

Meeting of the Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel Minutes - 16 September 2019

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet (Performance Management) Panel

Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE (Chair)
Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr John Reynolds

Employees

Shaun Aldis	Chief Executive Wolverhampton Homes
James Amphlett	Senior Analyst
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and External Relations
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Lewington	Service Manager - Housing Strategy and Policy
Kate Martin	Director of City Assets & Housing
Martyn Sargeant	Head of Governance

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Harman Banger and Peter Bilson.
- 2 Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 24 June 2019**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising**

The Chair asked, that where not already covered in the report at agenda item 5 (Housing Managing Agents Performance Monitoring Report Quarter One - April to June 2019), the data the Panel had indicated it wished to see in future housing performance monitoring reports, be taken on board.

5 **Housing Managing Agents Performance Monitoring Report Quarter One - April to June 2019**

Jenny Lewington, Service Manager Housing Strategy Policy presented the report on the performance of Wolverhampton Homes (WH) and the Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) in managing and maintaining council owned dwellings during quarter one of 2019-2020. Overall WH and the three the TMO's had performed well, with only one indicator being outside target during the quarter. The rest were either within target or within acceptable tolerance levels. Whilst Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board (EMB) previously had an excellent performance record, for quarter one, three indicators were outside target, two were within acceptable tolerance levels and the remaining two were within target. The report also included performance of WH in the delivery of homelessness services as part of a service level agreement with the Council.

The Panel noted the overall performance across the Managing Agents. Members also commented that the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears was beginning to become clear within the TMOs and WH. The Council would have to look at the problems associated with tenants accruing debt as a result of late payment of Universal Credit. The message would need to be conveyed to tenants that the Council recognised there are serious flaws in the Universal Credit process. However, tenants who received their rent through Universal Credit would be paid and would have to pay their rent. The Panel was also pleased to note that targets for completion of Gas Certificates and fire safety checks were achieved. Regarding Bushbury Hill EMB's performance on rent management, the Panel suggested that the Council, through its employees should assure itself that the Board had appropriate support and plans in place to improve performance across those indicators that were off target.

In response to the points made, Shaun Aldis, Chief Executive, Wolverhampton Homes, reported that the number of tenants in arrears had stabilised and evictions made were reducing. He also informed the Panel of service planning that had taken place in order to address issues of resources and recruitment and for WH to develop their employees to support tenants and the Managing Agents. He hoped that this gave the Panel some assurance that the Housing teams were working well with tenants. The WH Chief Executive also informed the Panel of the number of tenants claiming Universal Credit, the numbers in arrears and the largest amount currently owed by a tenant. When tenants were in the position of owing substantial rent arrears it was difficult for them to see a way out. For that reason, the service would be monitoring abandonments.

Councillor Steve Evans commented that the support and advice provided to tenants by council employees and WH, was making a difference to levels of rent arrears. He expressed an interest in seeing figures on the levels of evictions in the private rented sector as it was felt that a lot of those cases ended up presenting themselves to the Council to be accommodated. He also asked about levels of evictions in the Midlands from tenants who had moved from the South East because of the rent caps.

Councillor John Rowley informed the Panel that the Social Inclusion Board was working hard to keep evictions down to a minimum. Regarding Universal Credit, he said that the point must not be lost that a lot of people receiving Universal Credit were also in employment. However, the combination of their salary and Universal Credit payment was not enough for them to live on.

Resolved:

1. That the performance of the housing management agents for quarter one 2019-2020 be noted.
2. That the points raised by the Panel on the performance of Bushbury Hill EMB's be taken up with the Board.

6 **Information Governance Quarter One Performance Report**

Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE presented the report on Information Governance performance for quarter one (April to June 2019) of 2019-2020. As in previous monitoring reports, good performance continued to be maintained on the Council's response rates to Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests (FOR/EIR) and Data Protection /Subject Access Requests.

Resolved:

That the quarter one performance for Information Governance be noted.

7 **Annual Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints Report**

Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE presented the report on complaints, compliments and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman enquiries received by the Council during 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

During the discussion on the report Councillor Jasbir Jaspal requested further information on the complaints referred to in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Councillor John Reynolds in his capacity as Cabinet Member with lead responsibility for the MASH service undertook to provide a briefing to Councillor Jaspal on the service. He also said that the number of complaints received across the Council during 2018-2019 was relatively small and he was pleased with the way council employees resolved complaints and service requests. He also noted the 161 compliments the Council had received during the period. Councillor Louise Miles added that complaints enabled the Council to learn from customer feedback. However, employees in the MASH team were vulnerable to complaints because of the area they work in.

Dr Michael Hardacre noted that from the range of complaints received during 2018-2019 none related to Education and Skills. Given the numbers of children that entered the primary school sector and moved onto the secondary sector, and the small number of requests for school places the Education Service could not initially satisfy but subsequently resolved, he indicated that this was an achievement for the service. He said that cabinet colleagues would have to take away and interrogate the parts of the complaints report against their portfolios and directorates to make sure the complaints procedures are working.

Resolved:

1. That the complaints management and performance for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 be noted.

2. That the Statutory Complaints Activity for Children's Services, Adult Services and Public Health, as listed in section 1 of the report be noted.
3. That all the other complaints activity governed by the Corporate Complaints Procedures as listed in section 2 of the report be noted.

8 **Corporate Performance Management Framework**

Further to the discussion at the previous meeting on 24 June 2019, James Amphlett, Insight and Performance Manager delivered a demonstration of the data platform site that would be used to performance monitor progress against the delivery of the strategic indicators in the refreshed Council Plan 2019-2024. The platform would be available on WV Insight, the open data platform within the next few days.

Responding to questions, the Insight and Performance Manager confirmed that the references in the site to 'West Midlands' meant the wider West Midlands region, and that statistical data on the Council's neighbours would be incorporated into the system.

Councillor John Reynolds commented that the system would be a useful tool for university and college research and for responding to Freedom of Information requests.

Members of the Panel requested that in future any electronic presentations on performance against the delivery of the Council Plan, be accompanied by a written report to include a link to the data platform site, to be circulated in advance of the meeting. Ian Fagan, Director of Communications and External Relations agreed that there was merit in providing a summary report and undertook to circulate to the Panel the link to access the data site.

Resolved:

1. That the presentation be received and noted.
2. That future presentations and discussions on the Corporate Performance Management Framework be accompanied by a written report, to be circulated with the agenda in advance of the meeting.