

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD

29TH APRIL 2008

DELAYED REPORT – MOBILE HOMES LICENSING

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P. J. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Planning and Environment Services

SUMMARY

As requested at the last Meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board, this report advises Members of the circumstances that have necessitated a delay in the presentation to the Cabinet of the above mentioned report that was scheduled in the Forward Plan for April 2008.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, the then Head of Environmental Health Services reported to the Executive Cabinet, recommending the development of a strategy for the licensing of permanent residential mobile home sites.

The Executive Cabinet resolved to adopt a set of local standard conditions based upon Model Standards for all permanent residential home sites in the district. The Executive Cabinet also approved the adoption of a 'hard line' approach to ensuring compliance that gave owners a five year period to conform to the new standards at the end of which a full inspection would be carried out, remaining breaches identified and further enforcement action considered.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED REPORT

As the five year period of conformity expires later on this year, the purpose of the proposed new report is to remind Members of the 'hard line' approach that was adopted in respect of the enforcement of the Model Standard Conditions and to gain renewed endorsement to taking enforcement action as appropriate.

It is important that when considering the issue of enforcement, Members should be fully informed of the current level of conformity on the 13 sites that are licensed, as in some circumstances of non conformity (e.g. failure to provide required distance between mobile homes) the enforcement action necessary could impact upon residents' occupancy rights.

Therefore, when originally scheduling the presentation of the report it was envisaged that all 13 sites would have been inspected in order that a summary stating the level of conformity would be provided to members.

REASONS FOR DELAYING THE REPORT

1. An up to date survey of all sites has not yet been completed. Due to recruitment difficulties, the Private Sector Housing Team was without a Housing Standards Officer for the period September 2007 to January 2008. Prior to this staff deficiency, five of the 13 sites had been inspected. The post has now been filled and Mobile Home Site inspections have resumed. The report can be completed and presented to Executive Cabinet once inspection of all 13 sites has been completed.
2. Through close working with the CLG, the Private Sector Team Leader became aware that revised Model Standard Conditions for Mobile Homes are likely to be issued some time in April 2008. These revised conditions are likely to alter the standards recommended and the responsibilities of local authorities for significant elements of the standards. We were advised that guidance would be included upon how to incorporate or merge the new standards with the existing Model Standards already adopted. Accordingly it was felt appropriate to delay the report until the new Model Standards had been issued and their impact upon the Council's responsibilities (and need for enforcement action) had been assessed.

The revised model standards were received on the day of writing this report and are in the process of being analysed.

A. M. Coel
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