
Meeting	Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	24 June 2019
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Pavlovic (Vice-Chair), Baker, Vassie, Wells, Musson and Hollyer (as a substitute for Mason)
Apologies	Councillor Mason

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. Public Participation

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

3. Arrangements for Scrutiny in York

The Head of Democratic and Civic Services was in attendance to highlight the structure of the Council's scrutiny provision and answer any questions from the committee.

Members noted their thanks for the report and the Chair highlighted his own hopes that this refresh to Scrutiny arrangements would lead to an effective input into policy development as well as scrutiny.

4. Attendance of Assistant Director for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods - Overview of Housing and Community Service Areas

The Assistant Director of Housing and Community Safety was in attendance to give an introduction into areas that fall under this committee's area of responsibility. It was noted that an updated version of the report had been circulated to Members (and uploaded to the website under the agenda item)

The Assistant Director gave an introduction to the service by describing that it was an exciting time for Housing and Community Safety with significant development of new housing and a major ICT modernisation programme. The officer also noted that Housing and Community Safety were not under the same pressure as other Council areas due the different way in which this area is funded, primarily through the Housing Revenue Account.

Building Services

The Assistant Director described the two varying roles of the work of Building Services, one being a reactive service and the other focussed on planned works and modernisation. Particular highlights of the next 12 months included the Tenants Choice Modernisation Programme, a more permanent solution to deal with properties with standing water and the replacement of heating systems. It was also noted that the Council have requested a stock condition survey on Council properties for the first time since 2002. This was expected to provide some new challenges to the service.

It was suggested that a potential Scrutiny topic in this area could look into customer service and repairs.

Community Safety

The Officer outlined some of the key work in this area including keeping the City Centre Safe, Counter Terrorism, Substance Misuse and Serious Organised Crime.

The officer also noted the emerging issues of County Lines and Modern Slavery and suggested that these were also potential areas for Scrutiny to look into.

Members mentioned that it would be interesting and useful to have a briefing / meeting with the Community Safety Hub to better understand their work. Officers would look into the feasibility of this and organise with Members.

Older Persons Accommodation Programme

The Assistant Director stated that this programme was designed to address the increased need for care home places within the

City. It was noted that there were a significant number of improvements, new properties and refurbishments including at Marjorie Waite Court, Lincoln Court, Burnholme Site, Lowfields Site and Haxby Hall currently underway or planned.

The Officer suggested that a good topic for Scrutiny in this area could be the exploration into what the City's needs are and suggested that the officer in charge of that piece of work attend the next meeting of the committee.

Housing Delivery

The Assistant Director gave an overview of the significant house building programme being embarked on over the next 5 years with 8 sites that the Council owns being developed. This will involve the creation of over 650 new homes and investment of around £150 million.

It was suggested by the Assistant Director that the officer responsible for this area attend and present the draft 'Design Guide' that was being developed, as this would be going to the Executive in September. Members were very supportive of this idea.

Housing ICT Programme

The Assistant Director highlighted this as an extremely important area of work at the moment with significant investment into Housing ICT that will help transform the way that customers interact with the service.

The officer noted that the new systems would be more efficient, more intuitive and more interactive for both customers and officers.

Housing Standards and Adaptations Service

It was noted that this team delivers all the adaptations to Council and private properties across the city and that they were heavily involved in energy efficiency and bidding to the Leeds City Region Better Homes Consortium.

It was also noted that the team in this area are trying to provide a more comprehensive service and cover some services that

perhaps may have previously been delivered by Adult Social Care.

It was suggested that Scrutiny topics could include how to address fuel poverty and the progress made with the extension of HMO licensing that was brought into legislation last October. It was suggested that this topic could be added to the work plan for late 2019.

Housing Options and Support Team

The officer highlighted the work of this team in combating homelessness and explained that there had been significant development in this area with a new 57 unit building at James House being developed to help address homelessness in the City.

In terms of rough sleeping, the officer highlighted significant reductions in the numbers of rough sleepers counted in consecutive years (29 to 9).

It was noted that one area of work for the service in the future is the need to create a pathway to independent living for people with mental health problems.

Housing Equalities and Engagement

The officer highlighted the ways in which the service interacts with tenants including: Tenants Scrutiny Panel, Leaseholder Scrutiny Panels and an Equalities group.

Potential Scrutiny topics were identified included inviting tenants and tenants associations to attend meetings of this Committee and a review of the Housing Environment Improvement Programme (HEIP).

Housing Management

It was noted that this team handles the management of council stock, which is around 7500 homes. This service had recently been restructured with 18 estate managers becoming 29 housing officers. This has enabled much smaller patches and allows officers to make more of an impact with issues relating to households rather than just tenancy matters.

Housing Policy and Strategy Team

The Assistant Director highlighted the work of his Housing Policy and Strategy Team, noting particular aspects of their work that could benefit from Scrutiny as:

- The review of the HRA Business Plan; and
- Review into the Asset Management Strategy

It was also noted that it may be worth Members of this team attending a Scrutiny meeting to discuss the Housing Market in York to help develop the committee's understanding of issues in this area.

Members agreed that this would be beneficial and would be suited to a meeting where it could be given the time it deserved.

5. Draft Work Plan

The following were agreed as additions to the Work Plan for 2019.

July

- Attendance of Executive Member for Housing and Community Safety
- The development of the new 'Design Brief'
- Older Persons Accommodation Programme

September

- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

October

- Round table discussion with Safer York Partnership and external partners regarding County Lines and Modern Slavery.

January

- Review of Extension of HMO Licensing

CLlr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.10 pm].

DRAFT