

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room Two East Pallant House Chichester West Sussex on Thursday 27 September 2012 at 09:32

Members (15)

Mrs C M M Apel (Chairman)
Mr R J Hayes (Vice-Chairman)

Mr A D Chaplin	Mr D J Myers
Mrs P Dignum	Mr F Robertson
Mrs N Graves	Mrs J A E Tassell
Mr G H Hicks	Mrs B A Tinson
Mr S Lloyd-Williams	Mr N R D Thomas
Mr G V McAra	

were present (13)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members Absent

Mrs E Hamilton
Mr H C Potter

Chichester District Council Members Present as Observers or Speakers

Mrs H P Caird
Mr J C P Connor
Mrs J E Duncton
Mrs E P Lintill
Mr S J Oakley
Mrs C Purnell
Mrs P M Tull

Officers Present for All Agenda Items

Mrs A Jobling – Executive Director of Home and Communities
Mrs B Jones – Principal Scrutiny Officer
Mr G Thrussell - Senior Member Services Officer

81 Chairman's Announcements

Mrs Apel welcomed everyone to this meeting. There were no specific announcements. Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Hamilton and Mr Potter.

82 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approves without amendment the minutes of its meeting on Thursday 26 July 2012.

Mrs Apel duly signed and dated the minutes.

83 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

84 Declarations of Interests

Mrs Tinson declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 9 (Local Authority Mortgage Scheme) as her sister is a Lloyds TSB plc branch manager (recommendation 3 of the Housing Standing Panel in para 6.1 on page 49 of the agenda report refers).

85 Public Question Time

No public questions had been submitted for this meeting.

86 Feedback from the Scrutiny Planning Group, Standing Panels, Task and Finish Groups and West Sussex County Council Select Committees

(1) Scrutiny Planning Group

Since there were no meetings of the Scrutiny Planning Group (SPG) in August or September 2012 (the Tuesday 11 September 2012 meeting was cancelled) there were no minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive or matters to report.

Mrs Apel requested committee members to submit items for the SPG to consider as it was currently short of business. She mentioned a forthcoming half-day development session on accountability, improvement and transformation for all members of this committee, the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee and the Cabinet. This would take place on Thursday 25 October 2012 (start time to be advised).

(2) Standing Panels

(a) Housing Standing Panel – Wednesday 8 August 2012

Mrs Graves, the chairman of the Housing Standing Panel (HSP), gave an oral report on the matters covered by the HSP at its meeting on Wednesday 8 August 2012:

- Affinity Sutton Affinity Sutton (AS) representatives gave a presentation about the organisation's work and answered HSP members' questions. AS would be building approximately 3,000 homes over the next three years, 300 of which would be in Sussex. It was currently building at Graylingwell and 54 properties had become available there this year. The exact number would depend on how many homes were sold on the market. It was hoped that the state of the economy would improve to enable the number of affordable homes to increase. AS would be building on the St Margaret's Convent site in Midhurst, where there would be both affordable and some shared ownership housing. AS recognised the difficulties faced by many people and the disadvantage to them of registered providers being

able to charge up to 80% of the local market rent. In the current economic climate AS would not be looking to implement new rentals and relets at the 80% level; it felt that 65% should be the maximum. AS was willing to respond to any questions after this meeting and to meet with the HSP on another occasion.

Mrs Graves noted a request to question HydeMartlet (HM) about the need for there be a resident/tenant representative on its board of governance. She and Mrs Apel had in fact raised the point with HM on their recent visit to the organisation, when it was said that although the point had not yet been decided there had been an understanding that there would be such a representative. Mrs Jobling said that the issue would be better pursued once the outcome was known of a formal consultation HM would be conducting with tenants on proposed constitutional changes.

- Local Authority Mortgage Scheme This was discussed and the HSP received officer guidance on the financing and affordability of the scheme. It was agreed to refer the matter to this committee at this meeting for wider consideration (see minute **87** below).
- Tenancy Strategy The HSP reviewed and commented on a draft tenancy strategy prior to a consultation taking place.
- Allocations Policy The HSP considered published guidance for housing authorities in England on the allocation of accommodation and was briefed on how the policy would affect the Council. Three HSP members would be considering the aims and objectives in more depth to ensure that the Council's allocations scheme complied with the requirements.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the outcome of the meeting of the Housing Standing Panel on Wednesday 8 August 2012.

(3) Task and Finish Groups

(a) Recording Committee Meetings Task and Finish Group

Mr Hicks, the chairman of the Recording Committee Meetings Task and Finish Group (RCM TFG), gave an oral report on its Wednesday 29 August 2012 meeting as follows:

- The issue of audio or audio/video recordings of the Council's committees, in the context of the official minutes not being a full record of committee meetings, had been raised by Mr J Ransley (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Communications) on the Members Bulletin Board. Some members wished to have a fuller record being available and broadcast so that people who are unable to attend the meeting could see or hear the recording. Accordingly the RCM TFG had been established by the Scrutiny Planning Group in spring 2012 to examine the options, including the practical, financial and legal implications.
- There was no current budget provision for recording/webcasting the Council's meetings and if a recording option were to be pursued, funding would need to be identified.

- The experience of other local authorities had been investigated, for example Guildford Borough Council had recently decided to introduce webcasting at an estimated annual cost of £20,000 and was likely to broadcast full council, executive and planning committee meetings.
- The Council's current infra-red microphone system was installed in the committee rooms in 2006, including a 'follow-me' camera in committee room two (which had never been used and was now obsolete).
- Various ideas had been expressed about how to engage the public more in the work of members in committee meetings eg reaching out to the parishes, an article in the Council's *initiatives* magazine, providing transport (eg buses) to bring people to meetings from outlying parishes, the close link between raising the quality of debate and the quality of the elected members, save money by using the existing equipment and the use of a one-year pilot project to record the meetings of the Council's two area development management committees.
- Information about the experience of other, similar-sized local authorities had been obtained: (a) Braintree District Council (a full Council meeting in 2011 – 256 hits, 24 live and 232 archive; a planning committee in 2011 – 199 hits, 39 live and 160 archive) and (b) West Lindsey District Council (a full Council meeting in 2009 – 156 hits, four live and 152 archive; a planning committee in 2009 – 144 hits, five live, 139 archive). It was not known who was using the web-cast recordings. The data from four councils showed approximately 27,000 hits of which 2,000 were live (7.4%) and 92% were archive.
- On the one hand, concern had been expressed by some members as to whether there was and would be sufficient public interest in recordings to justify the expenditure required.
- On the other hand there were members who supported the introduction of recordings as a means of promoting access and transparency to enable local residents to access meetings and understand this aspect of the democratic process.
- The RCM TFG had agreed the following at its recent meeting:
 - Market research should be undertaken into the available audio and visual recording options including web-casting.
 - Write to parish councils and the political groups seeking their views by way of a questionnaire (this had already been circulated and was published on the Council's web site with a deadline of the first week in November 2012 – there was additionally a simple web-poll on the home page of the Council's web site).
 - Consider the effect of recordings on the new ways of working process.
 - Examine the costs of undertaking a pilot audio recording project for one year and for five years of the two development management committees.
 - Visit West Sussex County Council to observe the web-casting of one of its meetings and to discuss the same with its officers and members (this visit had been arranged for Wednesday 3 October 2012).

- The RCM TFG would finalise its recommendations in time for this committee's next meeting in November 2012.

Mr Hicks and Mrs Jones responded to members' question and comments on points of detail regarding the rationale for recording meetings (primarily improving public access to meetings rather than having more accurate records), whether the public really wanted this improved access opportunity (the responses to the questionnaire should reveal this), why the 'follow-me' camera had not been and could not now be used, the purpose of minutes (they were not to be a *verbatim* record) and the risk of members grandstanding for video recordings of meetings, and the importance of improved recording facilities to enhance the experience of local democracy for people with disabilities.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress to date that has been made by the Recording of Committee Meetings Task and Finish Group.

(b) Budget Task and Finish Group

The Budget Task and Finish Group (BTFG) meets once a year with terms of reference to consider and review the Council's revenue budget for the following year. The Corporate Governance and Audit Committee had requested to contribute to this budget review by sending delegated members to participate and Mrs Apel had agreed to this. The BTFG would, therefore, this year consist of six members, three from each committee and would be meeting in early December 2012.

The committee agreed to nominate from its ranks the three members named below.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee appoints Mr Hayes, Mr Lloyd-Williams and Mr Myers to be its representatives.

(4) West Sussex County Council Select Committees

Chichester District Council members who have been assigned to West Sussex County Council select committees have the opportunity to provide feedback to this committee on meetings which they have attended

As there have been no West Sussex County Council select committee meetings since the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's previous meeting, no reports were presented.

87 Local Authority Mortgage Scheme

Mrs Apel announced that this matter (agenda item 9) would be taken next in the order of business as one of the presenting officers had to attend another meeting in due course.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered both the agenda report and also an officer e-mail response (circulated during the debate on this item) to a series of questions raised in an e-mail by Mr T Dignum (Cabinet Member for Finance) regarding the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) (copy attached to the official minutes).

Mrs L Grange (Housing Delivery Manager) and Mrs H Belenger (Accountancy Services Manager) appeared before the committee for this item.

Mrs Grange summarised the report, which set out the options considered by the Housing Standing Panel (HSP) to enable first-time buyers to access home-ownership by using the housing investment reserves allocated by the Cabinet in February 2012 for various housing initiatives. The HSP considered the competing merits of several schemes and was mindful of the priority to assist those most in need and thereby also benefit the local economy and relieve pressure on both the private rented and affordable housing sectors. Having rejected on several grounds the option of the Council purchasing properties on the open market, the HSP had given very careful consideration to the LAMS option. Section 5 of the report explained the nature, risks, benefits and outcomes of LAMS and also the extent to which it would be consistent with the Council's policies which supported a housing scheme such as this. The HSP had supported LAMS in principle and made four recommendations if the scheme were to be implemented (para 6.1 of the report refers).

Mrs Grange referred to the questions about (and alternative suggestions to) LAMS raised in an e-mail by Mr Dignum the previous week. Copies of her e-mail response answering each question were made available to the committee for consideration as she and Mrs Belenger took turns to read out each question and answer as follows.

Question 1

'The target market seems to be assumed to be those who can raise only a 5% deposit. These are not necessarily those most in need. **Furthermore, there are a host of 95% mortgage deals available right now in the market** (see attachments) /Leeds Building Society LAMS rate is only fractionally below its own offering (5.49% versus 5.69%).'

Answer 1

'Agreed the scheme does not target those most in need. It is aimed at assisting the middle market into home-ownership and in doing so relieve the growing pressure on both the private-rented sector and affordable housing. It is proposed that an upper limit of £250,000 be set so that the scheme can help a range of households. The experience of other local authorities already funding the scheme is that the upper limit tends not to be taken up and most loans average at about 80% of the upper limit.

There are currently over 150 active applicants on the government's Homebuy agent's list seeking to access homeownership in Chichester District, all of which either live or work in the District and have met the criteria for being accepted on the list and identified by the government's HomeBuy agency as suitable candidates in terms of salaries and employment for home-ownership purchase.

We have researched the availability of 95% mortgage deals and although there are plenty advertised we found that of 4,000 mortgage products only 90 provided 95% mortgages. We found that all but three were limited to NewBuy direct (only available on new homes sold by national/regional house-builders); many were restricted to specific localities such as Derbyshire Building Society and Mansfield Building Society and others were only available to existing customers or dependent on parent guarantees. In all we only found three products that were not restricted and there is limited availability of funds to these on a national basis.

The Sub-Regional Housing Market Assessment states 'Access to mortgage finance is a key constraint to market performance here, impacting on levels of first-time buyers and investment purchases towards the bottom of the market in particular. This has a

cascading impact on overall market viability and confidence (and impacts on chains of sales).’.

Question 2

‘We are offered only 3% on our 5 year money and yet are taking a risk on up to 20% of the funds advanced.’

Answer 2

‘As at 1 April 2012 there had been no defaults for the 13 councils currently involved in the LAMS and with tougher lending criteria now used by the banks in selecting borrowers, repossession levels are currently running at 0.3% of all mortgaged property. The default rate for higher LTV mortgages is around 1 to 2%. The proposal is to ring-fence the rate of return received over and above that assumed within the Financial Strategy to provide provision for any defaults and to limit the risk and avoid any impact on the Council’s Financial Strategy. Over five years the ring-fenced fund would amount to approximately £90,000; this would be sufficient to cover the default on two mortgages.’

Question 3

‘We would have no audit rights. That means that we could not check that the bank had complied with normal lending criteria in granting the loan. Since we or the owner would be picking up the first 25% of loss they might be tempted to grant sub-standard loans. A mortgage insurer would have audit rights and would refuse to pay the bank where this had happened.’

Answer 3

‘The Council would decide which bank operates the scheme within the District. The obvious choice would be Lloyds TSB Bank as currently only Leeds Building Society and Lloyds TSB Bank operate the scheme nationally; the other five lenders were area specific. Consideration would have to be given to amending the Treasury Management Strategy to include Lloyds TSB in respect of its operation of this scheme. Sector [part of the Capita group which has been instrumental in establishing LAMS] also carries out a monitoring role within the scheme compliance arrangements. In recent communications there was a suggestion that this could be externalised but at a separate cost. We will investigate this further.’

Question 4

‘We are encouraging families to take on high levels of debt to buy a house. This could be a risky proposition given that house prices are still historically high in relation to incomes and nationally are no higher than six years ago, yet according to *The Economist* are still overvalued by 17% compared with the historical average house price to income ratio. If house prices continue to fall significantly house purchase will have been a very bad idea. Although CDC might lose money through the guarantee the savings of the family concerned will have been wiped out.’

Answer 4

‘The *Sub-regional Housing Market Assessment* states that Knight Frank forecasts a reduction in prices in 2012 in the South East with house price growth returning from 2013 (much earlier than other UK regions). Rents in the District continue to increase and in many cases households are paying rent that would more than cover monthly mortgage

repayments. Savings are the key constraint for potential new buyers and currently low interest rates make monthly mortgage payments for first time buyers the most affordable for almost eight years at 12.3% of income in October 2011 according to the CML. Furthermore recent evidence shows that employment figures have held up very favourably in Chichester District The draft report of *Chichester Employment Land Review Update, August 2012* states 'Experian figures indicate employment growth between 2000-10 of 5,000 with the ONS figures indicating growth of 6,000. In both cases it is noticeable that job numbers have continued to grow since 2008 in Chichester District (whilst they have declined over this period across the South east region and nationally).'

Question 5 (a)

'Further to (4) above, The Financial Services Authority stated 'Consistent with our earlier analysis of Product Sales Data and arrears data published in 2009...We have now completed further more detailed analysis of arrears and repossessions and we found that **Loan to Value (LTV ratios) are a relatively consistent predictor of default.**' (Source: *Mortgage Market Review* July 2010).'

Answer 5 (a)

'Historically first-time buyer and higher LTV mortgages have had a higher risk of default around 1 to 2%, however since the banking crisis the banks have introduced more stringent lending policies and to date there have been no defaults incurred on LAMS mortgages. Suggestions from presentations for the scheme shows that only a small proportion of applicants get through the assessment process and get approved for this scheme to reduce the possible financial risks.'

Question 5 (b)

'The Government now has a new scheme, launched in March 2012 called NewBuy. NewBuy is open to all home builders operating in England.'

Answer 5 (b)

'NewBuy is currently available within the District, however it is only available to first-time buyers of new homes and generally only the national and regional house-builder participate in the scheme. Furthermore new homes usually attract a high premium so they do not necessarily offer good value to first-time buyers eg NewBuy is available at Graylingwell but prices there are still well in excess of what local first-time buyers can afford. There is no government scheme that offers support to first-time buyers to purchase second-hand properties/existing stock, enabling existing homeowners to move up the ladder. I have made enquiries to find out how many NewBuy mortgages have been taken up within the District.'

Question 6

'Treasury management policy would require revision which would not necessarily be acceptable.'

Answer 6

'Any amendments in the TMS would have to go through the consultation process of CMT, Corporate Governance and Audit Committee, the Cabinet and Full Council and possibly members could decide not to agree to the necessary changes. Any changes required will be specific to being able to operate this scheme in accordance with the amendments legally tested and advised by Sector (TM consultants). This would not

widen or expand the investment criteria for 'normal' investment of surplus funds or effect potential counterparties. Ultimately the advice is that this should not be seen as an investment but strictly a financial guarantee.'

Question 7

'CONCLUSION: We do not need our own given the availability of 95% mortgages in the market and the NewBuy scheme. The scheme may have had validity two years ago in more difficult mortgage market conditions but it would not seem to do so now. If I have misread the details please let me know.'

Answer 7

'See comments above. The Newbuy scheme is only available for new-build homes, which attract a premium and are more expensive than second-hand/existing properties.'

Question 8 (a)

1 would like to suggest some other ways CDC might help to open up the supply of homes, including:

'(i) Loans to would be landlords to get their homes into lettable condition'

Answer 8 (a)

'There are already loans available to landlords including

- Our accreditation scheme whereby landlords can access a grant of up to £4,000 to bring a property up to the council's accreditation standard.
- Grants of up to £10,000 to bring an empty property back into use. Three empty properties have been bought back into use through this grant this year.'

Question 8 (b)

'(ii) Providing a downsizing service to home owners as well as tenants to move into smaller properties, freeing up their homes for larger families.'

Answer 8 (b)

- 'A downsizing service was introduced to help tenants over-occupying move to smaller properties to free up larger homes. The Council part-funded the scheme and the service was provided by HydeMartlet. In a 12-month period seven moves were achieved and the average move cost was £3,300. However the service was very resource intensive in staffing terms and at the end of the trial period HydeMartlet was not prepared to continue to resource the scheme.

The Environmental Housing team has, however, recently started working with a company called Seamless Removals, which can provide a complete package of support to help older people and vulnerable people move. If a client requiring disabled adaptations is willing to move to a smaller or more suitable property the cost of the move can be met by a disabled facilities grant. This is usually considerably cheaper than carrying out the adaptations

to their existing property, it saves the Council money and also has the advantage of freeing up larger properties.

Decent Homes Assistance

We currently work with Parity Trust to offer Home Loans to residents that require improvements to their properties. If their property does not meet the Decent Homes Standards and they are assessed to be unable to meet loan repayments they will be eligible for Decent Homes Assistance, whereby CDC will pay for the works and a charge will be put on their property so that this money is repaid to CDC when the property is sold.

We have looked at the Wessex Home Improvement Loans, however we cannot see that it would offer anything more to landlords than we already offer either under our accreditation scheme or empty homes assistance.

All the Council's current initiatives are advertised on the Council's website, however it may be useful for officers to put together a comprehensive summary detailing all the current schemes offered for easy reference for members. This could include links to individual schemes on the Council's web-site. I will bring up this issue at the next Housing Standing Panel.'

Mrs Grange, Mrs Belenger and Mrs Jobling responded to members' questions on points of detail relating to:

- The element of the risk default with LAMS.
- The eligibility criteria for the LAMS scheme.
- The rationale for LAMS assisting the middle-market into home ownership instead of households on the Council's housing register.
- The organisations including Sector involved in establishing LAMS.
- The difference between the NewBuy and LAMS schemes.
- The likely direction of house prices in Chichester District.
- The unlawfulness of local authorities awarding grants for a deposit in a property.
- The difficulty of obtaining up-to-date information to determine how many people on the Council's housing waiting list would be able to apply under LAMS.

Mrs Belenger and Mrs Grange noted for further research questions by members regarding (a) a recent report on rates of return for investment by local authorities in parts of the property market and (b) what checks would be in place to ascertain that a person was a *bona fide* applicant.

At Mrs Apel's invitation Mrs J E Duncton, who was present as an observer, addressed the committee briefly. Mrs Duncton was a member of the HSP in her capacity as the Council's Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning. She said that the option of a lower rent and save scheme proposed by one member at this meeting was not open to the Council and she commended LAMS as a very good scheme, which would thereby free up dwellings and relieve pressure in the private rented sector and, possibly, the social rented sector for lower income households that might be at risk of homelessness.

At the conclusion of the debate the committee did not dissent from the HSP's support in principle for the LAMS scheme as being suitable in meeting the Council's objectives and housing priorities. The committee agreed that it would be appropriate to refer the matter to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for its consideration by establishing a task and finish group for that purpose.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, having considered the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) and its suitability in meeting the Council's objectives and housing priorities, agrees that LAMS should be referred to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee for further consideration by a task and finish group.

88 Joint Scrutiny of the West Sussex Community Legal Advice Service

This and the following items of business were taken after agenda item 9 (Local Authority Mortgage Scheme) (minute **87** above refers).

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the agenda report (copies attached to the official minutes).

Mr D Hyland (Senior Community Engagement Officer) explained how a Community Legal Advice Service for West Sussex (WSCLAS) came to be commissioned jointly by all the West Sussex district and borough councils, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and the Legal Services Commission (LSC) and the generalist and specialist community legal advice service it was to provide under a three-year contract, which would expire on 31 March 2013. The LSC decision to withdraw from WSCLAS as a result of significant funding reductions for such legal advice following a review of the national Legal Aid scheme was an important development. In response to this situation, a West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group involving all the county's district and borough councils and WSCC met in June and July 2012. The conclusions drawn and the seven recommendations made were set out in paras 3.4 and 3.5 of the report.

Mr Hyland and Mrs Jobling answered members' questions on points regarding:

- The reason why the agenda papers did not include an analysis of the service provided by WSCLAS within Chichester District (this information would be e-mailed to all committee members in due course). The remit of the joint scrutiny review was to assess the overall performance and effectiveness of WSCLAS since 2010 and the need for an ongoing service after the current contract's expiry.
- The current cost of the Council's input into Chichester Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), which was probably consistent with the level of the government's funding support historically.
- The significant improvements introduced by WSCLAS in terms of management, use of volunteers, out-of-hours telephone access, online self-service information, the arrangements for referring clients to the CAB the via web sites of other organisations (including the Council's) and on location surgeries eg at Midhurst and Selsey.
- The availability of debt management advice to all-age groups notwithstanding that particular age or client groups eg those under-25 being targeted in recognition that they tended to be more reluctant to seek CAB advice.

At the close of the debate the committee recognised the vital work done over many years by the CAB locally and nationally, the funding problems that had unsurprisingly resulted in LSC's decision to withdraw from the WSCLAS, the clear need for the CAB service to be adequately funded and the appropriateness of extending the current contract.

RESOLVED

That having considered the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on the West Sussex Community Legal Advice Service, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses its findings and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CABINET

- (1) That the Cabinet adopts the findings and recommendations of the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on the West Sussex Community Legal Advice Service.
- (2) That the Cabinet agrees to extend the current contract arrangements for the West Sussex Community Legal Advice Service for two years together with the other West Sussex district and borough councils and West Sussex County Council.

89 Targeted Support for Communities – Selsey North

The committee considered the agenda report (copy attached to the official minutes).

Mr D Hyland (Senior Community Engagement Officer) presented this matter, which included showing the committee extracts from a DVD of face-to-face interviews with local residents seeking their perspectives on living in Selsey. These interviews were carried out on Saturday 18 August 2012 at a classic car event in the town, using an old -style London black cab as a video diary room.

Mr Hyland explained the background to, the case for and the preparatory consultation work in respect of the selection of Selsey North community for a pilot project as part of the Council's policy to provide additional targeted support for key communities within Chichester District. The nature, extent, objectives and results of the ensuing community engagement exercise and the next steps were set out in the report and its appendices.

Mrs Tinson (a Selsey North ward member) commended an excellent report and the work done to date by the community engagement team. She commented as follows:

- Notwithstanding Selsey North was one of the deprived wards and required intervention, it was important to have included Selsey South in the pilot project.
- It was encouraging to note that the process to date had acknowledged some of the previous work done by Selsey Community Vision (SCV), thereby allowing this community engagement exercise to focus more on the underlying social issues in the community. Further stages should take into account the findings and actions identified by SCV.
- It was to be noted that the low response rate to the consultation by the town's businesses (15 responses out of 94) was in line with earlier consultations including the High Street study in 2006-2007 and the SCV.
- The Selsey ward members were very concerned at the standard of education at the town's Manhood Academy and Seal Primary School. The consequences

of this were a cause for concern eg (a) school-leavers having or being perceived by potential employers as having poor or non-existent literacy skills and/or being insufficiently motivated to seek a job, (b) poor attendance at school, (c) a move by some parents to home-schooling, (d) having the highest level of free school meals in Chichester District, (e) disruption to classroom continuity due to above-average number of pupils joining or leaving school mid-term, (f) higher exclusions than in the rest of the District, (g) under-developed literacy skills and (h) the lowest attainment of English and mathematics in the District.

- The findings on crime seemed to focus around the social housing clusters.
- The health findings were a concern (particularly the under-18 conception rate) and this was accentuated by the demands on the town's health centre and the lack of a NHS dentist.

Mr Robertson (Selsey South ward member) and Mrs Purnell (Selsey North ward member present as an observer) endorsed Mrs Tinson's remarks. They would await the full analysis and the endorsement of local stakeholders and core Chichester in Partnership members in order to prioritise issues and options and devise an action plan.

In debate the committee raised a number of matters arising out of the report including (a) the educational attainment findings and the perspective by some parents that this was less of a concern because the higher quality of life overall that could be enjoyed in Selsey, (b) the need in partnership with other groups and organisations to understand fully detail of the consultation and the issues in Selsey North so that together with partners an effective action plan could be devised to deliver results and guard against disillusionment, (c) the need to identify Selsey's local employment requirements (the results of the employment land study as part of preparing the Local Plan would be available within a few weeks), (d) given that many of the issues identified did not fall directly within the Council's remit, its role was principally to influence and hold others to account through Chichester in Partnership, (e) how to engage with young people and encourage them to engage with their communities, (f) the reason for having chosen after careful consideration Selsey North for this study rather than, say, Chichester East or Tangmere wards (this was partly because of the amount of work that had already been done in this self-contained community and which could be developed rather than having to start afresh).

The committee commended the report and the valuable work already achieved.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the progress to date in the Targeted Communities pilot project and the proposed next steps.

90 Late Items

There were no late items considered at this meeting.

[**Note** The meeting ended at 11:46]

CHAIRMAN

Date _____