

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

2 November 2021

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Mills (Deputy Chair), Billington, Chadwick, J Fitzpatrick, J Homer, Jones, North, Robinson.

Apologies: Councillors Glover, Bowerman, Choksi, Gosling, Lewis, Patel, T Sharif.

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 7 September 2021 were approved as a correct record.

22. HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

The Panel welcomed Councillor Gerald Cooney, Executive Member, Housing, Planning and Employment; Ian Saxon, Director of Place; Gregg Stott, Assistant Director, Investment, Development and Housing; and John Gregory, Head of Community Safety and Homelessness, to receive an update in response to the Scrutiny desktop review of homelessness and housing, to inform future activity.

Mr Saxon updated members on recent changes within the Place directorate that have resulted in the services for housing and homelessness becoming more aligned, creating greater clarity and delivery of strategic priorities. It was discussed that during the review Scrutiny has focused its attention on three key strands with regard to outcomes for residents.

- Homelessness – statutory responsibilities and wider preventative work
- Housing access to public and private rent
- Private rented sector and improving quality

The presentation touched upon the recent development and adoption of a new Housing Strategy. This included wider context and external factors associated with housing supply and access, the effectiveness of partnerships across all housing sectors and priorities relating to homelessness prevention.

It was reported that a Registered Provider Partnership is to be established in Tameside, with strategic priorities to address:

- Supported Housing
- Housing management / Homelessness / Allocations and Nominations
- Growth and Development
- Place Making / Regeneration / Town Centres

The partnership is to become a key driver for work specific to homelessness and access to suitable housing and accommodation for vulnerable residents and families. Included within the wider aims of the partnership is to deliver new homes, specialist housing, improve quality in the private rented sector and to assist with homelessness prevention.

The Council has a legal duty to provide residents with housing support and advice. It remains important that the assessment and decision making process identifies the range of factors that lead to individuals and families becoming homeless. There is a range of tools available to

improve access to housing options through existing allocation and nomination arrangements with registered social landlords.

In addition to existing homelessness demand there is now a projected need for local authorities and partners to support a flow of people at risk of losing their home. Whilst the authority has no housing stock it does have a duty to ensure an effective scheme is in place for the allocation of social housing placements and a policy that prioritises households in 'Reasonable Preference'.

The private rented sector also has a significant role to play within the future supply of temporary accommodation and the provision of long-term housing solutions.

Implementation of the Housing Strategy and next steps include:

- Conduct a Homelessness Review of the borough
- Review the existing Homelessness Prevention Strategy
- Review the Allocations Policy to ensure it is effective under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Review the nominations process from Registered Providers with view to increasing the percentage of nominations the Council receives
- Pilot community outreach Tameside Housing Advice drop-ins in areas high need
- Develop a 20 unit modular Accommodation Based Support facility
- Review the allocations process for accessible and adapted properties

Councillor Cooney and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- The Council's Homelessness Strategy
- Temporary and long-term housing solutions
- The effectiveness of current policies regarding allocations and nominations with RSLs
- Role of the private rented sector in supporting sustainable housing solutions, including options to improve quality and standards

Resolved: That Councillor Cooney and officers be thanked for attending the meeting.

23. RESPONSE TO MID-YEAR BUDGET UPDATE

The Panel received for information, a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth, in response to the mid-year budget updates held on 7 and 9 September 2021.

24. GREATER MANCHESTER SCRUTINY

The Deputy Chair provided a verbal update on known activity of the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

25. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Deputy Chair advised members that a final report to conclude activity on the Homelessness and Housing review will now be drafted and discussed at the next panel meeting on 11 January 2022.

Members updated on the Scrutiny annual budget meetings that will take place in January 2022, as soon as the dates and times are finalised calendar invitations will be sent to all panel members to attend.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 11 January 2022.

27. URGENT ITEMS

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

CHAIR