

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel

Monday, 11 March 2013

Present: Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair) and Julia Berry, Graham Dunn, Hasina Khan, Roy Lees and Kim Snape

Also in attendance

Councillors: Councillors Adrian Lowe (Executive Member (Homes and Business))

Officers: Jamie Carson (Director of People and Places), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnerships and Planning), Zoe Whiteside (Head of Housing), Michael Coogan (Strategic Housing Officer), Victoria Willett (Performance Improvement Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

12.OSP.20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

12.OSP.21 MINUTES

- a) Confirmation

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel meeting held on 17 December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

- b) Matters arising

12.OSP.13 – Transformation Directorate – Business Plan Monitoring

The Panel were provide with an update on the projects contained with the ICT Plan that showed the progress that had been made to date.

12.OSP.22 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of any interests.

12.OSP.23 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - To exclude the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

12.OSP.24 SCRUTINY FOCUS - SELECT MOVE

The Chair welcomed Councillor Adrian Lowe to the meeting who was attending in his capacity as Executive Member for Homes and Business, along with Zoe Whiteside, Head of Housing and Mick Coogan, Strategic Housing Officer.

The Panel considered a confidential report of the Director of Partnerships, Planning and Policy that provided responses to a number of questions raised by Members around the following:

- Time taken to process, determine and allocate priority banding to applicants of Selectmove
- Simplifying the Selectmove application to make it more user friendly but ensuring correct information is received
- Measures that could be taken to help those applicants who know their existing tenancy will be terminated before they become homeless
- Improvements to the interface between Selectmove and members of the public
- Information on the bidding cycle; and
- Ensuring that social housing providers get an allocations service that they value.

Member of the Panel also asked a variety of additional questions with regards to the policies and procedure of the Selectmove processes.

It was explained that although it was difficult to benchmark the service against other authorities, the Council had used comparative information when developing the application forms to make sure that they followed a consistent approach and captured all the relevant information needed from which to form an accurate assessment of the applicant's needs.

Members were informed of the type of information required from Selectmove applicants before an assessment of banding can be made and the common reasons for delay. Additional support and guidance is given when necessary to ensure that all applicants are banded correctly and assurances were given that the service does a lot of work that was over and above what was required to make sure that the bandings were fairly allocated.

A dedicated officer was currently working with Registered Social Landlords to identify those people that were struggling to pay their rents and to ensure offer help and assistance is offered to prevent tenants being at a risk of becoming homeless.

Members had concerns that the online service was not as good as it could be. Some of the Registered Social Landlords did not supply adequate information including photographs, whilst this was something that that the Council sympathised with, they had very little control over but with the support of the Executive Member they continued to lobby the companies in an effort to improve the process for the customers and the Council.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

12.OSP.25 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Due to the amount of business still to be transacted and the lateness of the hour, the Chair took the decision to adjourn the meeting. The remainder of the business on the agenda would be considered at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 20 March 2013.

Chair