

These minutes are draft, subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Housing Sub-Committee

23 July 2018

Present: Councillor A Newman (Chair)
Councillors J Kirwin, P Oliver, J O'Shea, S
Phillips, M Thirlaway and J Walker

HO01/07/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Bolger, L Darke, A Percy and P Mason.

HO02/07/18 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the following substitutes were appointed:

Cllr J O'Shea for Cllr K Bolger

HO03/07/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor M Thirlaway reported a non-registerable interest in Item 5 – Construction Project and the New Repairs and Investment Offer – as his father worked for Kier North Tyneside.

HO04/07/18 Minutes

It was **agreed** that the minutes of the meeting on 26 March 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

HO05/07/18 Construction Project and the New Repairs and Investment Offer

The sub-committee received a presentation which provided information on the background to and the role of the Construction Project, key progress to date, customer engagement and the next steps.

In order to provide some background to the topic, Members were informed that the joint venture between Kier and North Tyneside Council had started in 2009, with approximately 392 staff employed by Kier North Tyneside. A 12 month review had taken place of the future construction requirements of North Tyneside Council, with Cabinet making a decision in September 2017 not to extend the contract. It was noted that the Kier contract would come to an end on 31 March 2019 and that a Construction Project, with associated governance structures, had been established to oversee the transition.

A project brief set out the policy requirements for the project, which was primarily based on housing requirement, but also value for money and flexibility. The workload had been split into 8 workstreams responsible for the delivery of key elements of the project. Key progress to date on the delivery of the project included the procurement of an ICT solution to manage repair requests, a decision to procure a new fleet and Kier staff and trade union engagement.

In relation to customer engagement, it was noted that a new Local Offer for repairs and a

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new Repairs Handbook were needed. In order to help achieve this, a series of engagement events were held with tenants to try and understand customer expectations. Feedback from these sessions identified priorities such as Right First Time, more online interaction and self-help tools and flexibility to do minor repairs with improvement works. Feedback and consultation with wider groups of tenants was ongoing in relation to the draft Repairs Offer.

Feedback from discussions with tenants to date had identified that 2 hour time slots for repairs were not always working for the service and for the tenants. Tenants identified that they would be happy to be allocated an AM/PM slot as long as these would avoid school run times. Overall, the tenants consulted felt that AM/PM appointments were reasonable. Members commented that they felt that some people, especially those working, would not be happy with AM/PM appointments and would prefer a 2 hour slot as this would minimise time they would have to take off work. In order to maximise the time of operatives, Members suggested that if a job was finished ahead of schedule, the next customer should be contacted to see if it would be convenient to attend to their repair earlier. Officers explained that this type of flexibility was being considered in creating the offer and consideration was being given to extending appointment times to allow repairs to take place into the evening and possibly weekends.

A copy of the draft Repairs Local Offer was circulated to Members of the sub-committee. Within the 'Right First Time' section it was noted that operatives would be trained so that they would be multi-skilled. A member of the sub-committee asked how this would be put into practice. It was explained that this was in relation to minor repairs being carried out at properties while improvement works were being undertaken. If all operatives were trained to carry out minor repairs, it would reduce the need for follow up appointments, which would reduce pressure on service delivery and be more convenient for customers.

The committee was informed that the next steps moving forward with the Construction Project included procuring a new fleet of vehicles, configuring and testing the new ICT system and further customer and staff engagement. In relation to monitoring performance, Members asked if the authority would be adopting the Key Performance Indicators used by Kier. It was explained that the Council would develop its own set of indicators which reflected the service that was strived to be delivered and that success of the service would be measured in customer satisfaction and delivering on potential efficiencies.

It was **agreed** to note the information presented.

HO06/07/18 Work Programme 2018/19

The sub-committee received a report which detailed potential topics for inclusion in the 2018/19 sub-committee work programme. Members were invited to consider the items raised and identify any other issues that they felt should be prioritised for inclusion.

The process of establishing the 2018/19 overview and scrutiny work programme began when a press release was issued on 22 March 2018 seeking the views of members of the public as to what services would be important for scrutiny to focus on. Several suggestions had been received and were being considered but none were directly related to the remit of Housing sub-committee.

Senior officers had discussed the overview and scrutiny work programme with a view to identifying key policy areas for scrutiny to focus on. A list of key policies and strategies that the Council would be developing or creating over the coming years had been produced. This included the following plans and strategies that related to the remit of the Housing sub-committee:

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- Housing strategy
- Affordable Homes Delivery
- Private Sector Renewal

As had been practice in previous years, it was recommended that sub groups (of around 4/5 members) be established to carry out scrutiny of topics identified as being appropriate for an in-depth review. A meeting of all scrutiny chairs and deputies had been scheduled for September to allow Members to share work programmes and identify any potential areas for duplication of work and to explore any opportunities for collaborative working. A list of topic suggestions was attached to the report as Appendix A.

Members agreed that the list of topics presented should be scheduled for consideration over the year. In relation to affordable homes, Members raised concerns over the level of affordable homes being delivered on some housing developments. It was requested that some information from the planning department be requested to accompany the next update on affordable homes, which details the level of information developers are given in relation to affordable housing and when in the process this is shared. In relation to the possible subjects for in-depth investigation, Members prioritised low level anti social behaviour as an area to focus on. It was suggested that a further report with a scope for the study be brought back to a future meeting, with the view to establishing a sub-group.

It was **agreed** to approve the list of work programme suggestions and incorporate the issues raised above.