

MEMBER COMMITTEE

Meeting: 10 February 2025

At: 2.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Mark Roberts (Chair) in the chair; Councillors Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, James Frizzell, Mark Hunter and David Meller.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 15 October 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were made.

3. URGENT DECISIONS

No urgent decisions were reported.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public were invited to put questions to the Chair on any matters within the powers and duties of the Committee, subject to the exclusions set out in the Code of Practice.

One public question was submitted where the questioner was not in attendance at the meeting, and in accordance with the Code of Practice, the Chief Executive was requested to respond to the questioners in writing.

5. HIGH RISE (BLOCK) ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

The Director of Customer Services (Stockport Homes) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the Committee with information on the review of Stockport Homes Group's management of high-rise accommodation and key findings following significant consultation that had taken place including with customers, Councillors, and colleagues.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The recognition of the need for improved communication was welcomed and it was suggested that local councillors in those areas that had high rise accommodation should be involved so that they are better able to respond to questions from residents.

- The positive impact of community groups like Forever Manchester and Lancashire family group was acknowledged, but it was commented that there was still a long way to go with communication, especially regarding repairs.
- There remained a sense amongst tenants in high rise accommodation that they were neglected and the need for actionable communication rather than discussions that didn't result in any change.
- There needed to be clearly defined lines of responsibility between the Council and Stockport Homes Group.
- Feedback from the Committee was welcomed and steps were outlined for improvements in communication and repairs, including structural changes to the team and the launch of a customer portal that would assist with repair reporting and communications with customers.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. SECURITY PATROLS EVALUATION

The Director of Customer Services (Stockport Homes) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the evaluation of the mobile security patrols pilot and outlining the next steps being undertaken to determine the benefit and demand for permanent roll out of the service.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The control room and concierge service became part of the Safer Neighbourhoods service in October 2023, providing services across various properties including CCTV door entry services.
- Extensive consultation with customers revealed a desire for a physical presence within blocks and estates outside of office hours.
- A pilot of security patrols was conducted over three months at Lancashire Hill and Heaton Norris due to an increase in anti-social behaviour incidents.
- The majority of customers still expressed a desire for security patrols as a permanent service. Further consultation with residents across all blocks was planned including asking customers if they are willing to pay an additional service charge of up to £2 per week to determine if they would like a permanent security patrol service.
- It was commented that there was an apparent contradiction in customer feedback, where many were dissatisfied with the trial but still wanted the service to continue.
- It was suggested that consideration be given to using the Carecall service for security patrols.
- Concerns were expressed about the visibility of patrols and the potential impact on residents' perception of safety.
- A discussion took place on the financial implications and the challenge of making the service chargeable to tenants.
- The importance of communication and feedback to residents was emphasized.
- In response to the comments made, it was stated that Stockport Homes were disappointed with the feedback as during the trial it had been considered that the service had been running well with patrol staff making good relationships with residents on Lancashire Hill and with a reduction in instances of fly-tipping.

RESOLVED – That the report and next steps being undertaken to determine the benefit and whether there is demand for permanent roll out of the service be noted.

7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Director of Property (Stockport Homes) attended the meeting and made a presentation (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the proposed measures that were included within Stockport Homes' 2025/26 Capital Programme.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The asset management strategy was welcomed emphasising its potential to shape Stockport's housing stock for the future.
- A question was asked about energy-efficient homes and the impact of changing legislation on landlords regarding carbon reduction targets and the expectations regarding the new legislation and its impact on the asset review.
- The discussion highlighted that 97% of properties had achieved EPC level C, but the remaining 3% pose a challenge due to high investment costs. The council was exploring external funding options to address these issues.
- The ongoing use of gas boilers versus heat pumps for heating works was discussed, noting the current strategy leant towards efficient gas boilers due to budget constraints and lack of funding for heat pumps.
- Heating remained one of the biggest challenges in relation to decarbonising, whether that was in social homes or more broadly. However it was noted that there was a lot of work going into district heat networks and exploring that across the borough.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

8. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Strategic Lead IT Services (Stockport Homes) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on performance against key performance indicators and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) for December 2024, year to date.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The report provided a clear explanation of why certain targets were not being achieved and the actions being taken to address this.
- In response to concerns about lift safety, particularly for wheelchair users, it was stated that in the particular case that was highlighted, one lift remained operational while the other was under repair which was expected to be completed at the end of February. It was noted that the impact of Brexit and covid had meant that manufacturers had moved to manufacturing spare parts on demand that had caused further delay. Contingency planning was discussed including the use of evacuation chairs if this became necessary.
- Concerns were raised about tenant satisfaction measures and the decline in satisfaction levels. In response, it was stated that efforts were made to collect feedback daily and analyse it for improvements. The importance of robust data and the challenges of online surveys was highlighted as part of the discussion.

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- A discussion took place in relation to the percentage of repairs completed at the first visit, noting that there had been a significant drop in this metric.
- When information was presented to area committees, it was requested that more granular data to be brought forward around some of the localised issues on repairs and safe neighbourhoods.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 3.50 pm