

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE –  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**1400 hours on Tuesday 4 September 2018, Committee Room 6**

---

**Present:**

Councillor Mahmood Hussain (Chair)

Councillors Deirdre Alden, Gurdial Singh Atwal, Marje Bridle, Eddie Freeman and Roger Harmer

**Also Present:**

Councillor Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

Lesley Ariss, Head of Business Improvement and Support, Place Directorate

Jim Crawshaw, Head of Housing Options/Private Sector Housing

Julie Griffin, Acting Service Director, Housing

Joyce Springer-Amadedon, Head of Bereavement Services

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer, Scrutiny Office

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

---

**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.civico.net/birmingham](http://www.civico.net/birmingham)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Penny Holbrook.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**4. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACTION NOTES – 3 JULY 2018**

(See document no 1)

The notes were agreed.

**5. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACTION TRACKER 2018/19**

(See document no 2)

Councillor Bridle suggested that Localisation should be brought back to a joint meeting of this Committee and the Co-ordinating O&S Committee once the consultation has ended.

The action tracker was noted.

## **6. PETITION – CT SCANNER FOR BIRMINGHAM CORONER**

(See document no 3)

Councillor Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, and Joyce Springer-Amadedon, Head of Bereavement Services, attended for this item.

The following were among the main points raised:

- There is on-going work with partners looking at the advantages and disadvantages of having a scanner and the wider issues, including where a scanner would be located;
- Whilst it was recognised that £1m is a significant amount of money, having a scanner would, in some cases, improve understanding of the cause of death, which can drive forward medical research and treatment, and in that sense the cost/value ratio does look very different;
- With regard to the issue of a shortage of pathologists, it was questioned whether Government should be lobbied for priority training for this area of work;
- The Cabinet Member is meeting with hospital staff with a view to getting a joint understanding of how to move forward and there will also be a need to look at funding options, which might include speaking to other local authorities and lobbying government for investment;
- It was agreed that a further report would be brought back in the new year to inform the Committee's decision as to whether the petition is supported or not;
- In the meantime, Members requested that it be noted that the Committee supports the work being done.

### **RESOLVED:-**

- That the Committee supports the work being done to consider the options for a scanner, and that a further report to Committee to be scheduled for early 2019.

## **7. PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

(See document no 4)

Lesley Ariss, Head of Business Improvement and Support, Place Directorate, attended for this item. Julie Griffin, Acting Service Director, Housing, was also in attendance and provided additional responses on some of the Housing related measures.

Members had been provided with a Housing and Waste Management Performance Measures report for Month 3 (June) which included Council Plan Measures and Service Delivery Measures reported as part of the Council's performance framework.

The Council Plan Measures are those which had been agreed by Cabinet Members and senior officers in June and the Service Delivery Measures are those agreed with relevant Cabinet Members.

All measures are reported monthly to the Corporate Management Team and quarterly to Cabinet as part of the performance report and both sets of measures are published on the City Council's website.

With regard to specific measures in the report, Members were given the following information:

- **Reduce collected household waste** – the Council is looking at benchmarking with other local authorities, however some authorities collect their data differently and some recycle food waste, which can impact on household waste, and care therefore needs to be taken to ensure we are comparing like for like;
- **Reducing the number of rough sleepers across the city** – this is an annual measure, with an annual count undertaken in November;
- **The number of households where homelessness is prevented or relieved** – there are some data collection issues following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act to make sure reporting is full and accurate. It was pointed out that almost 2,500 Personal Housing Plans have been completed since April;
- **Percentage of waste presented to landfill** – again, the Council is unable to benchmark against other local authorities as some authorities deal with their waste differently. However, the possibility of doing some benchmarking in the future is being explored;

Two new measures have been introduced this year:

- Percentage of tenancies sustained at 12 months and
- Percentage of council tenants prevented from becoming homeless as a result of intervention.

At the moment it is not possible to report accurately on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) due to changes made within the case management system but steps are being taken to rectify this.

During the subsequent discussion, the following were among the main points raised:

- Members requested that in future numbers be provided along with percentages, particularly with regard to missed collections, to get a clearer understanding of the scale of the problem;
- Also with regard to missed collections, it would be useful to have some analysis of missed assisted collections and green waste collections, together with response rates for missed collections generally;
- The high percentage of waste to landfill was queried and it was agreed this would be taken back to the service and a detailed explanation requested;

- With regard to the percentage of tenancies sustained, it was agreed that this measure may need re-wording to add “where appropriate” to take into account that where a tenant is in breach, for example because of ASB or rent arrears, appropriate action should be taken and the tenancy should not be converted to a secure tenancy;
- In terms of the localisation agenda and taking on board what residents think about council services, Councillor Bridle suggested that the Committee creates a case study with residents monitoring service delivery and performance and providing a “reality check”;
- Members requested that in future, where possible, a more detailed breakdown of performance information be provided by district/ward and in the case of missed collections by depot, to highlight specific problems in specific areas;
- Data on fly-tipping would also be useful – for example, locations and volumes – and Lesley Ariss said that she would look into this and feed back;
- Members agreed that they would like to receive performance reports quarterly, starting in November to coincide with the attendance of the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Waste and Recycling.

**RESOLVED:-**

- Performance Reporting to be programmed quarterly starting in November.

**8. PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR**

(See document No 5)

Julie Griffin, Acting Service Director, Housing, and Jim Crawshaw, Head of Housing Options/Private Rented Sector, attended for this item.

The following were among the main points raised:

- The Private Rented Sector (PRS) market is growing quite significantly and Birmingham is seeing migration from the south with landlords buying up properties which is limiting our access to the market and affecting affordability (only around 15% of the market is available at Local Housing Allowance rates);
- A more in-depth paper on the PRS market and the potential to improve it and work with Landlords to drive up standards can be provided to Committee if required;
- It was acknowledged that there is clearly a need for more housing in the city and with a growing PRS market the council must work with private landlords to support them and to drive up standards;
- Particular reference was made to the work being done with landlords in terms of trying to meet the needs of homeless households and a feasibility study has been undertaken to ensure there are sufficient PRS properties of a good quality available for letting in particular to those people threatened with homelessness or about to become homeless. The feasibility report is being completed and work will follow to develop models to bring good quality PRS stock for meeting this need;

- Issues with regard to ASB in privately rented properties are not dealt with by the PRS team and, in response to a query raised by Councillor Bridle, Julie Griffin offered to look into whether this is a service which had previously been provided by the team and has been lost;
- Members expressed concern about family homes being turned into HMOs and requested that this be looked into as part of the Committee's inquiry;
- Members asked about the additional risk area in relation to Supported Housing and were told that a piece of work is underway with Birmingham University to try and identify Registered Provider properties;
- In response to a question from Councillor Harmer, Julie Griffin undertook to speak to colleagues in the Children's directorate about what is happening in terms of governance of small children's homes;
- With regard to the recent Selective Licensing consultations, and the seemingly lengthy process of getting a report to Cabinet, Members were advised that a report was being prepared and Legal Services are currently looking at this to ensure the needs of the legislation are being met;
- The Empty Properties Team was praised and Julie Griffin said that she would pass this on to Matthew Smith, the Senior Service Manager;
- Councillor Harmer asked about the Controlling Migration Fund, specifically the reference to tackling exploitation by rogue landlords "in key neighbourhoods where disproportionate migration is evidenced" and what is meant by "neighbourhood", as there could be a high concentration in a small part of a ward and there is also the issue of displacement;
- In response, Julie Griffin explained that to meet the criteria for funding particular areas with migration issues had to be included in the bid and they are working with eight areas. A further report on this, including funding, timelines and KPIs, can be brought back to Committee if required;
- Councillor Thompson told Members that there is a commitment to do more work around PRS and said that she would be meeting with the PRS Forum in the next month or so to discuss some of the challenges and how to work better together, particularly in terms of homelessness and temporary accommodation. There is also a keenness to look at what others are doing around the country and that Scrutiny's help in this respect would be welcomed.

## **9. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19**

(See document No 6)

The work programme was noted.

## **10. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

None.

## **11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted.

**13. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

---

The meeting ended at 1606 hours.