

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Thursday, 25 April 2024
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Conference Room, Phoenix House, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0UL

Present:

Chair Councillor M. Brown (Chair)

Councillors S. Atherton H. Cliff
M. Gordon S. Lumley
R. Sharp T. Webster

In Attendance Councillor M. Glancy – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Governance, Environment and Regulatory Services
Councillor S. Carter

Officers Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
Assistant Director for Housing Management
Tenancy Services Manager
Housing Asset Manager
Regulatory Assurance Lead
Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Officer (CB)

Minute No.	Minute
49	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Child and Thwaites. Councillor Evans was absent.</p>
50	<p>MINUTES The comment was made that some comments at the previous meeting had been omitted. The Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer would review and suggest amendments, where appropriate. The Chair would then decide whether or not to include the amendments.</p> <p>In addition, a comment was made that the line in Minute Number 46 <i>‘there is a perception that there are problems with customer services’</i> was inaccurate as, in the opinion of the Member, there is a problem with customer services. The Chair noted that the Minutes are not a verbatim record and is a summary of the meeting. It was also noted that whilst the Member asserts there is a problem, it is their perception as the statement was not supported by objective evidence.</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2024 were approved.</p>
51	<p>MATTERS ARISING Regarding the issue of Senior Leadership pay, the Chair informed Members that he had received advice from the Monitoring Officer in which it was established that it would not be appropriate to review the top at Scrutiny. The Chair informed Members that he would circulate the advice to the Member who raised the topic.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee noted the Issue Tracker.</p>
52	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillor Gordon declared a personal interest, in Minute Number 55, as she is a tenant of a Melton Borough Council property, however she was advised by Officers that she could remain and participate in the meeting.</p>
53	<p>REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN The Chair introduced the Cabinet Forward Plan and invited Members to comment.</p>
54	<p>REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 The Chairman introduced the Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 and invited Members to comment on the document.</p> <p>In response to a query on whether to scrutinise the topic of the offer to young people, the Committee were advised that the Work Programme Workshop would be taking place on 3 June 2024. There is an opportunity then to rank the items on the pending list and consider whether any new topics should be added to the Work Programme.</p>

Members were reminded that there will be a Workshop on the topic of the Customer Journey Framework taking place in June.

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REGULATORY CHANGE IN HOUSING

The Director for Housing and Communities introduced the report on regulatory change in housing.

Officers were congratulated on the work they have done in this area.

The query was raised as to whether the audit overlaps could be reduced, however in response it was explained that one Officer is responsible for Corporate Health and Safety and another Officer is responsible for Housing Health and Safety and that the audits for both roles do cover different elements. In addition to this there is Internal Audit who are responsible for carrying out a formal audit on the service and then there is External Audit who are independent of Council and will conduct their own audits from time to time. Members were reassured that work was not being duplicated.

Following a question about the new arrangements and whether they cover private sector landlords, it was confirmed that the arrangements are focussed on the public/social sector and that there will be separate arrangements for private sector landlords.

In response to a question about remuneration for tenants when they join the Landlord Assurance Board, Members were informed that the Council can't pay tenants a salary when they join the board but that training and expenses, for travel and child care, can be provided so that they can discharge their duties more effectively.

In regard to the timetable for appointing to Landlord Assurance Board, it was noted that the first meeting was a few weeks prior to the meeting. Members were assured that tenants could be involved. Recruitment to the board would take between 2 to 3 weeks.

When reviewing the responses and in particular the satisfaction about repairs, it was commented that the dissatisfaction isn't with the Council but with the contractor. However, it was explained that the Council are the landlord and therefore it is up to the Council to hold the contractor to account. This is an issue which has been worked on, and along with regular meetings with contractors, Officers have also increased the percentage of post inspections to assess the quality of the repairs and identify and trends or issues in service delivery.

A Member commented that statistics have to be handled with care and that the Council has to be mindful of those who aren't satisfied. In response, it was explained that the Council can benchmark against other landlords and compare how the Council is performing amongst similar sized organisations. The Council are able to do this as a result of it's membership of Housemark.

RESOLVED

The Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) Considered and commented on the work undertaken to prepare for the new housing regulation regime and proactive consumer regulation inspection and provide feedback to Cabinet on areas for further development or improvement.**
- (2) Considered the outcome of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023/24 and will provide feedback to Cabinet that reflects the views of tenants on how the Council can continue to improve its role as a landlord and how tenant satisfaction could be improved in the future.**
- (3) Noted that an annual report from the Landlord Assurance Board would be provided for consideration by Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council. The first of these being for the period 2024/25.**

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URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at: 7.14 pm

Chair