

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3B - Town Hall
11 July 2019 (7.30 - 8.45 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Ray Best (Chairman), Robby Misir (Vice-Chair), Keith Darvill, Paul Middleton, Gerry O'Sullivan, Christopher Wilkins, Timothy Ryan and Carol Smith.

Councillor Tony Durdin was absent.

23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 26 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25 PERFORMANCE REPORT UPDATE - QUARTER FOUR

Members received a presentation that outlined the six corporate performance indicators for Quarter four that were reported to the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that three indicators were off target; and one was on target.

The Sub-Committee noted that two of the reported indicators were demand rather than performance indicators, therefore were not given a RAG status.

The report informed Member of the new Corporate Standards for Complaints Data which was introduced following some poor quality investigations at Stage 1 of the process and the nature of Stage 2 complaints had become far more complex.

- A review of the Council's Complaint Policy and Procedure was carried out and as a result there had been a change in timescales for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints from the start of Quarter 3

- Following a call-in of the Executive Decision, and a subsequent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the following changes were implemented:
 - Stage 1 complaints to be completed in 10 working days (amended from 15 working days)
 - Stage 2 complaints to be completed in 25 working days (amended from 20 working days)
 - Stage 3 complaints to be completed in 30 working days (amended from a calendar month)

The report outlined the following areas for improvement within Housing Repairs:

- 84.37% of repairs were completed within the target timescale in Quarter 4 against a target of 95%. The main repairs contractor Breyer's performance was 84.03%. The Sub-Committee noted that the main reason for Breyer performance being below target was due to a backlog of overdue orders they had allowed to accumulate. While clearing the backlog, it had not been possible for Breyer to achieve target, because all backlog jobs would be late and as such would inevitably impact on the overall KPI.

The repairs contractor was now working to a revised improvement plan designed to reduce the backlog, which was less complicated, more focused on outcomes and detailed the measures being taken to increase the contractor's resources to achieve target.

The new plan was reviewed more frequently at fortnightly meetings and attended by Breyer Operational Directors and Havering's Property Services Manager, together with operational managers from both organisations.

It was stated that the backlog was reducing month on month and had been reduced by approximately 35% in March 2019. As of the first week in April there were only 8 jobs above the target set.

The Sub-Committee was informed that with the backlog reducing, orders going forward would have an impact on repairs completed on time. Breyer were currently reporting figures for April 2019 of 93% on time and for May 96% on time. These figures had yet to be confirmed, but the reduction in overdue orders would result in improved performance. As part of the plan, Breyer have appointed new operatives to assist in clearing the backlog and this is clearly having an effect. There was concern raised previously around Breyer's ability to retain the additional staff but this had not occurred and monitoring of resources and regular communication with Breyer has proved to be effective.

Although Breyer had not met the KPI of "repairs completed within target" they consistently achieved the "Right First Time" target and continued to do so.

As previously advised, the interim Director of Housing had also set up and maintained regular strategic review meetings with the Managing Director of Breyer to ensure performance was highlighted as a key priority and to gain assurance that improvement would be delivered.

During brief discussions, Members suggested that future performance reports include a breakdown of what each category entailed.

A Member requested that in future the complaint figures provided should include a breakdown that determined the number of complaints at stage 2 and stage 3.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the current Housing Repair Contractor, Breyer, was appointed in 2014 and that the contract was recently renewed for another three years.

The Sub-Committee noted the performance report..

26 HOUSING REPAIRS TOPIC GROUP - UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a briefing on the current status of Housing Repairs as part of the ongoing scrutiny review from the previous year.

It was reported that there were the service maintained over 10,000 properties across the borough by using a term contractor, Breyer, and several small local contractors on an Ad Hoc basis.

It was noted that there were issues with the contractor performance around completed jobs within agreed timescales.

The report informed that in November 2018 the number of overdue jobs rose to 756. This had an impact on the main KPI, jobs completed within time, which dipped to 84% against a target of 95%. This had a direct effect on the number of complaints received.

The Sub-Committee noted the following improvements that had been made and other ongoing plans to give residents a quality repairs service:

- (i) The service focused on reducing the number of overdue jobs.

This was achieved by:

- A skill gap analysis which identified areas where Breyer were short on labour.
- Using an issues log, poor practice was identified within the contact center where orders were being raised with incorrect trade codes and priorities.

- Breyer changed a supervisor who was able to work with the team in a more effective manner which assisted in increasing productivity.
- Breyer worked with the contact center to increase the percentage of routine orders being issued, this was still a slight issue as it currently sat at 44% against a target of 70%.
- Breyer employed 5 temporary staff members to assist in the reduction of the back log.
- The introduction of a daily monitoring sheet which tracked all key data to act as an early warning indicator
- Reduction of “Fixed Appointments” allowing the OneServe scheduling system to operate more effectively.
- All of the above increased productivity to produce an out turn of 3.5 jobs per day per operative.

The service also focused on continued improvement:

- A new Repairs Manager was appointed and had immediately set about improving the client, contractor relationship, productivity and the service as a whole delivered to residents.
- Weekly meetings were being held around robust contract management.
- Breyer to reinstate Handyman service.
- Breyer to launch property MOT service targeting vulnerable residents.
- A more focused approach was being adopted by Havering surveyors.
- Officers and contractors were being held accountable for their actions, or lack of.
- A monthly reconciliation meeting would be held to establish a truer “jobs completed in target” figure.
- From 1st July Breyer would take back agreed out of scope works.
- From 1st July Breyer would start to take more voids.
- A tender exercise would be conducted to ensure VFM and due diligence for contractors picking up out of scope works and voids.
- The improvement action plan would continue and be updated to reflect the new ways of working.
- The call centre would be issuing agreed out of scope works directly to “back up” contractors instead of raising pre inspections to surveyors.
- Surveyors would be doing more back end monitoring of the contract i.e. cost scrutiny and quality assurance through a program of post inspections.
- Surveyors duty day was to be reinstated.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the Topic Group work should continue. Members requested that case study of jobs raised and how it was implemented be presented at the next meeting.

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

Chairman

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