

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 2 October 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair),
Sandra Barr, Liz Harrington, Simon Speller and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 7.40pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jim Brown, Roni Hearn, John Mead, Sarah Mead and Sarah-Jane Potter.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Community Select Committee meeting held on 4 September are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 DAMP AND MOULD SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Committee received an update from the Corporate Investment and Design Manager and the Principal Design Manager, Stevenage Borough Council, on the current position in relation to the Damp and Mould Scrutiny Review.

The Committee was advised that the improvement and action plan had been developed which incorporated previous recommendations and the progress made against them. It was noted that the Plan would continue to be updated and developed to ensure ongoing improvement.

The Committee was pleased to note that the Surveyors had now been tasked to take ownership of any enquiries they dealt with and that they were aware that the focus for any reports and complaints was now the fundamental cause of the reported damp and mould issue and not just remedying the problem as and when it arose.

Members were advised that the Major Refurbishment Contract (MRC) programme had now commenced and that the MRC and the Damp and Mould teams were working closely together learning from historic and new damp and mould cases that will inform the programme of works to the flat blocks.

Officers advised that they were using a tracker to monitor progress for each

individual case. Contact had now been made by Council officers with all those tenants who had previously reported problems. Members were also advised that following a reported problem, an initial inspection was now carried out within 3 weeks. The target for the completion of all works was 6 months although the majority of cases were completed a lot sooner.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update be noted and that officers be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

4 **RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Digital Transformation

The Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation reported to Members on the steps the Council was taking to make its services accessible via digital platforms and how residents would be able to interact with the Council in the future. Members were pleased to note the recent appointment of a Digital Transformation Manager who would be leading on this alongside Councillor Rob Broom as the Portfolio Holder responsible for this area.

It was noted that a new website provider had been appointed and work would commence to ensure that the new website which should be in place summer 2019, would focus on better customer journeys and include more self-service and more self-assessment options. It was also hoped that by the end of next year customers would be able to access all their SBC accounts with a single sign on. The importance of being able to access the Council website remotely was also stressed to make it as easy as possible to pay council tax/rent bills etc.

Councillor Rob Broom, Portfolio Holder Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working advised that he had organised a cross party member engagement group which would be involved in the web development project.

Members were also pleased to note that the Council's Community Engagement Team would be promoting 'internet clubs' within community centres.

In terms of IT resilience, officers advised that the Council was currently looking at alternative options in the instance of system failure including a hosted website, secondary cabling and cloud technology.

Resident Engagement

The Chair welcomed Les Isaacs – Customer Scrutiny Panel member and Jon Thurlow member of the Housing Management Advisory Board who gave their experiences of engagement with the Council on behalf of tenants and residents in the Town.

The Committee was advised that both of the Groups were well thought of and in particular the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) was using the Customer Scrutiny Panel newsletter as an example of best practice.

Members were pleased to note the positive feedback from the representatives although it was agreed that the diversity of the make-up of the different groups around the town could be improved.

Discussion then took place regarding ways the Council could engage differently with communities including social media, informal groups, time bound themed projects in task and finish groups relating to individual services which could be a recommendation of the review and engaging younger people to become IT champions.

Feedback from Members

At the last meeting of the Committee, some Members were asked to lead on certain aspects of resident engagement. However, it was agreed that due to several Members not in attendance, this part of the item be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the feedback be noted;
2. That updates from individual members be given at the next meeting of the Committee.

5 URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

None.

6 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Not required.

7 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR