



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

13 February 2012

PRESENT:-

Councillors D.R. Wright (Chairman) V.J. Manderson (Vice Chairman),
P.M. Chandler, M.C.R. Graham, E. Holmes, T. Moncrieff, J. Moulding, P.M Posnett,
J.B. Rhodes, J. Wyatt.

Chief Executive, Head of Community and Neighbourhoods, Place Manager,
People Manager, Corporate Director (KA), Chief Accountant, Solicitor to the Council,
Head of Welland Procurement Unit, Senior Housing Repairs Officer, Administrative
Assistant for Community and Neighbourhoods.

C16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

C17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Posnett declared personal and non prejudicial in relation to any issues concerning the Leicestershire County Council by virtue of them being County Councillors.

C18. SOLAR PANELS

The Place Manager outlined the Solar Panels report explaining the effects of the Governments changes to tariffs from the 31st October 2011. He highlighted that schemes now fitted after 12/12/11 would now only receive 21p per unit from 13/12/11 and 16.8p from 01/04/12 compared to the initial 43.4p that the Government had introduced in April 2010.

The Place Manager explained that the report had been written in response to the Community and Social Affairs meeting on the 21/09/2012 and that research had been done by TFEC on potential routes and procurement.

The Place Manager explained that despite communication with Solas Power, a business plan had still not been received from the company. The Council had also asked for references and information to show the viability of the Company and these have also not yet been received.

The Head of Welland Procurement Unit expressed a concern about the risk to the Council and potential disputes from other suppliers, explaining that the procurement must be open and fair to equal company competition. The Chairman added that point 6.4 of the report also highlighted that the company cannot assure the Council about the legalities of the contract. The Solicitor to the Council expressed that significantly more investigation should be done before any contract is signed.

Members expressed concern over legal matters, whether the contract would potentially give the Council problems in the future due to the costs of repairs and replacement of the installations and why the company had not delivered paperwork and plans to support claims.

Two Members congratulated the Officers for all the hard work that had gone into writing the report.

A Member wanted to register disappointment that this opportunity had not been taken up quickly enough stating that this had been first proposed to the Council in late 2010 and another Member suggested that the Scrutiny Committee should have a look at the case as a whole and find out why the process had taken so long.

Many Members expressed that they felt uncomfortable with the recommendation due to the large risk that the Council would adopt with regard to the legal and procurement issues if the recommendation was passed.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The continuing work with a range of companies to provide solar panels be agreed, subject to satisfactory information dealing with the legal and procurement advice.
- (ii) Officers be asked to develop a range of options covering the whole of our stock with a report back to this committee on 20th March 2012.
- (iii) Officers be asked to explore other appropriate options that will also support tenants in managing their finances as effectively as possible.

Chairman