

# SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

## CALL-IN

Wednesday, 10 November 2004

(5:00 - 6:50 pm)

**Present:** Councillor Mrs P A Twomey (Chair), Councillor Mrs M M West (Deputy Chair), Councillor W F L Barns, Councillor J R Denyer and Councillor Mrs K J Flint

**Also Present:** Councillor P T Waker, Councillor W C Dale and Councillor L R Waker (Call-In Members); Councillor L A Smith (representing the Executive) and Councillor M A McCarthy

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs D Hunt and Councillor D O'Brien

### 32. Call-In - Selection of Barking & Dagenham's Panel of Registered Social Landlords

Councillor Mrs M M West declared an interest as a director of the Barking and Dagenham Housing Association and withdrew from the meeting.

The Board considered a Call-In following the Executive's decision of 12 October 2004 to include the Southern Housing Group (SHG) on the Council's panel of preferred Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Call-in Members referred to the reasons for the Call-In set out on the form submitted by them, stating that, in their view, since the first Call-In by the Scrutiny Management Board in 2003 and the decision taken to monitor the SHG's work, there was insufficient evidence of improvement to justify their inclusion on the Council's panel of preferred RSLs. They highlighted the dissatisfaction expressed by tenants in Village Ward, particularly from the Rookery Farm Estate, with SHG's performance, and the poor quality of aftercare provided by them. They felt that SHG's inclusion on the panel should be deferred until Members could be sure that these issues were being addressed. They would then want continued involvement by sitting on the board of the housing development management company for projects in this Borough.

Councillor Smith responded on behalf of the Executive, commenting that he had been very impressed by the quality of the properties built by the SHG and that was the main reason why he felt they should be included on the Council's panel of preferred RSL partners. He highlighted the fact that, since becoming the Lead Member for Housing, he had not been contacted by any Members for Village Ward about problems on the Rookery Farm Estate. Ward Members for Marks Gate had approached him and problems there in relation to SHG had been dealt with effectively. Councillor Smith also pointed out that tenants on the Rookery Farm Estate are nominated from Newham and he felt there needed to be dialogue with Ward Councillors, tenants, SHG and Newham Council.

It was noted that a meeting has been arranged with Village Ward Councillors

and the SHG in the near future to discuss management issues.

All parties withdrew at 6.25 pm for the Board to deliberate and reconvened at 6.45 pm for the Board's decision.

After weighing up all the evidence the Board agreed to:

- (i) refer the matter back to the Executive for further consideration because of their concern that the report to the Executive did not inform Members of the full history relating to the performance of SHG on management issues. They were not recommending that the Executive overturn the decision to include SHG on the Council's panel of preferred RSL partners but were suggesting that they might consider requiring a review of their performance in six months' time.
- (ii) recommend that a Member for Village Ward be included on the Board of the housing development management company for projects in this Borough.