



Cabinet **29 July 2009**

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 8 July 2009

At this meeting the Committee also considered the Councillor Call for Action regarding Stanton Grundle Flooding Remedial Action, and a separate report (Report A141) appears on this agenda.

1. Cabinet Forward Plan/Work Programme

- 1.1 The Committee examined the Cabinet's Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period July to October 2009, but did not ask for any further information or involvement on this occasion.
- 1.2 Turning to its own Work Programme, the Committee appointed three members (Councillors Buckle, F J Warby and Mrs Rushbrook) to work with officers on the local economic assessment and development of the new Economic Development Strategy which the Committee will be working on with members of the Policy Development Committee. The Committee recommended that the Policy Development Committee also appoint three of its number. Finally, the Committee discussed the scoping of the items expected at its next meeting on 9 September 2009.

2. Affordable Housing

- 2.1 Following its review of affordable housing in November 2005 the Committee requested regular updates on the progress of its recommendations to Cabinet regarding affordable housing. The latest of these updates was considered, and Members were informed of changes since the previous update in January 2009, including the engagement of the newly formed Homes and Communities Agency with local authorities. Members were updated on the numbers of affordable housing homes delivered over the previous 5 years and those expected to be achieved during the current year and 2010/2011, the locations of these, and how these figures related to the target to achieve 120 new affordable homes each year. Recent completions were discussed, and Members also noted that the current economic conditions continued to impact on the ability to meet targets in relation to delivering affordable housing.
- 2.2 The Committee was also presented with a draft Affordable Housing Guide, which aimed to provide a fair basis for constructive discussions about the application of the current affordable housing policy and any future policy. The guide was intended to assist developers in preparing their planning applications.

3. Children Act Update

- 3.1 The Committee considered a review of the Council's contribution to safeguarding children, its Safeguarding Children Policy and its duties under the Children Act. Since its adoption the Safeguarding Children Policy had worked well, and all staff had undergone basic awareness training. Safeguarding Children was also included within the induction of new staff, and an e-learning package was being investigated for completion by all staff and councillors. Safeguarding Children is also highlighted in service plans for all services across the Council.
- 3.2 Regarding the Council's duties, in 2007 each Council had to carry out a self audit of its compliance with duties in respect of safeguarding. All outstanding actions within the resulting action plan had been completed, and it was as a result of that review that these annual reviews by Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's duties were commenced.
- 3.3 Other relevant issues were drawn to the Committee's attention, including the introduction of ContactPoint, the new way for authorised professionals to quickly find out who else was working with the same child or young person. The Committee concluded that the Council was fulfilling its duties with regard to safeguarding children.

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