



Kevin O’Keefe, Director of Governance, noted that the Kershaw Report recommended that councils adopt a whistleblowing policy as a form of good practice. He added that if the whistle is blown, three statutory officers (The Managing Director, Director of Finance and Director of Governance) meet to discuss the incident.

Cllr Hardacre raised concerns about whistle blowers involved in fraud cases. The Director of Governance explained that the council has a strong track record when addressing such issues. Cllr Hardacre queried how the policy would work with schools that have their own governance structures and connections to the Council. It was explained they have joint governance arrangements and that further details could be provided to the Board at the following meeting.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Director of Governance provide Scrutiny Board with an overview of the relationship between the Council and schools when the whistleblowing policy has been used.

- 5 **Tracking and Monitoring of the Private Rented Houses Scrutiny Review**  
Lesley Williams, Service Manager - Private Sector Housing, introduced the Private Rented Houses Scrutiny Review update by outlining the progress of the review in addressing housing issues in the City, particularly in supporting good landlords and tackling bad ones. She explained that there has been a review to policy and that new legislation published by the government will help address the issue of rogue landlords. She added that the Council has taken a national lead on this piece of work, which helped shape national policy. She concluded that the recommendations made by the review have now been implemented.

Cllr Hardacre commented that there were significant problems due to houses of multiple occupations (HMO) in the west of the City. He questioned what kind of work was being done to alleviate the issue. The Service Manager - Private Sector Housing explained that there is no national register of landlords, meaning that her team respond to complaints when landlords are reported. She added that it is likely a number of landlords were illegally avoiding regulations in various ways. However, the Council is making considerable efforts to prosecute rogue landlords via an enforcement policy.

Cllr Simkins noted that good landlords should not have their reputation sullied by poor ones, and commented that this policy can aid them to operate more effectively.

Cllr Findlay questioned whether there was a strong enough enforcement team to implement the policies in question. The Service Manager - Private Sector Housing noted that some Public Health funding had been acquired to support delivery, but acknowledged there will be a need to make efficient use of resources.

Cllr O’Neill praised the work of officers in his ward, but noted the issues of transients in the City, adding this was not helping settle the community. Cllr Brookfield raised concern that if the policy targets rogue landlords with a large portfolio of properties, then the small time rogues could be overlooked with their crimes going unreported. The Service Manager - Private Sector Housing explained that the new policy will

allow taskforces to deal with individual rogue landlords whilst simultaneously tackling the major issues in the City.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Private Rented Houses Scrutiny Review be signed off.

## 6 **Tracking and Monitoring of the Prevent Scrutiny Review**

Karen Samuels, Head of Community Safety, presented the Prevent Scrutiny Review outlining progress against the 14 recommendations made by the review. These have now been fully completed, with further developments implemented nationally such as the Counter Terrorism Security Act. She noted that past issues of engaging key partners, such as schools, have been resolved as a result of new legislation. The Contest Board has been created to provide accountability and governance for partners across the City.

Cllr Angus praised the review's work in engaging partners and supporting Councillors. However he questioned the timescales for a communications plan and meetings of the Contest Board. The Head of Community Safety explained that the Contest Board is in its infancy and that its terms of reference are still being finalised; a communications plan will be presented at the first Board meeting in October. She added that Ros Jervis, Director of Public Health, will chair the board and the other representatives will be confirmed shortly. She added that there have been some issues engaging with the prison sector, and that further work will be done via school engagement teams to support head teachers in Wolverhampton.

The Head of Community Safety drew the Board's attention to Councillor sessions to consider the Prevent agenda and a e-learning module for staff. She also mentioned that the 'Be Safe Team' will be working with young people to share the prevent message, which Cllr Hardacre noted was of great importance. This will be supported by the Upstanding Neighbourhoods Programme, which will roll out into the community to help residents provide a counter narrative to extremism.

Resolved:

- 1) That all Councillors be encouraged to complete Prevent training.
- 2) That the Prevent Scrutiny Review be signed off.

## 7 **Tracking and Monitoring of the First Impressions of the City Scrutiny Review**

Cllr Reynolds introduced the First Impressions of the City Scrutiny Review and stressed the importance of Cabinet member involvement in the scrutiny process. He presented a video to the Board exemplifying the key values of the Wolverhampton 'Making it happen' brand. Councillors were very positive about the video, which will support the wider push to make Wolverhampton a more attractive place to do business and live in. Keren Jones, Director of City Economy, added that this is one of many steps taken towards building the Wolverhampton brand through a variety of different mediums.

Cllr Sweetman endorsed the work completed to raise the profile of the City, but expressed desire to see the strategic remit ensuring buy-in from partners. She also sought clarity about how the video will be used to create buy-in further afield. Finally, she sought to clarify how the effects of the video will be monitored. The Director of

City Economy explained a lot of work has been conducted to understand local businesses and developers in the City, and that this will be used to then tailor future work to their interests. An information pack was circulated to Councillors, which outlined investment plans in the City.

Cllr Bolshaw welcomed the investment into Wolverhampton, but noted that the developments could have disruptive impacts on residents. Cllr Reynolds stressed the importance of early consultation with residents to alleviate this, as well as stating the need to provide a package for new businesses coming into the City. Councillors discussed the role of high profile businesses being involved in 'selling the story' of the City.

Cllr Collingswood praised the positive marketing approach, but questioned who the specific target audience was and noted the video could be made sharper for certain audiences. The Director of City Economy explained that whilst the video is fairly general at this stage, more tailored work will be conducted to target developers, investors and residents. Cllr Findlay also praised the positivity of the video, and echoed the importance of targeting certain audiences.

Cllr Simkins questioned how the video's positive message will translate into action for the people in need in Wolverhampton. Cllr Reynolds stressed that there is an urgent need to develop skills in the City to complement the investment drive. Councillors discussed the issue of negativity in the local press.

Resolved:

- 1) That the First Impressions of the City Scrutiny Review be signed off.

## 8 **Corporate Complaints Report Q1 2015/16**

Sue Handy, Head of Customer Services, presented the Complaints Report for quarter one 2015/16. She outlined some key statistics captured in the report and explained to the Board that where the Council has been at fault, it has addressed raised issues. She explained to the Board that when complaint trends are identified they are raised with heads of service to address. She added that service areas should let the Complaints Team know about compliments as well, and that this is promoted via City People. Cllr O'Neill noted that there had been a high number of compliments and praised the team's work.

Councillors sought clarification over the process of escalating complaints and noted that the process should be treated as an opportunity to improve services.

Cllr Hardacre speculated that field of complaints is a class related issue, noting that people who are articulate or who know the design of a system, are the individuals that more often follow through the formal process.

Resolved:

- 1) That future complaints reports provide examples, where relevant, of how upheld complaints have resulted in service improvements

## 9 **Work programme**

Deborah Breedon presented the work programme to the Board and welcomed any comments.

Cllr Angus informed the Board of new items for the Vibrant Sustainable City agenda, which were as follows:

11 February

- City Centre Region Street Trading and Displays
- Food Waste

14 April

- Resident Parking
- Keeping the City Clean with a focus on fly tipping.

Resolved:

- 1) That the amendments made to the Vibrant Scrutiny Panel meeting agendas on 11 February and 14 April be added to the work programme.