

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 23 July 2018 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Bill Williams (Chair)
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Peter Babudu
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Tom Flynn
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Jason Ochere

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Ian Wingfield

OFFICER SUPPORT: Norman Coombe - Head of Corporate Team
Shelley Burke – Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Ferenc Morath - Investment Manager, Housing & Modernisation Department

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alice Macdonald and Margy Newens.

VIDEO - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URrPp6gxAC0>

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

- 2.1 There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. LEDBURY ESTATE - MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE LEDBURY

4.1 Ferenc Morath (Investment Manager, Housing & Modernisation Department) presented the report. He explained that this report was a review specifically of the repairs history, with a set of recommendations for improving the systems. He gave a short background to the structural issues for the estate, for the benefit of new committee members. An options appraisal for the high rise blocks was currently being conducted and would be reported to cabinet in October.

4.2 Ferenc Morath explained that for independence, this report had been commissioned by the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance and carried out by external auditors, RSM. The recommendations and management responses were all contained in the report, and the department accepted all the recommendations.. He added that housing was in the process of introducing Apex, a new application for managing and tracking repairs data. This would improve the department's analysis of stock condition and spend. The published version of the report had identified some residents' details in error – this had been withdrawn and would be reported as a data breach. A redacted version of the report would be provided.

4.3 In response to members' questions, he explained the process for resident involvement in estate walk about and major works schemes. The department would be improving its system of repairs codes in order to better identify indications of structural issues in properties. This would also form part of monthly meetings with contractors. He was happy to come and report back further to OSC if members wished. He was confident that the department could achieve the deadlines for implementing the recommendations – much of the work was already under way and some were complete. He said that Arup were being commissioned to follow up their previous desk top survey with detailed surveys of all the system built blocks in the borough. Arup would advise on the risk management of this exercise. He agreed to think further about how to feed back to tenants on repairs problems reported on their estate. Key performance indicators for fire risk assessments would be introduced by 1st October 2018. The Apex application allows fire risk assessment action plans to be tracked in detail. Beyond the system builds, blocks will be surveyed as they come into the major works programme, and detailed fire risk assessment conducted at the same time. He said that it was not possible to resolve the issue of poor historical record keeping as this related to the period when the council's records were stored in paper form in neighbourhood offices across the borough. Many records had been lost over time. Looking forward, all systems are digital. He described how the system of surveys of council stock would be informed by repairs data, fire risk assessments, feedback from residents, as well as the survey itself.

4.4 Danielle Gregory and Glen Holmes from Ledbury Action Group welcomed the report and said it showed a history of disrepair which was not a surprise to residents. They hoped its recommendations would be applied to all housing stock, not confined to Ledbury. Trends in repairs were not being identified, ultimately costing the council more money as repairs are patched rather than fundamentally addressed. Residents could not

assess the potential risk around any repair, so it was important their views and the technical experts' views are drawn together and considered in tandem. There were too many examples of repairs not completed, complaints not responded too, freedom of information requests being delayed. The system for routine estate walk arounds outside the scope of major works projects could be better developed and better advertised to tenants. There is also an opportunity to take tenant feedback on repairs as part of the annual tenancy check – the council could make better use of this.

4.5 Ferenc Morath confirmed that the recommendations would be applied to housing systems borough wide. He accepted the point about trends in repairs and said that the improved Apex system would assist repairs analysis. The department continues to work on improving responsiveness to repairs complaints and is aware that performance is not yet good enough.

4.6 A member suggested that there might be a role for Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in reviewing the findings of this report as part of its management of systems and risk controls. The chair agreed to follow this up, alongside scrutiny follow up.

5. COUNCIL PLAN 2018/19 -2021/22

5.1 The council plan sets the backdrop for scrutiny work planning. The chair suggested that work planning was deferred until the new scrutiny structure was in place, given that council assembly date had moved

6. MOVING TO A NEW SCRUTINY MODEL AND ESTABLISHING THE BASIS FOR REVIEW

6.1 The principles for review were accepted. A member asked how follow up work from task and finish bodies would be managed, and the chair said this would be a role for OSC.

7. KNIFE CRIME REVIEW REPORT

7.1 Item deferred to next meeting as councillor due to present report had been unable to attend.

8. EHCP MINI REVIEW REPORT

8.1 Item deferred to next meeting as councillor due to present report had been unable to attend.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

Meeting ended at 8.30 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: