

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**SELLY OAK DISTRICT
COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 28 JANUARY
2016**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SELLY OAK DISTRICT COMMITTEE HELD
ON THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2016 AT 1030 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOMS
3 &4, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT: - Councillor Karen McCarthy in the Chair

Councillors Alex Buchanan, Phil Davis, Barry Henley, Timothy Huxtable, Brigid Jones, Mike Leddy, Eva Phillips and Rob Sealey.

ALSO PRESENT:-

Jonathan Antill – Acting Senior Service Manager, Landlord Services, Place
Pete Hobbs – Service Head, Private Rented Services and Tenant Engagement
Ifor Jones – Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods, Place
Andy Pepper- Assistant Director, Children in Care Provider Services
Barry Toon – Selly Oak District Housing Panel
Errol Wilson – Committee Services

NOTICE OF RECORDING

320 The Chair advised that the meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press / public may record and take photographs.

The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

321 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Susan Barnett, Changese Khan and Phil Walkling. Apologies were also submitted on behalf of Steve McCabe MP, Karen Cheney and Inspector Hodgetts and the Fire Service.

An apology for lateness was submitted on behalf of Councillor Phil Davis.

CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

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The Chair advised that she would take agenda item 5 ahead of the remaining reports.

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LICENSING BRIEFING NOTE

Pete Hobbs, Service Head, Private Rented Services and Tenant Engagement, Place introduced the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the Briefing Note circulated at the meeting.

(See Document No. 1)

Mr Hobbs advised that the aim was to bring a draft Business Case to the Selly Oak District Committee meeting in March 2016, which was the business case for Additional Licensing, in partnership with other agencies and resident groups to formally consult with residents, businesses and landlords/agents in the area. Mr Hobbs further drew the Committee's attention to the key issues stated in the document that were arising in the area from the consultation and the Project Officers meeting.

Barry Toon, a member of the District Housing Panel commented that they were broadly supportive of the HMO licensing in the area. He advised that there were two areas of concern: -

- National Government had recognised that there was an issue and this needed to be dealt with on a national basis. If the national consideration comes through in terms of the two storey properties, landlords would take action for the property to become a single storey property so that they would be ahead of the law.
- The area that should be covered – Selly Oak Ward was of particular concern, but as was previously seen under the Article 4 Direction, the issue was spreading across the District. Whilst there was some planning action, it did not control all the aspects of the HMOs that were spreading across the area. Article 4 Direction did not totally cover all HMOs. They needed to look beyond Selly Oak Ward as it impacts the whole of the District.

Members then made the following comments: -

- I. The standard students got were often superficially high and that it was important to recognise this point. A question was when the projected Cabinet date would be to get the report through.
- II. A request was made for the Article 4 consultation to be extended wider than the area that was proposed, but that the response was that there was no evidence base for doing so. It was urged for this issue to be revisited as it was a District wide issue and was not just restricted to Selly Oak Ward.
- III. In terms of the current proposal by the Boundary Commission for England in relation to Wards distribution, there was a significant area of the current Selly Oak Ward that was proposed to be transferred into the new Bournville

and Cotteridge Ward which include student areas. This would have an impact on the new Ward depending on when the new regulation comes into force.

- IV. In relation to the proposal and the key areas of concern, they did not see the advertising boards/To Let boards on properties in student areas that were raised on a number of occasions.
- V. Given the high quality purpose built student accommodations that was being built and continues to be built in Selly Oak and Edgbaston, the feeling was that there was an increasing level of vacancy levels in the private rented accommodation. This meant that if there was only one room to be let the landlord could continue to put up a sign stating *Rooms to Let*. Legally the Council could not get this removed. This was becoming a problem when driving along Oak Tree Lane for example and seeing all the houses with room to let.
- VI. If there were rooms that were unlet in the building, the landlords could put a board up. The requirement was that the letting agents/landlords take the boards down a fortnight after the property had been let which did not always happen. The most effective initiative that they had was one that was led by the Chair and the former Councillor David Williams when they visited the letting agents.
- VII. Every year there were more letting agents that needed to be persuaded that it was in effective to keep putting more boards up as it gives the impression that they were not good at letting their properties. This was a rolling programme and they were due for the next letters from the Project Officer Group that states that if they really had to not let everything they could leave their boards up, otherwise they needed to be removed.
- VIII. The local community relied on everyone working together with officers and in general. It was important to continue to work together across the wider area.
- IX. The Article 4 area goes into Harborne as there was evidence based for this. Article 4 review was now in place having been a piece of work which restricts the right to convert a family home into a small HMO with six people. This would be published and would then give people a comparison of whether its Bournville & Cotteridge so that the same data could be provided.
- X. Insulation, ventilation and damp needed to be included as every year in the summer people stated that they had chest infection. They needed to be more proactive with the university so that if students were sending in sick notes for exams and pieces of work that this was feedback. They also needed to look at the non-student HMOs as there were significant numbers of empty properties that were still being built in the main letting season.
- XI. The two markets – the HMOs and the Halls of Residence were not aligned i.e. they were imperfectly elastic so that for every 10 rooms that were built in the Halls of Residence, they did not get 10 beds empty in the HMOs. Some of the poorest housing was used for ex-offenders and other people

who were sharing housing. They needed to think how this affects the proposal.

Mr Hobbs then made the following statements: -

- a. The earliest date for projection would be July/September 2016, given the need to collate the evidence from the consultation and producing the report was the earliest they could produce a robust case if there was one. The boundary discussion was relevant and interesting.
- b. It was not Ward specific and they were not guided by Ward boundaries in determining where an Additional Licensing regime needed to exist. Practically this would be based on the evidence they call and bring forward.
- c. As part of this process in the City, they were looking at a number of areas and bringing them forward in a systematic way, but they did not have the resource to do them all at once.
- d. The impact of Article 4 and what was going on in those areas were the discussions they were having with Planning colleagues, but the reason they were looking at the Bournbrook area was as a result of the mass of evidence they had from the Project Team. They were happy to speak with other people outside the area to see what was happening. They were not guided by Ward boundaries in determining what the final area would be and this was part of the consultation.
- e. In terms of non-student housing, this was not about non-student housing, but about HMOs. If it was determined that they were in an area and was ineffectively managed, they were HMOs as part of this scoping and would be included.
- f. Mr Hobbs stated that he shares the concern regarding insulation and dampness and that this was an issue for a lot of students about the appropriateness of a lot of the buildings they were in. This was the reason they were in consultation with the university and the Guild of Students as this was the reporting route as opposed to coming to the local authority.
- g. In relation to rogue landlords, the City Council was successful in being awarded £110k of funding to tackle rogue landlords through the Government's Rogue Landlord Fund. This money would allow them to undertake some of the targeted inspections in areas where they believe they had high risk and licence HMOs that they most particularly.
- h. If they had any issues around unsuitable buildings being used for accommodation, they would like to know where these might be so that they could be investigated. As part of the work that Elected Members do and gathering local intelligence, if Members had this in their area they could contact him.

The Chairman thanked Pete Hobbs for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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RESOLVED:-

That Selly Oak District Committee noted the briefing note.

MINUTES

Page 173, Minute No.308, *Councillor Sealy* should be *Councillor Sealey*.

Councillor Huxtable referred to page 174, Minute No. 308 referring to Minute 295, bullet point 3 concerning Matters Arising: *Councillor Huxtable asked the Councillors to contact Darren Share directly*, should read *Councillor Huxtable asked the officers to contact Darren Share directly*.

Page 177, Minute No. 314 last bullet point, *The priorities were Dawberry Road, Yardley Road and Bournbrook area* should read *The priorities were Dawberry Road, Yardley Wood Road and Bournbrook area*.

Councillor Henley made reference to page 175, Minute No. 311, bullet point 5 and advised that *Meadow Lane* should read *Broad Meadow Lane*.

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RESOLVED:-

That, subject to the amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2015, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

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Page 174, the overall drop in recycling rates by Wards in the District – *the Chair confirmed that Fleet and Waste was not an agenda item and she would pick up the issue following the meeting*. Councillor Huxtable requested an update on how this was being progressed following the last District Committee meeting as he had been inundated with complaints regarding Fleet and Waste Management. He questioned whether there was any point for recycling when several people had contacted him to say that their recycling was taken in the general dust cart along with all the other the other residual refuse from the wheelie bins.

In terms of the analysis of the Street Scene, Minute No. 310, page 174 last bullet points - the outcome of the analysis needed to be made known and the name of the College that work was being undertaken with.

The Chair advised that they were at the stage where they either wanted to talk to Fleet and Waste Management collectively or to have a report at the next meeting or both. She stated that she share Councillor Huxtable's concern around recycling. She added that there had been reports of stuff going into one waggon, but that it turned out that people had misunderstood that the paper and the glass goes into the same waggon. The Chair stated that she was also aware that where collections were overdue, that it had been cleared as waste rather than recycling. She further stated that she was assured that this would settle down soon. She undertook to follow the issue up.

CORPORATE PARENTING

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The following corporate parenting presentation was submitted:-

(See Document No.2)

Andy Pepper, Assistant Director, Children in Care Provider Services drew the Committee's attention to the information in the document.

An extensive discussion took place and the following was a summary of the principal points made:-

1. The aspiration for Looked after Children was excellent, but the implementation was not good in relation to higher education matters, and children achieving their full potential. The Eve Brook Scholarship Fund in memory of the Late Councillor Eve Brook provides funding for Birmingham Looked after Children who manage to get into higher education. Each time they had a fund raising event the young people tell heart-warming stories.
2. What was clear was that without the Charity supporting them, they would not be able to continue with the higher education and certainly not with Masters or PhDs. It was noted that technically Birmingham did not have an obligation to Looked-after Children when they had a first degree and were pursuing a Masters or PhD. The point was that without the Charity's assistance, the Looked after Children would not be able to achieve their full potential.
3. The approach in a recent case concerning a Fostered child who had a place at university was wholly negative and completely unlawful. In as much as there was an obligation to provide funding for the transition from the end of the Fostering period age 18, to the take up of university place which the department had refused until they were reminded that this was unlawful and that they also owed a bursary to the young person concerned.
4. A great deal of heartaches and concerns were caused to that family until they got the funding and bursary. The approach taken initially was that *you are 18 and that is the end, the Fostering funding did not take the young person past this point*. This was not the case as the Government had made it clear in the guidance that it should continue as there was a transition period for higher education. The Foster Parents continue to receive an equitable payment to their Fostering fee in order that the child could be supported so that they were not destitute and on the street during that period.
5. There were issues in most cases, whereby the local authority was not yet supporting children who were Looked after Children to achieve their full capability in terms of higher education. This was something that the City Council needed to address as other local authorities had done.

Mr Pepper made the following comments: -

- In relation to moving on to a Master's degree etc., the local authority did not currently support this, but through some of the casework being discussed,

they had changed the way in which they were trying to support young people in Foster Care, particularly around the Staying Put arrangements. A level of funding had been built in for those young people that could not get benefit or some sort of employment to support them going forward. The new *Staying Put Policy* supports some of this going forward.

- There was a gap beyond the age of 18 years old as the amount of support drops between 18 – 24 years old particularly in terms of education, but not in regard to their general wellbeing. They were in support of Eve Brook Scholarship Fund and were doing all they could to support them going forward. There was a gap which legislation did not cover.
- Mr Pepper noted Councillor Huxtable's comments in relation to the Regulation 44 visits to Children's Homes both within the City Council and the private children's homes and advised that this goes back to the heart of Corporate Parenting. It was about showing the same commitment as a parent to children in care and the aspiration that any good parent would have particularly around the commitments.
- It was known through meeting with a substantial amount of Foster Carers and all residential staff, that they were clear on their responsibilities to make and ensure that in looking after those children it was not just about when they were in the homes, but what they were up to outside also.
- A substantial amount of work had been done over the last 12 months to get to grips with some of the most pressing issues around children that were missing and around children that were involved in child sexual exploitation and the understanding what was going on with the City and putting some good safety plan into place.
- As far as someone who was responsible for Foster Care and for residential visits, as it stands at the moment, he was quite heartened in the way they had moved forward in ensuring that they were doing their best to know what those children were up to.
- There were young people as well as children in care that had occasionally disappeared or try to hide things, but intelligence were being built up through other people that were working in the City through the Police with whom they were working closely to keep the intelligence and information flowing through as much as they could.
- Mr Pepper noted Councillor Leddy's comments concerning the number of Councillors attending events in their formal role concerning Looked after Children and stated that he would like to see more Councillors attending these events. If the Department was not getting that information out he would take the information back that they needed to inform all the Councillors what was happening. The training had been put in place in relation to the Regulation 44 visits, but only a small amount of Councillors had signed up to the training to date, most of which was from Selly Oak District.
- Mr Pepper noted the Chair's comment concerning sleepovers and advised that this also applied to Children in Foster Care. He stated that they were

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under the impression that it was Social Workers that needed to make that choice, but when they looked at the legislation and the guidance around it, it was noted that this about delegated responsibility. The Foster Carers had the same responsibility as a parent and were able to make those decisions based on the normal checks that a parent would do in a normal household.

The Committee agreed for Councillor Susan Barnett to continue as the Corporate Parenting Champion for Selly Oak District.

The Chairman thanked Andy Pepper for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

BIRMINGHAM COUNCIL HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS BUDGET 2015/16

The following report of the Strategic Director, Place was submitted:-

(See Document No. 3)

Jonathan Antill, Acting Senior Service Manager, Place presented the item and drew the Committee's attention to the six proposals for approval by the Committee. He apologised for having to defer the Moor House project in Brandwood Ward until the next financial year, as they were not satisfied that they had the right prices in terms of the quotes. He added that this would be investigated as the original quote was £41,500 which would take a huge amount of funds. This would be reviewed in terms of prioritising it for the next financial year. Members' approval was sought for the five projects. If approval was agreed, this would leave £18,133.49p which they would look to carry over to the next year.

Mr Antill advised that they had started to look at projects for the next year and would bring these to the attention of the Members and the Housing Liaison Boards (HLB) so that they could properly organise and prioritise what they wanted to do in terms of the Wards Plans

During the discussion that ensued the following points were made: -

- a. There was a problem on Druids Lane where people who live in Moor House park on Druids Lane which was the nearest point to the Tower Block. This was dangerous as there had been a number of accidents there. The road was only so wide that one line of cars parked on the left hand side meant that cars coming round the bend would go head on. The only solution to the problem was to provide some off road parking area at the foot of Moor House for the residents at Moor House.
- b. This project was in gestation for a couple of times which was important. The HLB had been campaigning for this for a long time this was the only project that there was a risk of fatality if it was not done.

- c. The Chair enquired whether there was any potential to agree/sort out the costing issues in order that this project could be dealt with on Chairs action following this meeting.
- d. Mr Antill advised that they would explore the possibility of this being done as it had been identified that this was a health and safety issue. He added that he was happy to look into the issue.
- e. With the introduction of wheelie bins, there were now a number of disused storage sheds for refuse. The storage sheds were not big enough for wheelie bins and were no longer fit purpose.
- f. A question was whether there would be a rolling programme for the demolition of the storage sheds and/or replacement for wheelie bins storage areas to make them fit for purpose across all high rise and low rise properties. Whether there were four flats in terms of Middleton Hall Road or four Blocks of flats and where on Middleton Hall Road they were located. Whether this would be a rolling programme in relation to the flats owned by the City Council as and when required.
- g. A kerb was dropped in terms of creating more parking spaces along Overbury Road in Northfield which had work well. If this experience could be used around Moor House in terms of dropping the kerb and getting the agreement of the PFI partner this could help to resolve the issue. The Chairman stated that similar work had been done in Bournville.
- h. Mr Antill advised that that it was four flats within Block 33. There was currently no project in place for a rolling programme for Middleton Hall Road, but they would review next year's Works Budget funding and prioritise this accordingly. This would be raised with the Place Manager.
- i. There was no proposal for the demolition of the disused storage sheds, but that he would take this back. Overbury Road project was a unique layout and may not be the same solution, but this would be taken on board and they would have a look at it. A request was that the issue of the disused storage sheds be looked at across the District.

Ifor Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods, Place advised that alongside Mr Antill he would raise the point with Robert James, Service Director, Housing Transformation, Place as an issue across the City. Any investment in this would be an alternative means due to the threshold of funding that they had for the global scheme.

Councillor Huxtable stated that at the last Council meeting they had talked about the estate demolition programme by the Government and that suggestions should be put to Housing. The question was whether the District would put forward any suggestion to the City Council in terms of this programme noting the extent of the budget that was announced by the Government.

The Chair advised that she would ensure that this was placed on the agenda for the next Housing Panel.

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RESOLVED: -

That the Committee agreed the projects with the proviso that Mr Antill clarify the cost of the Moor House project so that this could be done by Chair's action.

FEEDBACK FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE, JOBS AND SKILLS

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Ifor Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods, Place gave the following verbal report: -

- I. The challenge was a good one and was used in headline terms to feedback to the Improvement Panel on the Neighbourhood Challenge process generally. Many of the Districts were doing this, but needed to look at it in terms of how Selly Oak and the regeneration of Battery Park, university etc., how this could cascade the offer into Billesley and Brandwood and throughout the District.
- II. They were looking at the horizontal geography the west/east and the arterial route which they looked at in terms of the access of people who wanted to get the opportunities for skills, training etc., that they were fettered by the horizontal geography – getting from Brandwood through to Selly Oak, bus journeys and support in making that journey.
- III. The Committee had in three meetings discussions on the issue with partnering input with a strong presentation from High Speed 2 (HS2) at the last meeting at Stirchley Baths. The presentation identified that a number of arterial routes were not benefitting the Bristol Road, for instance Alcester Road and Pershore Road were not benefitting in the same way as the Bristol Road.
- IV. One of the issues that came out of this was how the Neighbourhood Challenges would be reported to the relevant Cabinet Member, how the recommendations would be meaningful and be taken forward. Emerging from this was a number of issues that were pertinent elsewhere that needed to be picked up and could help refined the overall regeneration approach and benefit the communities in Brandwood, Billesley etc.

The Chair commented that they had three meetings with good representation from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Adult Education and the Regeneration Team. Two broad themes emerged –

Connectivity

- In Selly Oak and Bournville Wards there were some choice between bus and rail to get to and from the City. Brandwood and Billesley had less connectivity not only across to Selly Oak for the new development there, but also into the City Centre for work opportunities. Some of the analysis was seen where people recruited to work in Grand Central and Marks and Spencer's at Longbridge lived.
- In terms of job readiness and work experience, they had requested the DWP to speak with people running job preparation sessions to make sure

they go where the trainees were and build the transport issues into the training.

- There was a presentation on HS2 and it was pointed out that the rail project Members were interested in was Camp Hill Chords to improve the connectivity for that side of the District and that the main interest in HS2 was about ensuring that people in Selly Oak District was ready to take those job opportunities – work in schools to ensure people were ready for the HS2 Academy.

Work experience

- Ensuring that the opportunities big organisations had were appropriate, but was also easier for small employers to take on people on work experience. Developing tool kits to aid people in their work as a template to improve the ability of small businesses to benefit and to provide benefit to young people in the area.
- There was to be a further meeting to *tie the various threads* together and to work out how this would be put into the wider work. A final report was to be submitted in March 2016 and to determine what the next Neighbourhood Challenge would be.
- Councillor Phillips stated that this was an interesting and important piece of work. With regard to the things identified around travel it was uncertain that they would get this completed by the end of March 2016. What was important was for all these things to be integrated into the Jobs and Skills Plan and that it was not seen as a one off, but a continual drive to get people the opportunities.
- The Chair stated that they were tasked with an on-going jobs and skills panel and would feed the big issues into the citywide process.
- Councillor Huxtable stated that a Scrutiny Review had been announced in terms of what was happening with regard to the different Neighbourhood Challenges across the City.
- In relation to the connectivity point, not HS2 per se, but the connectivity package that had been developed with Birmingham Connected Urban Mobility Action Plan and Centro working together on the HS2 connectivity package.
- With regard to the HS2 Academy, the issue was where it would be located as it appeared that it would be difficult to get to the Academy via public transport from the Selly Oak District. This needed to be feedback in to the various reviews to look at better transport links to the location of the HS2 Academy in Aston Science Park.
- They were well served in terms of an orbital route as the National Express West Midlands Bus Service 11 goes through all four Wards in the District along with other buses doing the east west direction, but they were always seen to lose out in terms of investments as they were prioritised towards arterial routes going in and out of the City Centre. This issue was raised

with National Express West Midlands, but could be raised at a more strategic level with the Bus Alliance Partnership being set up by Centro.

- The Chair advised that this would be taken to Scrutiny along with an overview as she was Chair of the District Chairs Forum. There were regular *show and tell sessions* on where the Districts were with their Neighbourhood Challenge.

UPDATE ON DISTRICT WORK PLAN

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Ifor Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods, Place gave the following verbal update: -

- Ms Cheney had circulated to Members the details of what was happening.
- Councillor Susan Barnett was the Corporate Parenting Champion for Selly Oak District.
- The District Convention had been held which was based on the Neighbourhood Challenge.

A fuller update on the Work Plan would be submitted by Ms Cheney in March 2016.

The Chair advised of the following additional items: -

- Children and Vulnerable Adults Scrutiny had requested that Members ensured that in their Wards they were visiting schools and building relationships so that they were aware of how the schools were relating to the local community. This was something they were hoping to have the help of Birmingham Education Partnership with as they were currently focusing on schools.
- At the District Chairs Forum this evening there will be a briefing on the Prevent and Social Cohesion Agenda. Reporting would be the Head of Equalities and the Head of the Wellbeing Service on how these kinds of activities such as Active Parks and Active Streets could contribute to social cohesion. This would be brought back to the District Committee meeting.
- The next scheduled District Committee meeting would be after the *Pre-election period* had commenced. She was looking to move this meeting forward to take place before that date.

FEEDBACK FROM SELLY OAK WARDS: BILLESLEY, BOURNVILLE, BRANDWOOD AND SELLY OAK

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Billesley Ward –

- 750 trees were planted on Billesley Farm Park with Hollywood School.
- A Jobs Fair would be held
- Billesley Ward Committee meeting will be held on the 4th February 2014.

Bournville Ward –

- Stirchley Baths was opened.

Brandwood Ward -

- Meetings with various partners and City Council officers were being held concerning the future of Druids Heath. It was hoped that there were enough plans that they could see some movement forward out of poverty over the next 5 – 10 years.
- A number of trees were being planted in the Ward.

Selly Oak –

- HMO briefing note presented earlier by Mr Hobbs
- Input in the District wide activities and on Christmas Eve's heavy rain it was discovered that the work which had been done in the flood hotspots had shown some results.
- The Student Food Drive as part of the Green Week.
- The trees for like for Selly Oak had one Oak Tree.

Objections in the form of a petition from 100 residents in Bournville opposing planning application 2015/10296/PA for 37 dwellings on Mary Vale Road was submitted for the attention of the Planning Committee.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS (REPORTS BY OFFICERS)

331 None raised.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRPERSON AND OFFICERS

332 **RESOLVED:-**

In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1205 hours.

CHAIRPERSON