and that she would liaise with members and Member Support to do this. The Committee agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm.

Chairman: