

Housing Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the virtual Housing Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 6.00 pm held online.

PRESENT: Councillor Gavin Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Hamish McCallum
Councillor Jack Buck
Councillor Jon Hartley
Councillor Nick Johnson
Councillor Bill Williams
Cris Claridge (co-opted member)
Ina Negoita (co-opted member)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor James Coldwell
Councillor Kieron Williams

OFFICER SUPPORT: Everton Roberts, Head of Overview and Scrutiny (Acting)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair informed the meeting of the reports contained on supplemental agenda No.1 as follows:

- Item 5 – Homelessness in Southwark during and Post Covid-19 Lockdown
- Item 6 – District Heating Case Study – Brandon Estate
- Item 7 – Update on District Heating Strategy
- Item 8 – Work Programme

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

5. HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTHWARK DURING AND POST COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

Ian Swift, Head of Housing Solutions presented the report on homelessness in Southwark during and post Covid-19 lockdown.

Following the report presentation, Ian Swift answered questions of the commission.

The Commission also heard from a former homeless person who had experienced homelessness prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED:

That the report on homelessness in Southwark during post Covid-19 lockdown and the key areas for dialogue with central government and partner agencies as detailed in paragraph 41 of the report be noted.

6. DISTRICT HEATING CASE STUDY - BRANDON ESTATE

The commission heard from Councillor James Coldwell, local ward councillor on behalf of residents on the Brandon Estate in respect of heating outages experienced on the estate.

Councillor Coldwell raised issues around winter outages which had become more continuous, the most serious being in 2018 which had been particularly long. The following issues were raised during the ward councillor's address and subsequent discussion:

- The blanket policy for compensation (£252)
- No consistency with regard to communication with residents,
- Lack of adequate warning when long term outages were expected.
- Some residents reluctant to use electric heaters due to having key payment meters and the need to leave the house to top up key.
- Noisy pipework during lockdown.
- Delay in works being completed.

The cabinet member for housing management reported that there was now major investment in the heating system to make the system more reliable. In terms of communication it was also reported that residents who have registered would receive a text message in respect outages and that there would also be pre-recorded phone messages announcing current outages. There was also a policy being developed around compensation.

RESOLVED:

That the officer reports on the Brandon and Wyndham District Heating System be noted.

7. UPDATE ON DISTRICT HEATING STRATEGY

The commission heard from Councillor Kieron Williams, cabinet member for Housing Management and Modernisation and Tom Vosper, Strategic Project Manager, Housing and Modernisation Department.

Following the presentation of the report, commission members asked questions of the officer(s) and cabinet member for Housing Management and Modernisation.

The following questions arose during the discussion – current position regarding heating dossier submitted by SGTO and update on district heating working party.

It was explained that the dossier would form part of the report on district heating.

RESOLVED:

That the report update on the district heating strategy be noted.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme as at 24 June 2020 attached as Appendix 1 of the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

CHAIR:

DATED: