

EXTRAORDINARY CUSTOMER SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee of Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday 26th April 2022 at 15:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Rose Bowler in the Chair

Councillors Rita Turner (Vice-Chair), Allan Bailey, David Dixon, Ray Heffer and Andrew Joesbury.

Officers: Karen Hanson (Executive Director – Resources) and Jo Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

CS54-21/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Stan Fox and Sandra Peake and Vicky Dawson (Assistant Director - Housing Management & Enforcement) and Deborah Whallett (Housing Enforcement Manager).

CS55-21/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

CS56-21/22 REVIEW OF COUNCIL-OWNED ADAPTED ACCOMMODATION

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer presented the final version of the review report to Members, following extensive consultation on the final draft with service officers and the Portfolio Holder (Housing). Members agreed the report was an accurate reflection of the evidence that had been discussed during the course of the review.

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer notified Members of specific comments by the service managers during the drafting of the final report:

- (1) Whilst officers appreciated the desire to improve mapping of the housing stock data, it was felt that mapping within Local Insight (Recommendation 1.5) would not be as beneficial as mapping within the GIS system (Recommendation 1.4) as the population deprivation data was not necessarily reflective of our tenant population. As such it was felt the recommendation would not lead to any noticeable improvements for the work that would be involved in implementation.
- (2) Whilst officers appreciate the demographic analysis completed, again it was noted that this was reflective of the whole of the population in the District, not out tenant population. As such, while useful data, it may not be a fully accurate indication of where demand would come from.

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Based on officer comments, the Scrutiny & Elections Officer asked Members to consider whether Recommendation 1.5 should be removed as it would not add value.

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Rose Bowler

RESOLVED that Recommendation 1.5 be removed from the report prior to submission to Executive for approval.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

At this point the Scrutiny & Elections Officer read a statement from the service managers thanking Members for the work of the Committee during the course of the review:

Firstly apologies for not being able to attend this meeting today.

The housing team would like to thank scrutiny for your time, and engagement in this specific work area. This review has come at the time when we have also been looking to improve internal procedures and to establish a policy to help support the work we do in terms of welfare adaptations.

You will recall that the review was requested by Executive after the service received 2 rather specific requests for disabled adapted properties where it was a child of the household who needed level access, so there was a specific need for a larger family home. This is not the kind of request we regularly get.

As we have said in previous meetings, it's important to understand that in most cases, the demand for either disabled adapted properties or any kind of adaptation tends to be generated by DCC social care. Most tend to be that people need an adaptation to help them live more comfortably in their own home. A lot of the time we do this relatively quickly and easily. The disabled adapted or substantially adapted tend to be when there is a disability that affects mobility and there is a need for the property to be wheelchair friendly or have a stair lift, through floor lift to allow access to all rooms etc.

Whilst the report does provide a lot of useful data regarding disability benefits generally across wards to help and show where there may be a need for more stock, it is important to know there are a number of reasons why someone gets DLA and these reasons may not correlate with the need for an adapted property e.g. a child with severe autism wouldn't necessarily need a level access dwelling.

As stated in the report there is a good mix of both disabled adapted and significantly adapted properties across the district and in each of the main town centre areas. We consider the waiting list when looking at new builds under Bolsover Homes and have tried to include larger adapted bungalows on these schemes to boost housing stock. We also work with tenants to support them in their own home with adaptations and if that is not possible look to find suitable alternative accommodation.

Apologies for our non-attendance today but thank you once again for your engagement in this work area, and for working with us to produce a robust policy which reflects working practices and sets expectations to our tenants.

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Following agreement to remove recommendation 1.5, the Chair asked for any final comments. A Member requested clarification that further consideration was being given to the policy around Mobility Scooters. It was noted that this was included at Recommendation 1.3 of the review and that a copy would come to Members as part of monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations.

Moved by Councillor Rose Bowler and seconded by Councillor Ray Heffer.

RESOLVED that (1) the Committee endorses the recommendations of the review outlined in section 2 of the attached report,

(3) Committee submits the report to Executive for approval, in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference – Part 3.6 (3) of the Constitution,

(4) following approval by Executive, monitoring of the recommendations by Committee takes place over a twelve month period via the PERFORM system with an update report to Committee at the end of the monitoring period.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

The meeting ended at 15:21 hours.