

# Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

6 June 2023

**Commenced:** 6.00pm

**Terminated:** 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors Reid (Chair), Alam (Deputy), Chadwick, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, McLaren, Robinson

**Apologies:** Councillors Bowerman, Roderick

## 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by members of the Scrutiny Panel.

## 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 7 March 2023 were approved as a correct record.

## 3. RESPONSE TO LGSCO FOCUS REPORT

The Panel welcomed Councillor John Taylor, Executive Member (Adult Social Care, Homelessness & Inclusivity); Emma Varnam, Assistant Director; and Lyn Scaplehorn, Partnerships Manager, to receive a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report, More Home Truths – learning lessons from complaints about the Homelessness Reduction Act, published March 2023.

Members received a response of the Executive to questions detailed on page 23 of the ombudsman report that aim to encourage local accountability. The report highlights the most significant duties in the order in which they generally arise as an applicant moves through the process.

Case studies highlight the breadth of investigation and identify common issues and learning points across the following areas:

- Not identifying homelessness and making inquiries
- Failings in the prevention and relief duties
- Personalised Housing Plans
- Interim accommodation
- Communication
- Reviews

The Executive thanked the Scrutiny Panel for highlighting the ombudsman report and that this has provided a timely opportunity for the service to reflect on shared learning and guidance.

The Executive Member and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- Key learning points that services and partners can take from the focus report.
- Personalised and tailored support, with a focus on individual circumstance and need.
- Homelessness prevention - options and measures.
- Access to temporary accommodation, including quality and standards.

**Resolved:** That Cllr Taylor, Ms Varnam and Ms Scaplehorn be thanked for attending the meeting.

#### **4. ROLE OF SCRUTINY**

The Chair presented an update and recap on the role of Scrutiny within the wider framework of the Council.

#### **5. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME**

Tameside Scrutiny Panels are required to publish an Annual Work Programme of planned activity. The programme of work will cover a two-year rolling period that is to be reviewed, updated and agreed on an annual basis. Scrutiny will continue to adopt a combination of approaches to review service and performance updates, respond to formal consultations, focus reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and areas in need of more in-depth review. This includes a responsibility for:

- Research and insight on a particular issue, including desktop reviews
- Review of decisions and recommendations
- Follow-up (from previous review / recommendations)
- Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
- Consideration of decisions and reports of the Ombudsman
- Receive updates on key issues as they arise
- Active monitoring of national and regional policy and substantive variation to services

The Chair presented a list of potential topics for the 2023/24 municipal year, with comments from members noted to inform the final document. Next step is for Overview Panel to receive the Scrutiny Work Programmes report on 1 August 2023.

Discussion followed on the priority of topics and the timetable for future meetings. The Chair confirmed that the following topic will now be explored to inform a future update and review:

- Neighbourhood Enforcement – policy and the effectiveness of strategic, operational and place-based approach to fly tipping and street scene/cleanliness.

Scrutiny activity will continue to take place outside of the formal meetings, with all findings and recommendations presented to the full panel for comment and approval.

#### **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 25 July 2023.

#### **7. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**