

Report of: Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee

Meeting of	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	19 April 2018	All

Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt
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**Subject: The Effectiveness of Housing Service Communications
– Findings of the Housing Scrutiny Committee****1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 This report requests that the Executive receive the recommendations of the Housing Scrutiny Committee following the completion of its review of The Effectiveness of Housing Service Communications. A response to the recommendations set out in the report will be considered at a future meeting of the Executive.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report of the Housing Scrutiny Committee be received.
- 2.2 That the Executive Member's response be reported to a future meeting of the Executive, including having due regard to any relevant implications of the Housing Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

3. Background

- 3.1 The review commenced in September 2017. The overall aim of the review was to review the effectiveness of Housing Service communications. The objectives of the review included a review of verbal, online and written communications channels; an assessment of if internal processes and staff training are sufficient; a review of how Housing Services respond to and learn from feedback and complaints; and an evaluation of the take-up of new electronic communication methods. Evidence was received from officers at committee meetings, and focus groups were held with residents and front-line staff. The review concluded in March 2018.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

The proposals in the report need to be costed before a response is made by the Executive.

4.2 Legal Implications

Relevant legal implications will be considered as part of the response to the review.

4.3 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications at this stage. Any environmental implications will be identified as part of the Executive Member response.

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The Committee has had regard to any equalities implications and resident impacts identified by witnesses during the course of the review. Details of any such implications are set out in the appended report. A Resident Impact Assessment has not been completed as the Executive is only asked to receive the report at this stage. The impact on residents will need to be fully considered as part of the Executive Member response to the review, at which point a Resident Impact Assessment will be completed if required.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The Housing Scrutiny Committee has made 19 recommendations in response to the evidence received. These relate to the quality of communications, communicating the right information to residents, supporting staff and joined up working, and other aspects of housing service communications. It is hoped that these recommendations will assist housing services in providing good services on a tight budget.
- 5.2 The Committee would like to thank the officers who provided evidence to the review. The officers interviewed said that they were motivated to provide a good service to residents and were frustrated when things did not go well. Although the review partially focused on service failures and complaints, the Committee also suggested that services should promote the positive work they are doing on behalf of residents; when the council provides a good service this should be recognised and communicated. The Committee would also like to thank the residents who contributed to the review by providing relevant casework and their views on housing services. The Executive is asked to endorse the Committee's recommendations.

Appendices:

- The Effectiveness of Housing Service Communications – Report of the Housing Scrutiny Committee

Background papers:

- None.

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