

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor Rebecca Longbottom,
Councillor Laura McWilliams, Councillor Lucinda Preston,
Councillor Pat Vaughan and Councillor Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: None.

57. Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee Minutes - 4 November 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting held on 4 November 2019 be noted.

58. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

59. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Quality Housing

CLlr Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing, presented a report to Performance Scrutiny Committee and gave an update on the following areas:

- **Homelessness** - This continued to be a significant issue in Lincoln with a total of 356 people approaching the Council as homeless in the first six months of 2019/20.
- **Tenancy Management.** Rent arrears as of the end of Quarter Three were £107,000 above the same point last year. There had been an increase of 641 tenants claiming Universal Credit in the past 12 months which was having a significant impact on arrears. An Income Officer had been recruited until the end of March 2020 to assist specifically with income collection and mitigate the impact of Universal Credit.
- **New Build/Allocations.** The addition of 172 new Council homes during 2018/19 was the most significant increase in the number of Council houses in Lincoln in a 12 month period for over 40 years. Work was continuing to progress with work underway on building a 70 bed extra care unit on the site of the former De Wint Court sheltered housing scheme.
- **Health.** The annual health profile for Lincoln produced by Public Health England showed some challenging data. The life expectancy at birth for both men and women was worse than for the rest of England. Within Lincoln the figures showed inequalities of health with life expectancy being 12 years lower for men and 8.7 years lower for women in the most deprived area of the City than in the least deprived areas. Lincoln was one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary authorities in England and 21.2% children lived in low income families.

He invited members' comments and questions.

Question: The Travelodge took people that needed emergency accommodation from other authorities that couldn't provide one bedroom accommodation. Members asked whether these were included in our figures?

Response: These were not included in our figures.

Question: There were 285 families placed in temporary accommodation which included 217 children. Members asked if data was available for the reasons why this was happening and what was being done to help prevent this?

Response: Data was available as to why people were being made homeless. There was a range of different reasons why which included the following:

- Evictions
- Fleeing domestic violence
- Evictions due to non-payment of rent
- Marital disputes

Question: Members asked what temporary accommodation was?

Response: Temporary accommodation was used for people who were waiting to be housed. B&B's were used as an emergency and were short term. There were three cases over the festive period where B&B's were used.

Comment: Members commented that they understood why other authorities would send residents to the city as there was a lot of support and charities

Question: Current legislation stated that if you were homeless you would get help at the point the application was made. Members asked how the customers that were housed in the Travelodge met the legislation as when they left after their stay they would remain within the city and put pressure on our services?

Response: Officers agreed that this did add pressure when customers were allocated to the city and this was a matter of demand and supply. The rough sleeper count had remained nearly the same for a few years.

Question: P3 took over some council properties to help with the rough sleeper project. Members asked whether these were included in our figures?

Response: The figures for the rough sleepers came from people that had been found on the street.

Comment: Members commented that they were aware of the mental and physical effect that moving people out of the city to be housed was having on them.

Response: There were people working with authorities to try and help these situations. Some other authorities could do more to help.

Question: Members asked how partnerships were managed and monitored to measure how effective they were?

Response: P3 previously ran active lincs which was now run by the council. There were provisions put in place after the three year project had ended to help the people that were part of the project. There were regular liaison meetings with P3 to help with monitoring. Feedback was received from people that had been rehoused with P3 and were monitored by Lincolnshire County Councils contracts process. Feedback received was that the project had been successful in Lincoln.

There were occasions where P3 and the council could have done more but generally speaking this had been good.

Question: Members asked for clarity on how many people had approached the council as homeless and how many had been prevented?

Response: Officers would clarify this and report back to members under separate cover.

Question: Members asked why many applicants that were on the housing waiting list had no connection with Lincoln?

Response: The council currently had an open waiting list with no criteria that stated that applicants needed to demonstrate connections to the city. This information would be hard to source.

Question: Members asked what had been happening with regard to health figures as the data in the appendix did not refer to anything for the last few years?

Response: The figures were produced by Public Health England and were the most up to date figures available. The report was produced in November rather than July. There was a county wide Housing and Wellbeing Strategy whereby housing was included. Some houses were how they used to be in 1950 as tenants wouldn't accept decent homes works. There was a Lincoln standard for our properties and this was set at 98%.

Question: Members asked whether performance figures for education could be brought up with Lincolnshire County Council as the GCSE figures were poor and the council didn't get an oversight of education?

Response: This request would need to be taken to Executive and a representative sent to Lincolnshire County Council to ask for more information on how these figures and life expectancy within the city could be improved.

Comment: Members commented that there were huge amounts of data available but it needed to be mapped and correlated so members could see where life expectancy was the lowest within the city.

RESOLVED that:

1. clarification on how many people approached the council as homeless and how many had been prevented was to be circulated to committee members
2. the content of the report be noted.

60. Delivering Quality Housing Vision 2020 Progress Report

Daren Turner, Director of Housing and Investment, presented Performance Scrutiny Committee:

- a) with an update on progress towards the Delivering Quality Housing strategic priority contained in Vision 2020 along with a Position Statement (Appendix A) and a Project Monitoring Table (Appendix B)

b) explained that there were 10 projects being monitored in the work programme for Quality Housing. A summary of the position of these projects was as follows:

- Completed projects:
 - Establish Supported Housing Forum and co-ordinate liaison with Lincolnshire County Council
 - Ensure compliance with the Homeless Reduction Act
 - Complete the Supported Housing review and implementation

- Projects flagged as green:
 - Bring empty properties back into use
 - Deliver De Wint Court plans
 - Improve energy efficiency to tackle fuel poverty
 - Deliver and facilitate at least 400 new homes by 2020
 - 5 year Housing Land Supply sites annual review
 - Deliver the Housing Health Assistance Policy

- Project flagged as amber:
 - Delivery of Queen Elizabeth Road development

c) invited members' questions and comments.

Question: Members asked how much land was within the city in the 5 year housing land supply?

Response: A lot of the land may be out of the city. Officers were to clarify this and circulate to members.

Question: Members asked whether a local authority company was still going to be created?

Response: The idea of creating a local authority company was due to the council coming close to the borrowing cap. The borrowing cap then got released by central government so the local authority company was not necessary at the given time but this may come through in the future.

Question: Members gave thanks to all of the hard work officers had put in to help deliver the projects for the Quality Housing Priority. Members asked if there was a process for a council tenant to have an electric car socket installed and whether the new build houses were electric car ready?

Response: There wasn't a process for existing premises but it was part of the planning policy for new builds. All new build properties were equipped to have electric car charging points. The council would be happy for tenants of older council properties to have a charging point installed as long as it was fitted by a reputable company and met all the necessary guidelines etc. Charging points were being looked at within the west end of the city.

RESOLVED that:

1. clarification on how much land that was included in the 5 year housing land supply and was within the city boundary was to be circulated to members

2. the content of the report be noted.

61. Performance Report Housing Repairs Service

Matt Hillman, Assistant Director of Housing and Investment, presented Performance Scrutiny Committee:

- a) with an update on the financial position of the Housing Repairs Service (HRS) at the end of the 2018/19 financial year
- b) highlighted that the HRS had a year of success during 2018/19 with the service maintaining their performance from previous years. A surplus of £271.534 for the year had been made as a result of a number of year-end variations in income and expenditure. The key variances were:
 - Transport – Fuel savings and change in CSS Fleet Allocation
 - Employees – reduction in costs of administration at Hamilton House, as well as vacancy savings on multiple posts during the year.
- c) explained the current situation:
 - Performance in the majority of all areas had improved in the financial year.
 - The Housing Repairs Service had various recruitment opportunities over the last year, which had given staff the opportunity to act up in roles for a short term period. This had led to upskilling and increased knowledge within the workforce and allowed more focus to be on learning and development within the service to further improve performance and enhance the service to the customer.
 - HRS had carried out a large amount of work around ensuring the service was compliant with current and upcoming regulations. Over the last year, HRS had become a FENSA accredited window installer and retained all other accreditations. 'Drone Surveys' were to be carried out shortly to reduce the reliance on scaffolding to carry out high-level inspections and HRS had achieved CAA registration to carry out this work.
 - Over the last year HRS had carried out several procurement exercises with contractors, and this would continue through 2020/21 with several small contracts coming to an end. Two significant procurement exercises were going to be worked on at the start of 2021 (Fleet and Materials).
 - HRS had been nominated for a Most Improved Performer in Building Maintenance by APSE Performance Networks.
- d) invited members' questions and comments.

Question: Members congratulated the HRS for their emergency repair work and asked whether the percentage of appointments kept included ones where access could not be sought for the property?

Response: The percentage of appointments kept represented the ones that were completed.

Question: Members asked what was meant by emergency repairs and reactive repairs?

Response: Emergency repairs were burst pipes etc and had a response time of 24hrs. Partial heating was classed as a reactive repair and had a response time of 3 days.

Question: Members asked how many vacancies there were and whether diesel was the most efficient fuel for trade vehicles?

Response: There were three supervisor vacancies which would remain vacant until officers were trained to have the chance to gain these posts. The fleet tender was being worked on and a range of fuel alternatives was being explored. There were currently 93 vehicles in the fleet. HRS were aware of the carbon footprint and were working on measures to re-use materials where possible from properties.

Comment: Members commented that the member development session they had on the HRS was good.

Question: Members asked if the drone used for surveys had been purchased?

Response: The drone had been purchased and was fully licensed. Operatives that couldn't return to their jobs through illness had been trained to operate the drone.

Question: Members asked if co2 emissions were monitored?

Response: Each van in the fleet had trackers which monitored co2 emissions and driving styles.

Comment: Members recognised the work that had taken place and commented that this was how council housing should be. Members commended the quality of the kitchens and bathrooms that were being upgraded and installed.

RESOLVED that the progress made on performance and efficiency by the Housing Repairs Service be noted.

62. Modern Slavery, Charter and Statement Review

Francesca Bell, PPASB and Licensing Service Manager, presented Performance Scrutiny Committee:

- a) with an update of the revised Modern Slavery statement, our compliance to the modern slavery charter and to appraise the committee of the achievements made
- b) provided Performance Scrutiny Committee with a copy of the revised Modern Slavery Statement 2020/21 (Appendix A), a copy of The Charter (Appendix B) and a Modern Slavery Guidance Note (Appendix C)
- c) explained the councils role in stopping Modern Slavery by:
 - Ensuring staff had a clear understanding of Modern Day Slavery and knew how to recognise and report signs.
 - Communicating and promoting materials highlighting Modern Day Slavery as an issue within Lincolnshire.

- Ensuring procurement procedures were in line with the Modern Day Slavery Charter.
- Ensuring that the council had a current Modern Day Slavery Statement.

d) invited members' questions and comments.

Question: Lincolnshire County Council was changing the way vulnerable people and safeguarding was dealt with. Members asked whether this would have an impact on the Council?

Response: Funding was being looked at for the future as the impact on resources also impacted on the vulnerable people. Housing related support came from Lincolnshire County Council and had been cut by £1m which had impacted on the Council.

Question: Members commented that there was a danger that the Council did more than they should be doing and asked if they were to see/hear anything where they should report it to?

Response: If members were unsure then they should speak to Francesca Bell or Paula Burton who would help them through the process.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted and the revised statement be formally adopted.

63. Fire Safety Update

Matt Hillman, Assistant Director of Housing and Investment, on behalf of Andrew McNeil, Assistant Director Housing, Investment and Strategy, presented Performance Scrutiny:

- a) with an update on the Councils actions/progress on fire safety in light of the Hackitt review following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower
- b) explained that the report covered the background to the consultations instigated following the Grenfell Tower fire (June 2017), it covered the main elements of the consultation process, some key finding/recommendations and the Councils current position relating to fire safety. This included clear improvements to the fire safety process and procedure across the city with:
 - Clearer timetable for fire risk assessment (FRA) implementation
 - Improved safety checks and tests
 - Improved auditing of those tests and checks
 - Fire compartmentation improvements
 - Fire alarm upgrades (sheltered schemes)
 - Correlation of all recommended actions (FRA's)
 - Timelines for remedial actions with on-going commentary of current position for improving training
 - Improved physical testing and checking of all sites (including low risk)
 - Recording of all required tests and checks (logbooks and tick sheets)

- Collaboration with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service
- c) highlighted that there was no combustible cladding on any of our building and that the Council was in a safe and organised position at this point, with a clear vision of possible future directions relating to the wider implications of the building and fire regulation changes. The Council were proactive in terms of fire safety with a blue print to continue the drive to delivering a portfolio that was the safest it could possibly be.
- d) explained that within the Hackitt report a recommendation was made that all new build and major refurbishment projects relating to HRRB's, complex and high risk buildings should be subject to a set of "Gateway" points which, unless fully satisfied would preclude a developer of new property from moving to the next, in brief they were:
- **Gateway point 1** – initial plans relating to fire safety and access for emergency services
 - **Gateway point 2** – full plans submitted and the start of the "golden thread" (complete digital record of the building and its infrastructure to include life safety elements), the golden thread would then be required throughout the full lifecycle of the building with any changes/improvements made to be recorded as a matter of law
 - **Gateway point 3** – Occupation, at this stage the regulator would need to see the handover of all required H&S and life safety information (through the digital platform – possibly "building information modelling" BIM) before occupation could occur
- e) listed the following actions and improvements that had been completed by the City of Lincoln Council:
- Instructed and carried out (competent fire risk assessment contractors) new fire risk assessments (FRA's) to all 12 higher risk sites
 - These sites consisted of 3 HRRB'S, 7 sheltered schemes, 1 community hub and Hamilton House
 - Overall action log spreadsheet created which included all recommendations from the completed FRA's for all sites. The actions were categorised in order of risk red, amber and green. The action log had comments of the progress along with completion dates of all required actions
 - Carried out a number of compartmentation works to seal breaches in fire compartments
 - Carrying out fire alarm improvements and upgrades to voice connectivity within sheltered schemes, if the fire alarm activated within a flat the resident was connected directly and instantly to the control centre who would check if it was a false alarm or a real fire.
 - A revision of all sites fire safety checks implemented with new fire safety log books introduced covering daily, weekly and monthly tests and checks within the buildings which were then recorded with any actions required noted and notified
 - Implemented a monthly auditing regime (carried out by the Safety Assurance Team – SAT), site log books were inspected to ensure checks were being performed as required and where any remedial works were required that they had been completed. These audits were recorded and discussed at quarterly SAT team meetings

- Process to carry out annual full FRA (was performed by external competent contractor) to all 12 higher risk buildings implemented with the next assessments being carried out in July 2020
- Low risk low rise housing stock (approximately 800 buildings) had a full FRA conducted every five years (starting early 2020) along with monthly on-going inspections carried out by RO and ROSS's on a monthly basis at all other times
- New on-line training modules created relating to the required checks mentioned above with training scheduled for January 2020
- New building checklists created ready for implementation in line with the training provided
- New guidance "procedures for the control of fire incidents at City of Lincoln Council properties" completed and implemented
- Case studies and research conducted into the possibility of adding sprinkler systems to the 3 HRRB's had taken place with indicative costs produced and discussed. The financial impact on the HRA had been assessed
- Liaison with the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, regarding the sheltered schemes and HRRB's had taken place
- A strategic meeting held with the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service had taken place to discuss emergency evacuation planning for a major incident within a HRRB/complex building and the possible pitfalls/outcomes
- Continued collaboration surrounding processes was ongoing with a possible desk top scenario to test plans and planning

f) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked if there was a plan to replace all fire doors in Jarvis House? Members commented that they were nervous putting an intermediate step in when a fire alarm was sounded by initially contacting the control centre to check whether it was a false alarm or not and asked whether there was any way that if the fire alarm was sounded the flat doors would open?

Response: There had been issues with the contractor for the fire doors which had led to delays. This had been recognised early and precautions were put in place to prevent this from continuing further. Work on intercom systems and access in and out of the building was being looked at. Installation at Shuttleworth House and St Botolphs Court had been completed, the rest of the fire doors were being picked up over the next few years.

Question: Members asked for residents to have a timeline of when fire doors were replaced as there was an expectation?

Response: Residents would receive a timeline. Operators have been trained to make them more knowledgeable.

Question: Members asked whether the fire doors on privately owned properties would be replaced and the resident billed?

Response: The fire doors in privately owned flats should be replaced but would be looked at from a legal point of view as we could not force this upon privately owned properties.

Question: Members asked for this report to be a yearly item so progress would be monitored?

Response: This was added to the work programme on a yearly basis.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Fire Safety Update be added to the work programme on an annual basis
2. the progress the council had made on addressing issues and proposals from the Hackitt review be noted.

64. Work Programme for 2019/20

Clare Stait, Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented the draft work programme for 2019/20 as detailed at Appendix A of her report
- b) advised that the work programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Performance Scrutiny Committee and its Chair
- c) reported that items had been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information could be reported to the committee; the work programme also included the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny
- d) requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2019/20.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2019/20 as detailed at Appendix A to the report be noted subject to the following amendment:

1. the Fire Safety Update be added to the work programme on an annual basis