

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE  
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
4 September 2018 (7.30 - 8.45 pm)**

**Present:**

Councillors Tony Durdin, Paul Middleton, Christopher Wilkins (Chairman), Robby Misir, Timothy Ryan, Paul McGeary and Stephanie Nunn

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keith Darvill, Councillor Gerry O'Sullivan, Councillor Carol Smith and Councillor Christine Smith

**5 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**7 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER ONE 2018/19**

Members received a presentation that outlined the current six corporate performance indicators for Quarter 1 that related to the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that performance ratings were available for 4 of the 6 indicators. Three were off target, rated Red and one was on target, rated Green.

The Sub-Committee noted the following highlights in Quarter one:

- To date, the regeneration consultation meetings had involved 1,482 residents across the 12 sites.
- The programme of engagement had been supported by 1-2-1 meetings with residents, newsletter and website updates and features in local publications.
- Since establishing the Joint Venture company in April 2018, Wates had completed 'Meet the Developer' consultation meetings, which 126 residents and neighbours of the estates in Phase One of the programme attended.
- The consultation programme was set to recommence in September 2018.

The presentation outlined the following areas for improvement:

- 89.4% (5,971 out of 6,676) of repairs were completed within the target timescale in Quarter 1.
  - Gas contractors' performance was 99.0%.
  - Main repairs contractors' performance was 87.5%.
- An improvement plan was implemented by the contractor which the Council was assured would result in improved performance during the last quarter of 2017/18. Regretfully this was not achieved and performance remained below target.
- The main corrective actions taken by the contractor involved recruiting additional resources to assist in managing the number of "out of target orders", scrutinising employee productivity and reviewing supply chain management to ensure timely completions.
- Completion of these actions and progress in achieving performance targets was scrutinised at regular contract management meetings and at separate monthly service improvement meetings.
- The Director of Neighbourhoods had also met with the Managing Director of Breyers to highlight the importance of service delivery to Havering and gain assurance that performance will improve.
- The appointment of additional staff resources was delayed due to recruitment difficulties, and following appointment some new operatives have subsequently left and some were not considered suitable. Recruitment continued to be a problem for the contractor, however resources had now been appointed and it was anticipated that the backlog of overdue orders would now reduce.
- The contractors' action plan was being reviewed, to identify any further changes that could be implemented to improve performance against the KPI.

### **Improvements Required**

- 117 out of 131 (89%) of non-ASB related Stage 1 Housing complaints were closed within 15 days in Quarter 1.
- 59 out of 65 (91%) complaints related to Housing repairs were closed within 15 days. Whilst below target (95%), performance had significantly improved compared with the same period the previous year (56%).
- Issues contributing to below-target performance included:
  - The Housing Complaints Team lost two experienced officers in Quarter 1 which impacted on the overall performance. The team had successfully recruited to these roles in Quarter 2. Once training is completed, an increase in performance was expected in Quarters 3 and 4.
  - There had been an increase in complaints due to letters sent to Private Sector Leasing (PSL) tenants regarding the PSL review and negative publicity in the local press surrounding this.

- A new Interim Senior Complaints Officer had been put in place to manage the team and the workload.
  - The Acting Assistant Director of Housing had instigated a more structured approach to achieving targets with milestones and warnings incorporated into the process. Also closer senior management scrutiny had been built into the system.
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- In Quarter 1 there were 49 Stage 2 complaints that fell within the remit of the Sub-Committee. Of these, 33 were closed on time, resulting in the outturn being significantly below target.
  - Targets on Stage 2 cases could be missed due to the extreme complexity of the complaint. Some cases could be historic, involving information going back many years (sometimes in excess of 10 years), as well as the need to contact external agencies and view archived files.
  - The Chief Executive signed off all Stage 2 complaint responses and was kept up to date with delays on investigations. Case officers were in regular contact with complainants.
  - Targets could also be missed as complaints were investigated fully with complete transparency, so as to bring resolution to the matter for the customer without the need to escalate further to Stage 3 or the Ombudsman. The Complaints team was reliant on services to provide information in a timely fashion, which often prompted a need for further information or clarification until resolution had been achieved. The reduced number of Stage 3 complaints supports the theory that a full, comprehensive investigation at Stage 2 brought a satisfactory resolution for the customer.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report and the presentation.

## **8 PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING - CURRENT UPDATES**

Members received an update on the current position on Private Sector Leasing, which they had requested at the sub-committee meeting on the 10 July 2018.

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the update on the current position on Private Sector Leasing, be noted.**

## **9 HOUSING REPAIRS AND GAS SAFETY CHECKS - UPDATE REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report which updated on the provision of responsive repairs and carrying out gas safety checks to Council owned and managed housing stock.

As a landlord, the Council had a statutory duty to undertake responsive repairs to its properties, which included those associated with gas appliances and heating systems.

Due to the specialist nature of the service in 2018, K&T Heating had been appointed as the contractor for domestic installations and BSW Ltd for communal (commercial) installations, to provide responsive repairs and planned servicing to gas appliances and heating installations.

Performance associated with completing repairs on time had been a significant challenge, with the contractual KPI target of 95% Repairs Completed On Time having been consistently missed and this was acknowledged by Breyer as one of their primary failures. Despite action plans having been developed and worked to, no significant improvements had been made and no sustainable solution had been put forward by Breyer to resolve the matter. The contract was approaching an end and officers were reviewing a range of alternatives with service quality, customer satisfaction and sustainability being at the centre of the new service specification.

The new gas servicing contracts commenced in the early part of the year with a handover of outstanding works and servicing schedules being a major part of the mobilisation. The contractor providing the domestic installations service had not made a satisfactory start to service provision, due partly to the availability of Gas Safe qualified engineers to maintain the previous servicing programme. Performance issues had been addressed through contract supervision meetings and the corrective actions in place were beginning to deliver better quality.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

## **10 UPDATE ON THE LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT**

The Sub-Committee received a report that provided an update on the Sports and Leisure Management Contract with regard to the Chafford Sports Complex.

The Sports Complex was in need of significant capital investment if it was to continue to operate as a publicly accessible sports complex, as the Complex did not meet with current expectations for the quality of facilities.

A review to consider the options for the future of Chafford Sports Centre would be undertaken, which would consist of a consultation regarding the future of the Complex, including seeking to identify the impact if the Complex were to cease to be included within the Sports and Leisure Management Contract. The consultation, subject to final confirmation, would include meetings with key stakeholders, including Harris Academy Rainham, Sports and Leisure Management and groups that hire the Complex. Once the consultation had been completed, and the results

analysed, a report would be provided to Cabinet seeking a decision on the future of Chafford Sports Complex.

The Sub-Committee noted the progress with the Sports and Leisure Management Contract since the award of the contract that commenced on 01 October 2016 with regard to Chafford Sports Complex.

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**Chairman**

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