



**Chair -
Councillor M
Westwood**

Annual Report of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

2022/2023 Muncipal Year



**Vice-Chair –
Councillor
W Sullivan**

Our role involves the scrutiny of matters falling within the functions of the Directorates of Housing and Community Services and Public Realm and the Cabinet portfolios of appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

Minutes – 9th June, 2022

Councillor D Stanley commented on the minutes of the meeting held on 30th March, 2022. Additional comments were incorporated in the minutes of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee held on 9th June, 2022.

Outcome:

- *That the Head of Housing Maintenance be requested to provide Members with a written response providing accurate Key Performance Indicator figures relating to PI 2194, percentage of gas compliance.*
- *That the Interim Head for Neighbourhood and Communities be requested to send information to all Members of the Committee on the engagement event at Baylie and Kennedy Courts in relation to compliance in general.*

Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23

The Committee considered reports on the annual scrutiny programme 2022/23.

Outcome of the meeting held on 9th June, 2022:-

- *That a meeting be arranged to discuss and agree a Scrutiny Programme for 2022/23.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 23rd June, 2022:-

- *That a Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Working Group meeting be arranged to discuss progress on the Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA), to include outcomes on the ARK Consultancy report.*
- *That the Head of Traffic, Transportation and Engineering Services be requested to provide a written response in relation to the programme of maintenance/repair work to the highway infrastructure and the issues associated with the programmed work, to include improvement strategies and planning techniques.*
- *That two separate Working Groups be established to provide for the informal consideration and formulation of recommendations concerning items associated with Housing and Communities and Public Realm to comprise all Members of this Scrutiny Committee.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive provide a draft programme of potential items to be discussed at future Working Groups to be submitted to the next Working Group.*

Corporate Quarterly Performance Report

The Committee received the Corporate Quarterly Performance reports during the financial year 2022/23. Specific officers attended meetings to provide a summary and responded to questions asked by the Committee. In view of the number of items that were considered by the Committee, the Corporate Quarterly Performance report in relation to Quarter 2 was e-mailed to the Committee for comments.

Outcome of the meeting held on 9th June, 2022:-

- *That the Corporate Performance Manager be requested to refer the specific issues raised by the Committee to relevant Officers or Cabinet Members for appropriate responses.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a comprehensive response to Councillor D Stanley in relation to the void property located in Sedgley.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive, together with the Director of Housing and Communities, investigate the progress of anti-social behaviour complaints received and particularly, any cases not progressed and respond to Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a detailed breakdown of figures in relation to strategic investments and the overall percentage of rent loss through voids to all Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Deputy Chief Executive be requested to provide background information on the ARK Consultant report to Councillor J Cowell.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to circulate information on stock investment decisions, the number of Inspectors employed, and the timescales involved in making decisions to all Members of the Committee.*
- *That the Head of Housing Options and Support be requested to provide a written response to Members of the Committee outlining*

details of the challenges faced and delays associated with the refurbishment of Jack Newell Court.

Outcome of the meeting held on 21st September, 2022:-

- That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Public Realm be requested to review recycling options and facilities in the Borough, together with the possibility of introducing fortnightly recycling and residual waste collections and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.*
- That the Interim Director of Public Realm and the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide Members with a management and officer structure of Directorates, to include service responsibilities.*

Housing and Communities Directorate report on the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee received reports on areas agreed within the 2022/23 Annual Scrutiny Programme, approved by the Committee in relation to Social Housing White Paper, customer and value for money quality services.

Outcome of the meeting held on 21st September, 2022:-

- That the aspirations and commitments of the Social Housing White Paper and its impact upon Dudley MBC, be noted.*
- That the Community Housing Vision and progress in its implementation be noted.*
- That activity to improve void performance for empty homes and garages be noted.*

Outcome of the meeting held on 17th November, 2022:-

- That the activity around compliance, assets, capital investment, development and fuel poverty be noted.*
- That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for a comprehensive response to be provided to*

Members on the percentage of income retained by the Council from capital receipts received through the Right to Buy (RTB) Scheme.

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to pursue the requirements for a Fire Door Contractor and provide a response to Members.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide a comprehensive response to Members on details of the housing 30-year maintenance plan to include information considered when assessing the overall baseline valuation of housing stock for strategic assessment management purposes.*

Developing a Neighbourhood Approach – Street Cleanliness and Environmental Quality

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Street, Green and Amenity Services providing an overview on developing a neighbourhood approach to street cleanliness and environmental quality.

Outcome:

- *That the comments made by Members be noted and referred back to the Directorate of Public Realm for consideration.*
- *That the Head of Street, Green and Amenity Services be requested to circulate statistics for fly tipping, including prosecutions, to all Members of the Committee.*

Public Forum

The Committee heard representations from members of the public concerning Affordable Housing, Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA) and the High-Rise Aerial Fund.

Outcome:

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for information to be circulated to the member of the public on the definition and criteria of affordable housing and areas that had been identified for such housing.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for feedback to be provided to the Housing Board on a recommendation made by the Committee on 31st March, 2022 in relation to the consideration of appointing non-voting Co-opted Members to represent the Housing Board and Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association, to comment on Housing issues only.*
- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to arrange for a written response to be provided to the member of public in relation to the suggestion to review procedures for the allocation of funding from the High-Rise Aerial Fund.*

Public Realm – Transport and Highways Progress Report on Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a report on progress on all matters associated with Transport and Highways, in particular, strategic transport and partnership working, highways maintenance, asset management and a neighbourhood approach to traffic and highways functions.

Outcomes:

- *That the information contained in the report and presentation submitted to the meeting be noted and the comments made by Members be referred back to the Directorate of Public Realm for consideration.*
- *That the Head of Traffic, Transportation and Engineering Services be requested to provide a comprehensive response to Members of the Committee on the strategies and funding obtained to*

improve the cycle and bus corridor, with particular reference to the A4123 and A461 schemes.

Developing the Neighbourhood Approach to Delivering Services to keep Dudley Clean and Safe

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Street, Green and Amenity Services providing an overview on developing the neighbourhood approach to delivering services to keep Dudley clean and safe.

Outcome:-

- *That the presentation be noted and the comments made by Members be referred back to the Directorate of Public Realm for consideration.*

Action Tracker and Future Business

The Committee received information on outstanding actions following recommendations made throughout the 2023/23 municipal year, which included items to be considered at future meetings.

Outcome:

- *That the Director of Housing and Communities be requested to provide information to all Members of the Committee in relation to the length of time a fire door contractor had not been in place, whether the contract awarded to ABCA had been agreed and signed and the length of time expected for the new contractor to carry out the required work.*

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Legal, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Housing and Communities and the Interim Director of Public Realm on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26, with emphasis on those proposals relating to the Committee's terms of reference. Items

directly relevant to this Committee were those in relation to the Housing and Community Services and Public Realm Directorates.

Outcome:

- *That the Director of Finance and Legal be requested to provide statistics on the number of individual library facilities available within the Borough to all Members of the Committee.*

Annual update on the Safe and Sound Partnership priorities and update on improvements to managing neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour

The Committee received a report providing an overview of Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) and an update on the ongoing work to improve the management of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.

Outcome:

- *That the information contained in the report be noted and the comments made by Members be referred back to the Directorate of Housing and Communities for consideration/action.*

Other Items Considered by the Committee in the 2022/23 Municipal Year

- Overview of Public Realm
- Review of Housing Finance

Briefing Notes considered by the Committee through e-mail

- *Corporate Quarterly Performance Reports – Quarter 2*

Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Working Group

- Annual Scrutiny Programme 2022/23
- *Progress on the Housing Board/Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (DFTRA).*

Ongoing items for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee

Items requiring further scrutiny or to be included in the Annual Scrutiny Programme for 2023/24 are listed below:-

- *Medium Term Financial*
- *Review of Housing Finance*
- *Issues associated with anti-social behaviour*
- Future plans for the Lister Road Depot, people and workforce and progress with the work on partnership and neighbourhoods
- Progress on grounds maintenance, green and open space