

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods
Date	21 March 2016
Present	Councillor Carr

32. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests he may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

33. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session of the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods held on 15 February 2016 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

34. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

35. Results of the Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The Executive Member considered a report that highlighted the outcomes of the annual 2015/16 Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Officers gave an update and confirmed that the survey had taken place between October and December 2015 and was primarily carried out by post but contact by email and text was also used. The survey contained several new questions to ensure the results were compatible to feed into Housemark benchmarking and the results showed that 11% of tenants answered the survey.

In answer to the Executive Members questions officers confirmed that visitor numbers to West Offices and email contact to officers had increased but phone calls received had declined.

Officers discussed the analysis and stated that the results were statistically significant to within +/-2.48%. The Executive Member noted that:

- the vast majority of areas within the Your Property theme had increased with a notable increase within the overall quality of the home, overall repairs, maintenance service and with gas servicing arrangements.
- tenant's satisfaction with neighbourhood and estate services had mainly increased, however, satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live had decreased.
- tenants cited dog fouling as the highest problem followed by car parking, condition of the roads/pavements and rubbish or litter issues.
- satisfaction with the service delivery had mixed results and included decreases in the ability of staff to deal with a query at first point of contact, ability of staff to deal with a query efficiently and effectively and the ease of making a complaint.

In response to the results officers confirmed:

- they would be considering frontline services to effectively deliver a more proactive approach with customers.
- Building Services would continue to improve their service, including implementing a text messaging notification service for residents.
- amendments to the tenancy agreement made it a requirement that tenants requested permission to keep a pet and tenants would also be issued with a best practice guidance on keeping a pet

The Executive Member thanked officers and welcomed even more positive results in the 2016/17 survey.

Resolved:

- (i) That the results of the 2015/16 Tenant Satisfaction Survey be considered and the officer comments regarding future actions be noted.
- (ii) That a Tenant Satisfaction Survey for 2016/17 be run.

Reason: To ensure that the Council has up to date information regarding customer satisfaction, enabling landlord and building services to target resources and improvements to those services prioritised by customers.

36. Amendments to the Private Sector Assistance Policy - the Introduction of an Energy Repayment Loan

The Executive Member considered a report that informed him of the new regional product that had been developed by the Regional Homes and Loans Service aimed at alleviating fuel poverty within the city.

Officers gave an update and confirmed that since 2007 York council and 21 other local councils used the Regional Homes and Loans Service based with Sheffield City Council to deliver a range of loan products, in particular the loan called Home Appreciation Loan. It was now proposed to recycle funds from redeemed Home Appreciation Loans and other loan products to help tackle Excess Cold and Fuel Poverty across the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

The Executive Member noted that these new affordable Energy Repayment Loans (ERL) would be available from 1 April 2016, subject to delegating the function to Sheffield and had been developed to complement and supplement other energy efficiency funds. The ERL was designed to be a loan of last resort, where other forms of finance were not viable.

In answer to the Executive Members questions officers confirmed that each loan was based on regular affordable monthly repayments, managed by the Homes and Loans service and repayments would normally be by means of direct

debit but should the house be put up for sale or the loan owner had died, it would be repaid once the property had been sold.

Officers confirmed that in order for the Council to carry out this function it would need to delegate its powers to Sheffield City Council to award the grant in the same way as the Home Appreciation Loan.

Resolved:

- (i) That the development of the loan product to tackle fuel poverty be noted.
- (ii) That Option 1, to amend the Private Sector Assistance Policy and introduce a new Energy Repayment Loan product, be agreed.

Reason: The new evidence base from the Building Research Establishment found that, although fuel poverty levels in the City were generally below the national and regional average, there were certain Wards which were found to be higher.

Cllr Carr, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 3.18 pm].