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**OVERVIEW OF ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
  - (a) **Supported Housing Strategy** – We have received a draft copy of the proposed Supported Housing Strategy 2012/17 for our views. Members will be aware that supported housing is a general term which describes properties that provide a mixture of accommodation and support and, which covers specialist accommodation for a wide range of different needs i.e. adults groups, including people with a learning disability, a mental health problem and people with a physical disability or a sensory impairment, homeless groups and older people. The draft Strategy, which is currently out for consultation, reflects the changes that have been introduced in national policy since 2010 and sets out an analysis of the current market for specialist accommodation by each one of the above groups, produces a set of priorities for actions and a delivery plan. Consultation is currently being undertaken with partner organisations and with a range of people who will make use of supported accommodation, including the Tenants' Board and we have requested a further update on the outcome of the consultations be submitted to a future meeting of our Scrutiny Committee.
  - (b) **Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Reforms** – Following a presentation which was given to Members as part of the Members' training and development programme, Anthony Sandys, Head of Revenues and Benefits, gave a more detailed presentation on the Welfare Reform changes, which are likely to have a significant impact on residents, including, the introduction of a new Council Tax Support scheme which will replace Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit restrictions for social housing tenants who are over accommodated and proposals to pay Housing Benefit direct to those tenants and a new local Social Fund scheme for crisis and community care support. The Revenues and Benefits Section are currently focussing resources on the implementation of the changes, however, as much as can be done to get the messages out to those affected is being undertaken.
  - (c) **Changes to the Common Allocation Policy** – We also received a presentation from Hazel Neasham, Head of Housing, on the main changes to the Common Allocation Policy. Compass, the Sub-Regional Choice Based and Common Allocation Policy was introduced in 2009, and, following the enactment of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Localism Act 2011 and the revised Allocations of Accommodation Code of Guidance, it has been necessary for Officers to review the current Compass policy to ensure it was still fit for purpose and was in line with forthcoming changes in other policy areas.

One of the main areas of concern to our Scrutiny Committee in considering the changes, was the proposal to allow families to bid on any property which met their bedroom requirements, including flats and the need for some discretion to be applied to ensure consideration of other tenants in such flats, however, we were reassured that this could be achieved through the application of our Local Lettings Policy.

- (d) **Work Programme** – We further discussed the work programme and have agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group to undertake a piece of work in relation to safeguarding Adults and we will be reporting back to Members on the progress of this work. A meeting of the Nutrition in Care Homes Task and Finish Review Group will be held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and again, we will update Members on this piece of work.

**Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite**  
**Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee**