

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Adrianna McNulty, Councillor Neil Murray,
Councillor Lucinda Preston, Councillor Anita Pritchard,
Councillor Emily Wood and Councillor Donald Nannestad

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Natasha Chapman and Daren Turner

51. Confirmation of Minutes - 14 November 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 be confirmed as a true record.

52. Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes - 31 October 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2024 be confirmed as a true record

53. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

54. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Quality Housing

Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing:

- a) advised that performance data for service areas which came under his portfolio covered the Council's own housing stock, regulation of private sector housing and health
- b) highlighted those major changes since his last report had been the Regulator of Social Housing (ROSH) expanding to cover local authorities from 1 April this year and policy announcements by Government since the July General Election
- c) reported that in terms of Government announcements, the changes in Right to Buy would help, however, in the period between the autumn statement and the deadline for applications to be made under the previous system, over 90 applications were received which was the equivalent to the number which would normally be sold in around two years.
- d) presented his report to Performance Scrutiny Committee providing an insight into key activities and achievements during the past twelve months, covering the following main areas:
 - Homelessness
 - Tenancy Services
 - Voids
 - Housing Repairs
 - Housing Investment
 - New Build
 - Decarbonisation

- Control Centre
- Private Sector Housing
- Health

e) extended his thanks to the team of officers that supported his Portfolio for their hard work, dedication and commitment to supporting the residents of Lincoln

f) invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Why did Park and Carholme wards have the highest number of complaints regarding dis-repair?

Response: Complaints were received from private and rented accommodation. Park and Carholme ward were the two wards with the biggest numbers of private and rented properties which was reflected in the number of complaints.

Question: Who carried out the inspections of City of Lincoln Council properties?

Response: The Council had entered into a contractual agreement with an external contractor to undertake stock condition surveys. A small number of unresponsive surveys would be undertaken by existing City Council employees.

Question: What was the Lincoln Home Standard?

Response: The Lincoln Home Standard was developed locally by the Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) to agree to some enhancement of homes. It was being reviewed in anticipation to decent homes round two which included exploring different floor coverings if a property became void. Local enhancement on decent homes was in the process of being reviewed but wasn't yet complete. A report would be submitted to a future Portfolio Holder meeting on the management of homes for customers.

Question: If the inspections were undertaken by a contractor, how much would it cost?

Response: To complete and independent 20% stock condition survey of the stock, it would cost around £137,000.

Following a brief discussion on the matter, Gary Hewson, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee raised concerns in relation to health in the city and highlighted that every year the statistics showed that regionally and nationally it was very poor.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing explained that there were a number of reasons for this but the main issue was due to the lack of support services and NHS funds. The best way to access information currently was through e-gyms as it enabled officers to measure statistics more closely. There also needed to be improvements through the primary care trusts and mental health services.

The Chair concluded the item, and on behalf of the Committee made a recommendation to the Executive expressing its concerns around health and requested that they view the current Health statistics and liaise with the Local MP with a view to receiving suggestions on what improvements could be made locally.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Performance Scrutiny Committee submit a recommendation to the Executive to review the current health statistics and liaise with the Local MP on what improvements could be made locally.
- b) The content of the report be noted with thanks.

55. Fire Safety Update

Martin Kerrigan, Fire Safety Assurance Manager:

- a) presented an update to Performance Scrutiny Committee on City of Lincoln Council's (CoLC's) current position regarding Fire Safety to the Housing stock including High Rise Tower Blocks, Supported Housing Schemes and Low Risk blocks only
- b) stated that the main legislation in terms of fire in England was 'The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005', that put a duty on the responsible person to undertake fire risk assessments and ensured general fire precautions were undertaken.
- c) highlighted that in addition, following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017 various new pieces of legislation came into force including 'The Fire Safety Act 2021', 'The Fire Safety (England) Regulation 2022' and 'The Building Safety Act 2022', with additional requirements for the responsible person (COLC) to undertake regarding fire safety
- d) referred to the table at 4.3 of his report which outlined the current position regarding Fire Risk Assessments
- e) explained that:
 - The inspection of fire doors continued to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety (England) Regulations.
 - From the regulations there was a requirement for the communal fire doors within the high-rise blocks to be inspected on a quarterly basis and flat front doors to be inspected on an annual basis by best endeavours.
 - The inspections were being undertaken with communal doors next due for inspection in November 2024 and flat front doors next planned to be inspected in February 2025, with letters being sent out to residents for access.
- f) welcomed members comments and questions.

Question: Had all fire doors been located correctly?

Response: A lot of sites had 'fit for purpose' fire doors but a few weren't certified. As part of the inspections, the size, depth, etc was assessed to ensure it was a fire door when it was originally installed.

Question: Were there officers trained for assessing fire doors?

Response: Yes, there were fully trained accredited officers to carry out assessments.

Question: Had all the cladding similar to Grenfell been changed?

Response: There was no flammable cladding on any tower blocks anymore.

Question: Would the position of the Technical Officer be recruited to?

Response: Officers provided assurance that the role had development opportunities. Agency staff were currently carrying out fire inspections, shadowing and mentoring until more permanent measures were put in place.

Question: Could noticeboards be put in the flats to show residents they'd been assessed?

Response: It wasn't possible at the moment. The website was being reviewed but there were restrictions with the current website. Plans were being put in place to expand it and customers would then have access to when their fire door was last inspected and when the last fire risk assessment was carried out including any outstanding actions. There was a slight issue around flat front doors and leaseholders as technically they weren't owned by the Council. Officers confirmed a report would be submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee in 6 months on options going forward regarding leaseholders.

RESOLVED that:

- a) A report be submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee in 6 months presenting the options going forward regarding inspection of flats owned by Leaseholders.
- b) The report be noted with thanks.

56. Work Programme 2024-25

The Chair:

- a) presented the draft work programme for 2024/25 as detailed at Appendix A of the 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 2024/25.

RESOLVED that:

- a) An update report be submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the first meeting of the new municipal year to review the options going forward regarding inspections on flats owned by Leaseholders.
- b) The work programme 2024/25 be noted.