

Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 September 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors James Halden (Chair), Sue Shinnick (Vice-Chair), Steve Liddiard, Maureen Pearce, Joycelyn Redsell and Neil Speight

Sue Hodgson, Housing Tenant Representative

Apologies: None

In attendance: Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director Housing and Development
Keith Andrews, Housing Development Manager
Chris Seman, Intelligence and Performance Manager
Mohammed Ullah, Repairs & Planned Maintenance Manager, Adults, Housing & Health
Lucas Critchley, Chief Operating Officer, Mears
Gary Luscombe, Head of Operations, Mears
Bruce Chibesa, Senior Housing Development Project Manager
Donna Noble, Note Taker

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

9. Minutes

The minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 20 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

10. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items of business.

11. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Housing Ombudsman Report: Spotlight on Damp and Mould - Thurrock Council's Response

The report presented updated Members on how the council was addressing the management of damp and mould within its housing stock, and in the context of the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight on Damp & Mould Report published in October 2021.

Points Raised:

The committee discussed how different approaches were taken with residents, namely alternative treatments, revisits, educational tools.

Officers had approached the issue of damp and mould via proactive engagement, resulting in a higher number of repairs this year, but the feedback is good.

Discussions were had regarding Blackshots, namely the vacating of flats and the checks and maintenance needed on the empty properties to ensure safety of active tenants.

Questions asked regarding whether we have any responsibility for privately let properties. Ewelina Sorbjan said we have a responsibility to refer to enforcement teams and can issue fines via Court.

Actions:

Chris Seman to provide breakdown of damp and mould reports by ward/property type/town to individual Councillors. This action was completed after the meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the Council's progress on the management of damp and mould within the housing portfolio in relation to the Ombudsman's Spotlight report on Damp and Mould.**
- 2. The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the Council's measures that are still in development on the management of damp and mould.**

13. Housing Development Programme Update

The report presented updated Members on progress on various sites considered for housing development. The report set out a reduction in the overall programme of new homes for rent within the housing development pipeline since last reported to this committee. This number now stood at 338. The reduction was a consequence of scheme amendments and a number of projects no longer progressing.

Actions:

Chair raised concerns regarding seeking disposals rather than continuing/halting projects due to temporary external circumstances. Agreed this was a question of strategy, Ewelina Sorbjan to discuss with Finance colleagues and report back.

Chair will write to Chief Executive urgently to discuss legal advice regarding site disposals.

Councillor Pearce asked for updates on Teviot Flats, Keith Andrews to provide the consultation report.

RESOLVED

The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1. Noted the updates on sites being considered for housing development.**
- 2. Noted that the sites at Aveley Library, Darnley Road, Corve Lane and the CO1 building as part of the civic estate were no longer being considered for Housing Revenue Account housing development.**

14. New Recommendation Log

Members noted the recommendation log.

15. Work Programme

Members noted the work programme and made the following comments:

Councillor Redsell asked for an update on the painting of the garages. Ewelina Sorbjan commits to providing a briefing note for the ward.

Discussed upcoming meetings. An additional meeting should be scheduled in February.

Action:

Ewelina Sorbjan to meet with Jenny Shade and rework the workplan.

The recording of the meeting can be found from the following link:

[Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 28 September 2023, 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The meeting finished at 8.28 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**