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London Borough of Islington

Housing Scrutiny Committee - 3 February 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held at Town Hall on 3 February 2022 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors: O'Sullivan (Chair), Bossman-Quarshie, Graham, Jackson and Ozdemir

Also Present: Co-opted Members: Dean Donaghey, Rose Marie McDonald

Councillor: Dairmaid Ward – Executive Member Housing

Councillor Michael O'Sullivan in the Chair

324 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Spall and Councillor Valerie-Bossman Quarshie for lateness

325 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of substitute members

326 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest

327 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

328 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)

The Chair stated that it was disappointing that Hyde Housing Association who had been invited to the meeting had chosen not to attend. Hyde had been subject to a number of complaints from Partners residents, and given that tenant satisfaction in Hyde is low it was felt that they should have had the courtesy to appear before the Committee. The Chair added that a survey of Housing Associations was currently taking place and Councils were being consulted with a date for submissions ending on 1 March. The Committee felt that the Chair should respond on the Committee's behalf

The Chair also referred to a Housing conference called Futurebuild that would be shortly taking place from 1 -3 March, and that details should be circulated to Members following the meeting

329 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 6)

The Chair stated that the order of business would be as per the agenda

330 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)

The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions

331 SCRUTINY REVIEW - FINAL REPORT , REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME OF PFI 2 SERVICES (Item B1)

The following officers were present for consideration of this item –
Maxine Holdsworth, Matt West, Hannah Bowman – Housing Directorate
Linda Nicholas - Human Resources
Lyne Stratton – Communications
Jon Cumming – Digital Services

During consideration of the report and presentation, copies interleaved, the following main points were made –

Programme Progress overview – progressing well, with significant progress against key milestones, and the closing down of issues encountered along the way
Working closely with Partners, Hyde, Rydon, and United Living, on the transfer of services.
Organisational structures are in place for the delivery of services
Data transfer has progressed well. TUPE discussions are ongoing with staff and Trade Unions, and induction plans are developed. The programme is entering its final phase and receiving teams are working on detailed case handovers for key areas of work
Risk profile of the programme has significantly reduced, with only a few remaining high risk items. These risks concern the retained PFI2 structure, a peak of repairs being needed at handover, not being well prepared for the TUPE transfer, and transfer of data. Most risks have been mitigated through preparation for the transfer
Closely monitoring the delivery of the handback survey works. Sums have been retained for 1253 repairs at 895 homes identified by the survey, and outstanding on 11 January 2021
Each month complete repairs are checked and sums paid back to Partners for completed works. At the end of December 402 repairs were outstanding at 283 homes. 68% complete, 32% remaining. Access to COVID continues to be a problem for completion. Damp cases and major works are being closely monitored to ensure they are being progressed, and Rydon will continue to carry out these works until the end of the contract. Sums will be retained at the end of the contract for any incomplete works
Noted that it was felt that data transfer had gone well, and that there would be a comprehensive set of data at the time of transfer
The view was expressed that it repairs would improve now that the Council is handling the properties, and that a positive meeting had been held with staff transferring, and that standards could be raised in the future on both Partners and Council properties
In response to a question it was stated that work could take place with local community organisations, including community centres, in order to provide translation facilities in relation to the handover of properties
Reference was made to the ‘first time’ fix rate and that the target was currently being exceeded. However it should be noted that all repairs could not be completed first time. It was felt important that residents had a ‘voice’ following transfer, and that the existing PFI 1 contract did not get diminished. There is also work to be done on leaseholder recharges, and the Council would need to communicate with leaseholders in connection with the Council’s charging policy
It was noted that the Council had engaged a specialist contractor to work on street properties, who had specialist expertise in dealing with these
In response to a question it was stated that surveys of properties had taken place and disrepair issues picked up, however there were still issues in relation to vulnerable residents, and the Homes and Communities team were looking at this
A Member indicated that she wished to have details of those properties that had disrepair issues in Bunhill ward, and it was stated that this could be provided

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Reference was made to energy efficiency issues in street properties, and it was stated that Government funding was being accessed wherever possible, and in addition works would be identified to be included in the capital programme. A solar strategy was also being looked at

In response to a question it was stated that the confidence of data transfer being effective was high, however there were always risks associated with a cyber attack

Noted that where appropriate properties would be adapted for disabled residents

In response to a question it was stated that the staff transferring had expertise on working with street properties, and there would also be multi trade training offered to staff to enable them to work on all types of properties

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be approved and referred to the Executive for consideration
- (b) That a progress report on transfer be submitted to the Committee at a future date
- (c) That details of Bunhill properties with disrepair issues be sent to Bunhill ward Councillors

332 MINI SCRUTINY REVIEW - COMMUNAL HEATING FINAL REPORT AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (Item B2)

Matt West and Garrett McEntee, Housing Directorate were present for discussion of this item

Following consideration of the report it was -

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendments detailed below, the report be approved, and referred to the Executive for consideration

Recommendation 7 – the inclusion of the words at the end of the recommendation ‘ that the Council should make sure that, where there is one, the Energy Performance Compliance Certificate is made available for all properties, including street properties, to the resident

Recommendation 8 – after the words ‘carried out’ add the words ‘rapid resetting of boiler plant’

Recommendation 10 – add after the word heat pumps add the words ‘and heat meters’

Add additional recommendation 14 – ‘That on blocks where external sensors are used to control a boiler plant, a check is undertaken to ensure that these sensors are in the correction location, and giving representative readings’

The Chair thanked Matt West and Garrett McEntee for attending

333 TRIAGE SYSTEM - END OF CALL SURVEYS (Item B3)

Ian Swift, Director Housing Needs and Strategy outlined the report

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

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- Noted that only 67% of completed the questionnaire and that details of the number of calls in relation to completed surveys would be provided at the next meeting of the Committee
- Noted that the questionnaire could be completed if the call was abandoned

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The Chair thanked Ian Swift for attending

334 WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22 (Item B4)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIR