

Joint Scrutiny Committee Report for Council – 22 April (Babergh) and 24 April (Mid Suffolk) 2014

1. Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 26 March 2014

A summary of key items follows (and for full detail of the meeting, please see the minutes):

- 1.1 **Choice Based Lettings:** This report was discussed by Members and they were able to ask questions of the Corporate Manager – Supported Housing.
- 1.2 With regards to the Gateway to HomeChoice system Members asked questions on various aspects such as age limits to registering, dealing with homelessness, waiting times, armed services families and access.
- 1.3 There was particular discussion regarding local connections (when applying for housing) and Members were assured that this was clearly recognised in the system and especially how this followed on from planning decisions (for new developments). It was noted that most housing was not subject to such a restriction.
- 1.4 They were also advised that data from the system such as popular areas and numbers of requests for particular types of housing could be used to inform Council policy development.

2. Scoping of review on the impact of the Health and Social Care Act: Members discussed a potential review of the impact of the Act, especially in relation to the Councils' public health obligations.

- 2.1 Members noted that this was a very wide and varied topic involving many specialist areas and it was important to establish how external parties thought the Councils were delivering. As such they felt it would be most useful to have a broader meeting involving public health experts and patient "champions" where issues relating to the districts could be discussed. This may then lead to more specific areas of focus for a future review.
- 2.2 It was agreed that such an approach would be arranged for a future Committee meeting.

3 Update on review of localism: This paper was presented following the discussion on the scoping of this review.

- 3.1 Members assessed the many aspects of the Localism Act and agreed that those currently of prime interest to communities within the districts were the Community Rights to Bid and Challenge; and Neighbourhood Planning.
- 3.2 Members were keen to directly question representatives from communities who were undertaking or had undertaken any of these provisions and to investigate what was the community benefit and if there were barriers to achieving this.

- 3.3** It was agreed that this would be discussed further with the Chairs / Vice-Chairs and Officers at a Scrutiny planning meeting on 14 April and a future approach would be presented to the Committee.
- 4** **Workplan:** Members discussed the current list of potential topics.
- 4.1** Other suggested topics were employment opportunities for young people; youth homelessness and fuel poverty.
- 4.2** All Members are invited to submit topics for discussion.

The next Joint Scrutiny Committee is on Wednesday 28 May 2014 at Mid Suffolk District Council offices.

Councillor Jenny Antill
Joint Chair (Babergh) and Chair of this meeting

Councillor Rachel Eburne
Joint Chair (Mid Suffolk)