

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2024

Present: Councillor S Dannheimer, Chair

Councillors: T J Marsh
H Land
W Mee (Substitute for K Woodhead)
P A Smith (Substitute for S Webb)
C M Tideswell
E Winfield

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Williamson, H L Crosby, K Harlow, R D MacRae, J M Owen, A W G A Stockwell, S Webb and K Woodhead

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 22 and 28 February 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 **CONSIDERATION OF CALL-IN**

There were no call-ins to be considered.

3.1 **HOUSING REPAIRS**

Members were updated on the improvements to the Housing Repairs Service from the Head of Housing. The Committee received a comprehensive report on how the service has been improved since the review. The report in 2022 provided key finding including: the number of employees in Housing Repairs was not sufficient to meet the needs of the service, the involvement of two teams in the repairs booking process was one of the main reasons for increased tenant dissatisfaction and inefficiency, there was a need for a more senior role with responsibility for compliance matters and that the structure would benefit from a number of specialist roles instead of a generic role under the Senior Maintenance Officer. Since 2022 there had been two restructures, the first restructure to support the Housing repairs calls and the second was to build on the compliance and repair inspectors along with operatives to cover the skills gaps required. Further roles had been created including Voids Surveyor, Disrepair Inspector and Assistant, and Change Delivery Manager.

Members queried how long void properties were vacant for and the reason for the target being missed was due to new software being implemented It was hopeful, going

forward, the target would be met with both general needs and Independent Living. It was confirmed to Members that the historic backlog of housing repairs had been cleared and some of the repair issues was due to data in the system being incorrect. This information has now been data cleansed and that 71% of tenants were pleased with the repairs carried out including positive feedback received to the operatives.

The Chair would like to see a further spotlight review on Housing Repairs to monitor the changes in the next six months.

3.2 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT THE COUNCIL

Members were presented with the report from the findings of the Working Group on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council. The Working Group would be continuing their scrutiny on the topic. The review was requested by Councillor S Dannheimer to consider if the Council met the needs of all service users, Members and employees. The review was in accordance with the Council's Always Improving, value providing continuous improvement and delivering value for money.

RESOLVED that the Committee RECOMMENDS to Cabinet that the following recommendations be considered.

- 1. The Human Resources Manager share the Neurodiversity Policy with all Members and employees.**
- 2. To increase awareness of Neurodiversity and support available to employees and Members.**
- 3. To consider the provision of additional resources to the Communities team to ensure at least one event per quarter and a minimum of four in a year, be organised.**
- 4. To consider changing the counter space at the D.H. Lawrence Museum to be more accessible to customers and incorporate an area for a wheelchair user to access the digital tour.**
- 5. To consider the provision of ear defenders, to offer visitors who may have sensory processing differences and additional audio headsets to enhance the D.H. Lawrence experience to all.**
- 6. To increase signage within the museum to increase awareness of health and safety issues and accessibility and to provide signposting to the nearest accessible toilet.**
- 7. To increase advertising of the D.H. Lawrence digital experience to promote live tours to Groups.**
- 8. The Working Group notes that the current Council Offices required substantial works to resolve the current issues of disrepair and accessibility issues and at the earliest opportunity plans should be considered for the future of the Kimberley Depot Offices.**

9. To ensure all fire risk assessments are up to date in residential accommodation.

10. To ensure independent living schemes have automated doors to support living independently.

4 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the Cabinet Work Programme.

5 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Suggestion request from Councillor B C Carr to look at a full and comprehensive review of the impact of the increased parking tariffs brought in across the Borough on 1 January 2024. Members felt that the request was already being undertaken as agreed at the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 23 May 2024. Members felt they didn't want to duplicate any work already being considered and the request came to the Committee within six months of it already being discussed.

Members also requested that no further scrutiny suggestions should be brought to the Committee without the nominated person attending the meeting to present to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Suggestion topic on parking tariffs not to be included on the Work Programme.

The Committee considered the work programme, and with the additional items to include a spotlight review on Housing Repairs in six months' time and to receive updates from the Working Group on Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity at the Council approved accordingly.

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved.