

# Scrutiny Committee

7 January 2020

**Report of:** Voids/Temporary  
Accommodation Task and  
Finish Group

## **FINAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP - HOUSING VOIDS MANAGEMENT AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

### **1.0 Summary:**

1.1 The Final Report attached at Appendix A details the findings of the review carried out by the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group for Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation. The Task and Finish Group have proposed a number of recommendations which are presented for Scrutiny Committee approval and further recommendation to Cabinet.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 **That Scrutiny Committee approve and recommend to Cabinet the Final Report of the Task and Finish Group for Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation (Appendix A).**

### **3.0 Report Detail**

- 3.1 On 23 July 2019 the Scrutiny Committee approved the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation.
- 3.2 On 28 August 2019 the Task and Finish Group met for their preliminary scoping meeting. At that meeting the Group were provided with some background information and performance measures on Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation processes. The Group identified issues and areas that they would like to explore further and also discussed the timetable for the review.
- 3.3 The Group felt that the original timeline to present to Cabinet in November was unachievable and agreed that it was important that the review was thorough and the Group had ample time to complete their enquiries and deliberations; as such a completion date of January 2020 was agreed to be more realistic. Minor revisions were also made to the Terms of Reference.
- 3.4 The Scoping Document for the Review and the revised Terms of Reference were presented to and approved by the Scrutiny Committee on 17 September 2019.
- 3.5 Over the last 4 months the Group has established a sound evidence base which includes performance statistics, review of current policy and process and draws on the experiences of customers, officers and other stakeholders. A summary of the evidence considered is included in the report (Appendix A). Evaluation of this

evidence base has clarified the issues and lead to the identification of the underlying causes.

- 3.6 Using the evidence and with technical support from Officers, the Group have considered options for improvement, alongside feasibility for future delivery, realistic timeframes and performance monitoring indicators and translated their findings into a set of recommendations. Subject to the approval of Scrutiny Committee, these recommendations will be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration on 22 January 2020.

The recommendations are noted below:

1. A review of the voids module within the Northgate Housing Management System is undertaken and recommendations proposed to Senior Leadership Team as to how an improved system can be implemented along with revenue expenditure required.
2. Consult tenants in relation to the implementation of a Golden Goodbye scheme that incentivises tenants to return their home in a good standard that in turn reduces void time and void costs to Melton Borough Council.
3. Ensure that a framework is developed that includes TFEC in the monthly monitoring of voids and includes a written protocol from both parties so as to clarify expectations.
4. To reduce, with the aim of eliminating, use of private Bed and Breakfasts by introducing alternatives with options developed by officers for consideration by Cabinet by the end of July 2020.
5. Review contract in relation to voids with Axis seeking to amend the terms thus enabling all works (including capital components) except gas safety, to be carried out by one main void contractor subject to a suitable schedule of rates being agreed.
6. Review of the Allocations Policy by July 2020.
7. To develop and implement a new Voids Policy by July 2020.
8. To provide an interim report to Scrutiny Committee in July 2020, detailing progress against recommendations and a full report in January 2021 to evidence the impact of improvements.

#### **4.0 Consultation and Feedback**

- 4.1 A list of stakeholders and expert witnesses consulted is contained in the final report.
- 4.2 Some of the recommendations will require further consultation should they be approved and taken forward by Cabinet. Where appropriate this has been highlighted in the report.

#### **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 Subject to the approval of Scrutiny Committee the report will be presented to Cabinet on 22 January 2020. The report to Cabinet will be accompanied by a management response.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Each recommendation may have financial implications which will be evaluated and further information provided to Cabinet in the form of a management response.

**7.0 Legal and Governance Implications:**

7.1 The Task and Finish Group operates and reports to the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet within the rules set out in Section 8 and 9 of Chapter 2, Part 10 of the MBC Constitution.

**8.0 Equality and Safeguarding Implications:**

8.1 Equalities implications arising out of the recommendations will be considered on a case by case basis.

**9.0 Community Safety Implications:**

9.1 There are no community safety implications in this report.

**10.0 Other Implications**

10.1 There are no other implications.

**11.0 Risk & Mitigation:**

11.1 There are no implications associated with this update report.

**Background Papers:**

Report to Scrutiny Committee 23 July 2019 & 17 September 2019

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Final Report of the Scrutiny Task And Finish Group - Housing Voids Management And Temporary Accommodation.

**Report Timeline:**

<b>Equalities Check &amp; Challenge</b>	N/A
<b>SLT Sign off</b>	N/A
<b>Previously Considered by Cabinet</b>	N/A
<b>Director Approval</b>	19.12.19
<b>Chief Finance Officer Sign Off</b>	19.12.19
<b>Finance Officer Sign Off</b>	19.12.19
<b>Legal Sign Off</b>	19.12.19
<b>Monitoring Officer Sign Off</b>	19.12.19
<b>Consultation with Portfolio Holder</b>	N/A

**Report Author & Job Title**

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