

Committee: COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: September 18, 2008

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Title: LEAD OFFICER'S REPORT

Author: Diane Burridge, Director of Operations,
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Item for noting

Summary

1. This report updates Members on matters arising from the minutes that are not otherwise on this Agenda and provides information items.

Recommendations

2. That the report is noted.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

- Minutes of community committee on 19 June 2008.

Situation/Update

There are updates from the June 2008 meeting followed by items for information.

4. Removal of BT Payphones

The consultation document was returned to Bt with a covering letter. The consultation objected to the removal of 41 payphones and agreement to the removal of 4. BT has acknowledged receipt and as yet has made no appeal against our comments.

5. Negative Housing Subsidy

A delegation from the Council met Iain Wright, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government, at Westminster to discuss the amount of money it has to hand back to central government from council rents each year and to try and secure a fairer deal for its tenants.

The Council's deep concerns over the Negative Housing Subsidy system were expressed and Members strongly pressed for the regulations to be changed as the Council considers them to be grossly unfair. It was pointed out to Mr Wright that if the process continues as it is now, Uttlesford will not in due

course have the funds to keep the housing stock up to the current government required specifications.

Mr Wright acknowledged that in percentage terms, Uttlesford District Council suffers under the current system. Whilst he did not commit himself to any specific action he noted the comments made and said he would take all points into careful consideration as part of a current review of the rules governing the Housing Revenue Account. He suggested that a representative of the Council should participate in one of the expert and practitioner workshops being facilitated by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) to advise the Review as it proceeds. An officer attended one of the workshops and ensured that the Council's views were recorded as part of the review.

The findings of the Government review will be published in Spring 2009.

4. Greenways Play Area Consultation with Residents

It is anticipated that this consultation will be undertaken in October 2008.

5. 'Free Swimming'

A verbal update on the Government's 'Free Swimming' proposal will be provided at the meeting.