

Executive Scrutiny Committee

24 June 2010

Minutes



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Members Present: Councillors Edward Lavery (Chairman), Brian Crowe, Mo Khursheed, Anita MacDonald, John Riley and Brian Stead.</p> <p>Representative Member for Education Issues: Tony Little.</p> <p>Also Present: Councillor John Major.</p> <p>Officer Present: Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p>		
7.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None.</p>		
8.	<p>Minutes of the meetings held on 27 May 2010</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record.</p>		
9.	<p>Exclusion of the press and public</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>		
10.	<table border="1"><tr><td><p>Consideration of any Call-Ins of decisions made at the Cabinet meeting on 24 June 2010</p><p>Members gave consideration to the Cabinet reports of 24 June 2010 and after careful consideration Members decided not to call-in any decision made by the Cabinet at their meeting.</p><p>However Members sought clarification on the following items:</p><p>Cabinet Agenda Item 7 - National Housing Revenue Account Review</p><p>On page 73 of the report, paragraph 10, reference was made to the current HRA subsidy system being generally held to be unfair by the majority of stakeholders. Members asked for further information on this in relation to how many stakeholders found it unfair, which stakeholders found it unfair, and what was the percentage of stakeholders that found it unfair?</p></td><td><p>Action By:</p></td></tr></table>	<p>Consideration of any Call-Ins of decisions made at the Cabinet meeting on 24 June 2010</p> <p>Members gave consideration to the Cabinet reports of 24 June 2010 and after careful consideration Members decided not to call-in any decision made by the Cabinet at their meeting.</p> <p>However Members sought clarification on the following items:</p> <p>Cabinet Agenda Item 7 - National Housing Revenue Account Review</p> <p>On page 73 of the report, paragraph 10, reference was made to the current HRA subsidy system being generally held to be unfair by the majority of stakeholders. Members asked for further information on this in relation to how many stakeholders found it unfair, which stakeholders found it unfair, and what was the percentage of stakeholders that found it unfair?</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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[Subsequent to the meeting, officers provided the following response:

The HRA subsidy system is generally regarded as unfair by councils and tenants who lose out from the system. No survey information was available but this feeling had been expressed by officers during the last decade or so in numerous national conferences on the subsidy system. Individual, annual HRA rent setting reports within the majority of councils also contained references to the unfairness of the subsidy system.

The Audit Commission in their 2005 report, 'Financing Council Housing' also pointed out that: 'The current system means that in many areas, local authorities' tenants, on low incomes, are subsidising services to tenants who may also be on low incomes in other local authorities. This is in contrast with other government initiated investment programmes, which make significant demands on the exchequer and therefore on national taxation.'

The number of dissenters was significant. Of the 205 local authorities in the HRA subsidy system in 2008-2009, 153 were making a contribution into the system (negative subsidy) and 52 were receiving subsidy from the system (positive subsidy). The requirement for those authorities in negative subsidy to contribute some of their rent income back to central Government for redistribution to other areas was particularly unpopular as it took away some of the money paid as rent by tenants, who were generally on low incomes or on benefit, into the overall national purse.

Future projections from the current formula also clearly indicated that all housing authorities would become negative subsidy authorities. Consequently, even the authorities that gained from the subsidy system had expressed concern about the current operation of the subsidy system.

The current government, through continuing with the HRA Review started by the previous government appears to be acknowledging that the system is unfair. They also acknowledged that the current subsidy system was expensive for both central and local government to administer.]

Cabinet Agenda Item 11 - Sustainable Community Strategy - 2008-18 Progress and Future Direction

On page 166, SHP 10 - Increase sanctioned detection rate for serious acquisitive crime - Members asked for an explanation of what this task means?

Under the paragraph "Consultation Carried Out or Required"

	<p>on page 167, Members requested who were the key stakeholders who were consulted?</p> <p><i>[Subsequent to the meeting, officers provided the following response:</i></p> <p><i>SHP 10 - Increase sanctioned detection rate for serious acquisitive crime</i> <i>The partnership had a number of interventions to reduce crime and this target concerned activity to increase the likelihood of offenders being identified and brought to justice thereby increasing the deterrence effect of enforcement.</i></p> <p><i>'Serious Acquisitive Crime' was a group of offences that included burglary, robbery, theft of and theft from motor vehicles. The 'sanctioned detection rate 'was the proportion of crimes where the offender had been identified and had been the subject of a judicial disposal which could be a formal warning, caution, penalty notice or prosecution in court (whether successful or otherwise). Although sanctioned detections were heavily dependant upon police work the Council does contribute, for example, through its CCTV camera operation.</i></p> <p><i>Key stakeholders consulted through-out the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy included:</i> Age Concern UK BAA Brunel University Chimes shopping centre Groundwork Thames Valley Hillingdon Association of Voluntary Services Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce Job Centre Plus NHS Hillingdon Pavillion shopping centre Pension Service Police Uxbridge College</p> <p><i>The priorities within the Sustainable Community Strategy were identified also drawing from:</i> Residents Survey Council Question Time events Crime & Disorder Survey Housing Survey Youth Council Conference</p> <p><i>The resulting list of priority areas was subject to wider public consultation including:</i> survey/questionnaire in Hillingdon People and on Council website</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<p><i>LSP strategic theme groups 3rd sector workshop Chairmen of Policy Overview Committee.]</i></p> <p>Resolved -</p> <p>1. That the decisions made by Cabinet at their meeting on 24 June 2010 be endorsed and noted and no call-in be made of any decision.</p> <p>2. That officers be asked to provide responses to the issues outlined above.</p>	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
	<p>Meeting commenced at 7.35pm and closed at 8.10pm Next meeting: 15 July 2010 at 7.30pm or at the rising of Cabinet</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.