

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

30 July 2019

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.40pm

Present: Councillors Glover (Chair), Mills (Deputy Chair), Alam, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Choksi, P Fitzpatrick, Hollinshead, Robinson, Sidebottom, Sweeton.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Chadwick, J Fitzpatrick, Naylor, Sharif.

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 11 June 2019 were approved as a correct record.

8. HOUSING STRATEGY – PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The Panel welcomed Nicola Turner, Interim Head of Development and Investment; and John Hughes, Housing Growth Lead, to provide an overview of the private rented sector in Tameside.

It was reported that the Council has a strategic housing role, with a need to:

- Assess and plan for housing needs
- Make best use of existing stock
- Plan for and facilitate new housing supply
- Plan and commission housing support
- Address issues linked with areas such as regeneration, sustainable communities, employment and skills.

The Panel heard that in 2017 just over 14% of all properties in Tameside were located within the private rented sector (PRS). This equated to almost 15,000 households, a total of 40,000 residents and therefore 11,885 children. During 2018/19 a total of 283 households were made homeless as a result of loss of accommodation in the PRS.

The presentation provided a visual representation of property types located within the PRS and included examples of projects that have presented risks, the range of quality in the sector and the development of housing associations managing in the PRS. Specific reference was made to the local housing stock and high numbers of pre-1919 terraced housing. Mr Hughes advised members that St Peters ward has the highest percentage of properties in the PRS and this is important when taking account of the concentrated high levels of deprivation and economic inactivity.

In 2017 the highest proportion of households (40%) had a gross weekly household income of less than £300, with only 24% reaching more than £500. There is clear evidence available to the Council and partners that quality and standards within the sector is varied and the available data can help to identify where greater consistency and improvement is needed.

The Council currently has a number of available tools to assess the market and take appropriate action to improve standards through broader licensing and enforcement. A number of authorities have developed and introduced landlord accreditation schemes with varying success and impact. Case studies of which can be made available for the panel to review going forward to inform activity in this area.

It remains important for Tameside to remain closely connected to Greater Manchester priorities detailed within 'A Greater Manchester Vision for Housing'. There is a broader need to steer the GM Housing Strategy, with a focus on:

- Connections between housing, people and place
- The homes we have now
- The new homes we need

The implementation plan includes options for good landlord schemes, better information and support for tenants, with a need to generate a more consistent approach to coordinate enforcement of housing standards in the PRS.

Panel members identified that Tameside's housing stock remains a key factor in determining the best course of action at a local level, with the need to ensure improvements are sustainable. There was further interest to ensure activity includes local incentives to reduce the impact of empty properties and to review recent growth in the number of houses in multiple occupation (HMO).

Resolved: That Ms Turner and Mr Hughes be thanked for attending the meeting.

9. RESPONSE TO CLEAN AIR CONVERSATION

The Chair presented the formal response letter of the panel submitted to the Greater Manchester Clean Air Conversation on 26 June 2019. The Panel will remain informed on progress and consider future timescales and possible input to the future public consultation.

10. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Having been agreed at the previous meeting held on 11 June, the Panel will progress activity to review methods to improve quality and standards in the private rented sector. The Chair invited panel members to express an interest in establishing the new working group. The following members agreed to join the group.

- Cllr Glover
- Cllr Mills
- Cllr Billington
- Cllr Choksi
- Cllr Sidebottom
- Cllr Sweeton

The Chair informed members that all relevant activity of the Council's Scrutiny Panels is routinely reported to the Council's Overview Panel, with a number of items to be presented at the next meeting on 29 July 2019. A section on this is to be included within the next monthly update email sent to all scrutiny members.

Resolved: Details of future working group meetings for the Private Rented Sector review to be circulated to members by email and as a calendar invitation.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on 10 September 2019.

12. URGENT ITEMS

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

CHAIR