

Chairman's Report
Services Select Committee

In the absence of the Chairman I chaired the meeting on 14th January 2013.

Key Points arising from the meeting were as follows: -

1. Following the success of the two in-depth scrutiny reviews undertaken by this Committee in 2012, the SSC agreed in principle to undertake an in-depth scrutiny of rural broadband within the Sevenoaks area. Parameters for this review will be set at the next meeting.
2. A detailed report was received from the Head of Housing and Communications in relation to Sevenoaks District Tenancy Strategy and Sevenoaks District Housing Register Allocations Policy. The key points to be noted were that: -
 - a. The allocation policy had been re-targeted to focus on those with a local connection and local employment.
 - b. That the old points system had been replaced with the Kent wide banding system.
 - c. Those on the housing register would be reviewed and the register would be significantly reduced.
 - d. That the strategy would be trialed on a 10% sample of the housing register. The update of the trial would be provided to SSC in June 2013.
 - e. That a significant publicity campaign in relation to the new policy would be undertaken, including local newspapers and individual letters to all those affected.
 - f. Members made a number of positive suggestions in relation to the policy, including a greater emphasis on young people, the location of affordable housing and rewarding those in employment.
3. An update report was provided in relation to Localising Support for Council Tax. The key points arising were that: -
 - a. Town and Parish Councils would now be affected by the scheme and SDC had provided support to them in understanding its impact.
 - b. Officers would be writing to all affected residents at the end of January in a deliberate attempt to prevent non-payment at an early stage.
4. Lastly updates on Localising Support for Council Tax (April 2013), Tenancy Strategy (June 2013) and Universal Credits (November 2013) would be provided later in the year.

Cllr. Cameron Brown
4th February 2013