
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	27 JANUARY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MORLEY (CHAIR), BOWGETT (VICE-CHAIR), SUE GALLOWAY (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), HORTON, HYMAN, SIMPSON-LAING, WISEMAN, MCLAUGHLIN (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) AND GUMLEY (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR TAYLOR

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

44. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair and the Executive Member as a correct record.

45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

The Chair, however, agreed to hear representations from Heather McKenzie from Unison regarding Agenda Item 7 – Home Care Efficiencies Project – Final Proposal, immediately prior to discussion of this item on the agenda.

46. RESULTS OF 2008 ANNUAL HOUSING SATISFACTION SURVEY

Members received a presentation and considered a report providing them with the results of the Annual Housing Services Monitor (AHSM): a postal survey of City of York Council tenants undertaken during November 2008.

The Research Officer, Marketing and Communications, gave a PowerPoint presentation, which provided a brief background to this statutory survey,

the overall results, results per subgroup and highlighted the key aspects of the survey.

It was noted that overall satisfaction with housing services was 85%. 74% of tenants described the council as a 'very good' or 'good' landlord, down from 88% in the previous 2006 survey. 84% of respondents said that they were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' with the condition of their home and 83% said that they were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' with the repair and maintenance service.

Nine areas were defined in the survey, including: repairs and maintenance; overall quality; neighbourhood; dealing with anti-social behaviour; keeping tenants informed; taking landlord's views into account; involving tenants in management; value for money; and dealing with enquiries.

Members then raised various concerns and comments to which officers responded:

- Paragraph 15 of the report had noted a fall in satisfaction with regard to the Council as a landlord. Officers stated that a focus group would be set up to establish the reasons for that and the results would be brought back to the Panel. Approximately 300 tenants who took part in the survey had stated that they were willing to take part in more detailed focus groups. It was noted that older and longer-term tenants were more satisfied with housing services than younger tenants.
- It was mentioned that tenants preferred to deal with one person when reporting a problem. Officers responded that unfortunately this was not always possible given the nature of some of the roles, however, they stressed that what was important was whether a response had been made right away and this involved ensuring that the message was passed on and responded to appropriately.
- Anti-social behaviour was the second area of concern for tenants. It was noted that anti-social behaviour was a problem involving other agencies and that it was important to keep all those involved well informed. It was also noted that there was now greater satisfaction in how this was dealt with, an 11% increase from 2006, but that tenants often had high expectations and these could not always be met.
- The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group proportion of respondents was less than 1%. Officers responded that they were undertaking a customer profiling exercise over the next 10 months and this would provide the opportunity to tailor some services to meet the needs of certain tenant groups.
- It was noted that a higher proportion of females responded to the survey. Questions about age range, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation were asked by the survey.
- It was agreed that officers would send a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and the questionnaire to Members.

The co-opted members confirmed that the survey had given a good breakdown and that satisfaction with housing services had generally been high.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to note the results of the 2008 Annual Housing Service Monitor and the proposed follow up focus work and actions.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To improve the satisfaction levels of tenants with the Housing Service.

47. OUTCOMES OF THE RESPONSIVE REPAIRS REVIEW

Members received a report presenting the recent Responsive Repairs Review carried out within Housing Services and Neighbourhood Services and the recommendations arising from it affecting the levels of service to be offered to customers.

The Head of Housing presented the main points of this report, which had been based on a pilot in the Acomb area. It was stated that 30,000 repairs were carried out annually costing in excess of £4 million. The Acomb area was chosen for the pilot as it represented about 40% of these housing repairs.

Members raised comments and concerns with regard to the review to which officers responded:

- It was confirmed that heating problems fell under the category of same day repairs.
- Tenants would be made fully aware of which areas fell into which area of repair priority – 04, Same Day or General.
- In terms of the percentage of repairs undertaken for new tenants, at least 99% of repair work was now done before a tenant moved in and that a house would only be taken “as seen” where there had been a mutual exchange.
- That there was an “out of hours” 24/7 emergency service. Should a repair need to be dealt with within the 04 timescale, then a standby would go out, and if a repair needed to be done which was the same day category this would be done the next working day.
- In terms of heating repairs and elderly tenants, the Customer Service Assistants had discretion to override a decision with regard to the timeframe for such a repair if felt needed, but that this was monitored.

The co-opted members confirmed that with regard to the Acomb area, the service repair work had been done very well and very efficiently.

The Executive Member noted that it had been very useful to have the voice of co-opted members, who were tenants, to guide the Panel and that satisfaction had been expressed from the Acomb side.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to consider the report and approve Option 2 in paragraph 21 "accept the new repairs priorities for customers arising from the review process" with an implementation date of 1 April 2009.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To improve the levels of service offered to customers.

48. AMENDMENTS TO THE LETTINGS POLICY

Members considered a report seeking consideration of amendments to the allocation and lettings policy that aimed to make the best use of the Council stock in light of the need to tackle the demand for public rented housing.

The Head of Housing Services explained that these amendments were required to reduce the number of homeless applicants in temporary accommodation.

Members then raised various points to which Officers responded:

- With regard to ensuring that private landlords were reputable and that properties were up to standard, Officers responded that the Council did not want to put people in less than adequate housing. The Council was looking at developing an accreditation scheme for private landlords, but that at present only a small number of private landlords were used.
- Accompanied viewings to properties were made and the tenant could refuse to accept the property if it was in a poor state of repair.
- With regard to the question of repossession of properties, due to the present financial climate, that each case would be looked at on its own merits. Decisions regarding being intentionally homeless would be made on a case-by-case basis.
- On the question of overcrowding with regard to families and children, Officers confirmed that this was a challenge and a balance.
- With regard to those tenants convicted of an offence and likely to go to prison, a protocol had been developed with the Probation

Service, which came into force in 2008. This would fall under the responsibility of the Offender Management Team to inform the Housing Department if a custodial sentence was felt likely, so as to ensure that debts/rent arrears were not accrued and that the property was not vandalised. Housing Services were working with the Probation Service. It was stated that the Probation Service had a housing and employment specialist, with a dedicated specialist for the York and Selby area.

- Encouragement would be given to offenders to apply for housing well in advance of their release date.
- One member stated that approval of this Letting Policy should include the caveat that the quality of the landlord's housing must be taken into consideration.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to approve Option 2 as outlined in paragraph 10 of the agenda.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To enable the Council to do all it can to increase the quality of life for homeless applicants and reduce the number of homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation.

49. HOME CARE EFFICIENCIES PROJECT – FINAL PROPOSAL

Prior to the consideration of this item, the Chair had agreed to receive representations on this agenda item from Heather McKenzie of Unison.

Ms McKenzie stated that overall Unison was pleased with the consultation process and that past inconsistencies in administration policy had been identified, relating to downtime and non-contact time. However, other concerns were expressed with regard to the staff plan, the IT system and its abilities to produce efficiencies, and it was felt that more discussion with regard to the new system would have been helpful. Concerns were also expressed about the reduction in home care managers from six to four. With regard to the re-ablement efforts, it was felt that even best efforts might be jeopardised as the over-charging policy was not being looked at and there were concerns expressed about the cost to customers.

Generally Ms McKenzie reported Unison was pleased with the increase in team leader hours, but was less sure about the future. With regard to the removal of the 9 to 2 shift, it was felt that this posed a problem for recruitment. Concern was also expressed about the 15-hour minimum contract, especially for those staff in receipt of tax credit who had to work a

minimum of 16 hours in order to be eligible for this benefit. Concerns were also expressed about the merging of the EMI support team and that the paperwork was not ready for full consultation. It was highlighted that the main concern of staff was the implementation of the new structure, accommodation, existing working hours, the use of pool cars and training. It was also felt that it was essential to maintain good communication and give consideration to staff and their circumstances.

Members then considered the Home Care Efficiencies Project – Final Proposal. At the meeting on 8 September 2008 Members had considered an item on In-house Home Care – Revised Delivery Model and requested that the final delivery model for in-house home care be brought back to them after the staff consultation process and before its implementation.

At this meeting, Members considered the report, which reviewed the background to the need for changes and set out the final proposed Service Delivery Model. It also outlined the consultation process that had been followed since the initial proposal was first presented to staff back in late July, the key messages received from staff during that process and how the Home Care Efficiencies Project Board had responded to these and how it was anticipated the service delivery model would achieve the necessary efficiencies and improve outcomes for customers.

The Assistant Director, Service Delivery and Transformation, stated that the report was the work of a Project Board to further improve services and focus on customers, to get people off the long-term packages of care and back home. It was noted that with recent demographic trends there had been an increase in the demand for dementia care and that it was important to improve the continuity of care and to have as few people involved as possible. It was stated that the saving target was £950,000.

The Officer stated that the contribution of the unions was recognised and that this had helped to reassure staff and that the process of consultation had improved services and identified continuous improvements. How the efficiencies were to be achieved was outlined in Annex 6 to the report, including efficient rostering and the merging of teams, and that this was seen as important to retain frontline staff.

The officer further confirmed that although the number of team leaders would be reduced, team leader hours would be increased and two temporary team leader posts would be created, but these posts would be reviewed in the next six to nine months.

The officer confirmed that the council would accommodate a variety of work hours within shift patterns and would seek to recruit to as many hours as possible. On the issue of rostered hours and shift patterns, staff had indicated that rostered hours had matched the demand from customers. On the question of the merging of the EMI and High Dependency and Night team into one Care Service it was stated that job description changes would be needed with further consultation and that this was underway.

With regard to property implications, the officer stated that following meetings with tenants that the response was strong from Glen Lodge. Concerns about parking, noise and security were raised across the other three sites. The officer stated that time was needed to look at finding alternative office accommodation and that the least impact option would be considered.

In response to the comments made by Heather McKenzie of UNISON, the officer stated that the staff plan was a robust system suitable for more stable groups of customers. Further, it was stated that the Project Board would be meeting on the 28 February to talk about the next stage of implementation, the HR implications and the training programme.

Members then raised various points to which officers responded:

- With regard to Gale Farm and Glen Lodge and the issue of parking, it was noted by officers that it was not just the issue of parking, at Gale Farm in particular, but of traders parking in the surgery and local streets and this had been taken up and instructions would be issued to staff.
- That the review would be brought back to the Panel.
- The importance of providing a good service was noted and that the 9 to 2 shift had suited mothers with primary school children. It was also noted by Members that the wording of the advertising was important and advertising only 15 hours per week was likely to reduce the potential pool of workers for these jobs. Officers confirmed that recruitment could be within the parameters of 15 to 30 hours per week.
- On the question of the new IT system, the officer confirmed that the system had been designed with input from users and that feedback from other authorities using the system was that it was fairly easy to use and provided useful and robust performance data.
- Members also raised the issue of the importance of high priority of service delivery.

The Executive member noted that in the current turbulent time in social care that it was important to have a service that would respond quickly and well.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to agree the proposed service delivery model.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To improve outcomes for customers and achieve the required budget savings for 2009-10.

50. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009/10

Members considered a report, which presented the 2009/10 budget proposals for Housing & Adult Social Services.

The Director of Housing and Adult Social Services reported to Members that the savings proposed were in Annex 3 and that Annex 5 referred to the savings consulted on but not the recommendations for inclusion. He also noted that this year the budget was tight with cost pressures and growth kept to a minimum. He also stated that decisions needed to be made with regard to fees and income as referred to in Annex 4. The Officer noted that there had been very strong support for protecting services to the elderly and long-term care fees as noted in paragraph 31 of the report. On the question of risk it was stated that an Equality Impact Assessment needed to be undertaken with regard to the impact of Savings Proposal HASS15 in respect of disabled adults, together with more consultation. It was stated that Housing Revenue had shown a surplus.

Members of the Labour Group reserved their position for Budget Council.

Members noted that some of the annex pages had been difficult to read due to the page setup and that this would be looked at for future agendas.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

Consider whether the budget proposals are in line with the Council's priorities and provide comments to be submitted to Budget Executive on the:

- 2009/10 base budget as set out in paragraph 6
- Service pressure proposals as set out in Annex 2
- Savings proposals as set out in Annex 3
- Fees and charges as set out in Annex 4
- Other revenue budget options for consultation as set out in Annex 5
- Options for new capital schemes in Annex 7
- The HRA budget as set out in Annex 8

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: As part of the consultation on the Housing & Adult Social Services budget for 2009/10.

51. HASS DIRECTORATE PLAN 2009-2010

Members considered a report, which sought approval from the Executive Member for the directorate plan for Housing and Adult Social Services covering the period 2009-12.

The Director of Housing and Adult Social Services stated that this important plan for the department focused on the important issues of staffing, health and safety and equality with vision, key drivers, objectives and an overview of the structure and resources. It was noted that all the figures could not be included, as the budget had not yet been approved. The list of milestones and targets was recorded on page 88 of the agenda. The officer also stated that the detailed service plans from this overall plan would be brought back to the Panel in March 2009.

Members of the Labour Group reserved their position, as the full figures were not available.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to accept Option 1 and approve the Directorate Plan for Housing and Adult Social Services.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: So that the Council's corporate and departmental objectives can be achieved.

52. IMPROVEMENT PLAN IN RESPONSE TO COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL CARE INSPECTION (CSCI) ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (APA) OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES 2007/8

Members considered a report, which asked them to comment on and approve the high-level improvement plan following the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) for Adult Social Services 2007-08.

The Director of Housing and Adult Social Services stated that the Improvement Plan set out the key areas for development and these had been shared with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). He also stated that he was confident that the end of year figures would show an improvement. It was noted that staff members had shown enthusiasm for the improvement plan and were involved in the process.

Members commented that they were pleased that the Improvement Plan had been brought back to the Panel and thanked the officer for the additional work that had been undertaken on this. Members enquired about the councils that York was working closely with and officers confirmed that these were Bolton and Sunderland, both larger authorities,

which had achieved outstanding results and which had a good reputation on performance management. It was also confirmed by the officer that other external help was being sought on a selected basis.

A Member asked about the number of HIV and Aids referrals with regard to safeguarding. Officers replied that there had been no referrals on this issue of which they were aware. However, it was noted that the number of people who were HIV positive had grown, though it was not felt that harassment was a particular issue.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- (i) Approve the improvement plan attached as Annex 1
- (ii) Agree to receive a progress report on the improvement plan at the meeting in June 2009.

Decision of the Executive Member

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To enable progress to be made on the key areas for development and to ensure ongoing and effective Member scrutiny of the improvement plan.

Councillor Sue Galloway, Executive Member

Councillor J Morley, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.03 pm and finished at 7.08 pm].