

Joint Scrutiny Committee Report

1. Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 15 February 2017

A summary of key items follows - for full details of all the discussions please see the reports and the minutes.

1.1 Neighbourhood Plans: Continuing the review of the two Councils' support for the development of Neighbourhood Plans, the Committee heard from three communities - Lavenham (who had just completed a Neighbourhood Plan); Woolpit (who were in the process); and Copdock & Washbrook (who had decided not to go ahead with a Plan).

1.2 There was an extremely interesting discussion with some wide-ranging questions including those on types of support needed, the difficulties in getting a Neighbourhood Plan underway, the issues particular to small parishes, the costs and the time taken.

1.3 It was very valuable to hear such detailed contributions from community representatives and it was agreed that a Task & Finish Group be set up to consider the evidence and report recommendations back to the Committee.

1.4 Community Engagement: Continuing this review, the Committee heard from two service groups - Tenancy Services, who had been running engagement exercises for some time, about their approach to engagement; and Open for Business, whose approach was emerging.

1.5 Members asked questions of the two service areas and particularly focussed on what could be used to assess success and how good learning was shared across the organisation.

2. Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 19 April 2017

2.1 Community Engagement: Following on from the last meeting, the Committee were due to hear from service users of the two previously mentioned Council services – tenants and a local business – on their engagement experiences with the Councils.

2.2 Disabled Adaptations to Properties: Members asked for a presentation from officers to understand what the Councils could do to make any impact on the issues surrounding the delayed transfer of care – and specifically whether any issues surrounding disabled adaptations needed to be reviewed.

2.3 Task & Finish Group report on support for Neighbourhood Plans: After considering the evidence from the last Committee meeting, and having researched what other councils offered (both locally and nationally) Members put forward five

recommendations. These were relating to in-house officer support, developing a memorandum of understanding with community groups, adding information to the Councils' website, providing member training and reviewing support for small parishes.

3. Next and future meetings: To be confirmed.

Councillor Rachel Eburne
Joint Chair (Mid Suffolk)