

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE  
Virtual Meeting  
22 March 2022 (7.03 - 8.29 pm)**

**Present:** Councillors Ray Best (Chairman), Carol Smith, Timothy Ryan, Paul Middleton, Gerry O'Sullivan, Keith Darvill and Christopher Wilkins

**Councillors' attendance noted only due to informal virtual meeting.**

**50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Robby Misir.

**51 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**52 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**53 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

**54 MEARS CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received an update on the performance on the Council's contractor Mears.

The report contained the key activities that were required to mobilise the new repairs and voids contract with Mears and demobilise the existing contract with Breyers.

Garry Knights explained that a number of subject specific meetings took place each week and included overall service delivery, IT and Communications. These meetings further helped clarify the scope and extent of the service and removed the ambiguities. A full activity tracker was provided in Appendix 1 for the report and there had been significant works undertaken by the teams from Havering and Mears. Full commencement of full service was on target for Monday 4th April. The model they were currently working towards was for jobs to be done in less than 10 days and appointments would be offered on Saturday mornings along with the weekday 8am-8pm times.

Discussion occurred around increased costs and where that money would come from. It was confirmed that some unforeseen circumstances had been provided for in the budget. Further discussion could take place after further discussion with Mears.

Concern was raised over private landlord housing stock standards and the challenges of getting landlords to bring properties up to a good standard. It was explained that the Council was looking to help landlords through the process in any way they could.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

## **55 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE**

The Sub-Committee was provided with an overview on the Quarter 3 performance.

The report and presentation provided an overview of the Council's performance against the performance indicators selected for monitoring by the Sub-Committee. The presentation highlighted areas of strong performance and potential areas for improvement. Council performance was identified using colours that indicated RAG ratings for 2021/22. Red meant that more than the 'target tolerance' off the quarterly target was achieved; amber meant that within the 'target tolerance' of the quarterly target was achieved; and green meant that on or better than the quarterly target was achieved.

Where the performance was off track against the quarterly target and the rating was read 'Improvements required' were included in the presentation. This highlighted what action the Council would take to address poor performance.

Questions were raised around the staff issues and staff shortages and whether more staff would be required in future. Patrick Odling-Smee explained that the planning officers' service was exempt from the VOI release but that he would get an update and ask for a response from the service regarding recruitment and further training of staff.

Members requested if there could be more of a breakdown of the complaints within the report in future. It was explained that complaints sections could be broken down into repairs and needs sections with complaints and enquiries shown separately.

It was also noted that due to the probability of many residents going to be impacted by rising costs, there would be increased pressure on rental payments. Therefore, Council inclusion advisors would be on hand to offer advice and support to assist residents who required additional benefits and or employment services.

Members enquired about staff and contractor incentives or targets and it was explained that all staff were aware what was expected of them. Officers felt that it was far better to measure process rather than outcomes. This especially held true for rental arrears. Proactivity was a key preventative measure within this area.

Further queries were made on the backlog of stage 2 and 3 complaints and around the restrictions for planning visits continuing post pandemic. Patrick assured Members that there would be a comprehensive report on those done for the next meeting and he would also ensure to include any reports on safety compliance where there were performance framework changes. KPIs and targets could also be provided within those reports. Louise Warner would update all committee members on the position of planning visits.

The Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

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**Chairman**