

## STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Date: Tuesday 29 November 2016**

**Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage**

**Present:** Members: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair),  
E Connolly, E Harrington, J Mead, and C Saunders

**In Attendance:**

**Start/End Time:** Start Time: 6:00 pm  
End Time: 7.30 pm

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bainbridge, J Brown and A Mitchell.

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2. MINUTES – 19 OCTOBER 2016**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 19 October 2016 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **3. MINUTES – 25 OCTOBER 2016**

The Scrutiny Officer informed the meeting that Councillors D Bainbridge, E Connolly and C Saunders had been erroneously recorded as attendees having given their apologies for the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to deleting the names of Councillors D Bainbridge, E Connolly and C Saunders from the list of attendees, the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 25 October 2016 are approved as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

#### **4. SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO DAMP AND MOULD IN STEVENAGE HOUSING STOCK**

The Head of Asset Management updated Members on the statistical data report collated regarding cases of damp, mould and condensation.

In relation to the scale of known damp, condensation and mould within SBC's housing stock, the Head of Asset Management acknowledged that this was difficult to accurately ascertain as using the stock condition data as a measure was insufficient as it focussed on external rather than internal observations. However it was noted that having used key word searches

that the words damp, condensation and mould appeared in 0.87% of all repairs that were reported during 2015/16. It was acknowledged though that there could be a number of factors informing the figures including some people experiencing issues but not reporting them and others who may have reported matters previously and then not followed up. The number of cases brought to Members attention was another helpful indicator of the scale of the matter. He also noted the inconsistencies in how repairs had been recorded and managed which could skew the data or result in a misrepresentation of the issue. Members recommended that the classification of damp and mould be recorded in the future stock condition class

In response to a question on causes of damp and mould, Officers acknowledged that previous assumptions that lifestyle was the main reason for damp and mould would no longer be the case.

It was suggested that all complaints received from the onset should be referenced with a unique number to the property rather than the resident so that it could be easily followed up.

The Head of Asset Management informed Members that the Investment Team, in conjunction with the IT team, would be looking at ways to make more effective use of the Housing IT system by introducing a facility to assist the monitoring performance issues around damp and mould.

In response to a question on the timescale for visiting tenants, Members were informed that although SBC would endeavour to respond to enquiries within 7 days, the new approach would be centred on getting the diagnosis right from the onset.

With regard to the timescale in clearing the backlog of reported damp and mould cases, the Head of Asset Management advised that as inspections had been carried out by SBC Surveyors on most of the identified cases, all works should be completed by March 2017.

The Strategic Director (Community) suggested that the Damp and Condensation strategy be trialled for a period of time in order to test and evidence its effectiveness. The strategy had been informed by national best practice focussing upon the causes rather than symptoms. Further changes could be considered if it is proven that performance doesn't improve.

A Member suggested officers give consideration to support that could be provided to people experiencing health and respiratory problems as a result of damp and mould when reviewing the allocation policy.

The Scrutiny Officer tabled the draft recommendations for Member's consideration.

Members having discussed the recommendations made some amendments

and agreed for the Scrutiny Officer to circulate the amended recommendations to the members of the Committee before the final consideration of them at a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that

1. The statistical report regarding damp and mould is noted.
2. The draft recommendations are noted, subject to amendments suggested by Members at the meeting.

**5. URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None

**6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required

**7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**