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## **SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL - THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS TO THE COUNCIL AND RESIDENTS OF STOCKPORT**

Meeting: 2 February 2024  
At: 3.05 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Dena Ryness (Chair) in the chair; Councillors John Taylor and Claire Vibert.

### **1 QUESTIONING OF MEMBER COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES ON THEIR WORK IN RELATION TO STOCKPORT HOMES GROUP**

Councillor Rachel Wise attended the meeting to answer questions from the Scrutiny Review Panel in relation to the Member Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- It was reported that the Member Committee was a mechanism by which the council could ensure that the arms-length management organisation, Stockport Homes Group (SHG), was taking care of the properties it owned and whether SHG met its responsibilities as a provider of social housing.
- The Member Committee met three times a year, and it was reported that this slightly unusual meeting frequency might be owing to the need for pieces of work to embed in advance of a further update being provided to committee. However, if an issue was raised at a meeting, there was an extended period of time until the next meeting of the committee where an update could be received.
- It was noted that the Chair of the Member Committee was part of the council's executive.
- Members were advised that it was important to have a democratic and accessible mechanism to consider the work of SHG.
- It was noted that SHG had worked hard to deliver a comprehensive member induction training programme for new councillors in 2023.
- Members noted that councillors used to appointed as members of the board, but this was no longer the case.
- It was reported that the ideal role for members was as 'critical friend' to SHG, and that Member Committee may or may not be the right forum for this. It was unclear as to whether the role of Member Committee was to hold SHG to account.
- It was unclear how the agenda for meetings was set, and there was no work programme in place. SHG brought reports to meetings for members to consider, which included but was not limited to, information on strategies and priorities.

### **2 DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES THE PANEL WANT TO UNDERSTAND FROM STOCKPORT HOMES GROUP RESIDENTS**

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- It was felt important that views of residents were sought to support the panel's review.

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- It was suggested that councillors be approached to identify residents who could engage with the council in the first instance, and that a fair cross section of the borough be sought.
- It was suggested that it would be useful to ascertain instances where a resident had engaged with SHG, the reason for this, how easy it was to engage with SHG and what the experience of that engagement was like.

### **3 DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED TABLE OF RESEARCH POINTS IN RELATION TO THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS IN STOCKPORT**

The following comments were made/issues raised:

- It was suggested that the table demonstrating mechanisms of accountability previously drafted by the Clerk be populated with information relating to the largest provider of social housing in Stockport initially and populate further tables for other providers of social housing, time permitting.
- The aim of the table was to ascertain what existing mechanisms of accountability were in place to enable members to consider whether these were still fit for purpose.

### **4 DISCUSSION OF WHICH ALMOS AROUND THE COUNTRY TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST FINDINGS WITH**

RESOLVED – That information relating to the following local authority areas to enable a broad comparison of mechanisms of accountability in place be sought:

- Blackpool
- London Borough of Barnet

### **5 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillors and officers to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

### **6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2024 were agreed as correct record.

The meeting closed at 4.13 pm.