



Report to: Cabinet 28 September 2023

Lead Cabinet Members: All

From: Councillor Graham Cone, Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Councillor Stephen Drew, Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Update from Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Purpose

1. This report informs Cabinet about the outcome of discussion among members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at the meeting on 7 September 2023.

Mutual Exchange Policy

2. Having considered the officer's report and statement submitted by the tenant representatives on the Housing Engagement Board and having heard from officers and the Leader of the Council in the absence of the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee supported by affirmation the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet.
3. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee specifically supported officer recommendation 3 (staffing) by saying it was satisfied that there were insufficient mutual exchanges in an average year to justify the employment of an officer dedicated to this one area of work. The Committee agreed that the Council's established housing area officers were far better placed to understand the circumstances involved in each case but noted that the matter would be monitored and reconsidered should there be a sharp increase in the number of mutual exchange applications. The Committee acknowledged that the use of generic area officers would avoid the potential problems of having a single point of failure.
4. Several Committee members welcomed the proposed policy's flexibility and pragmatism and were satisfied that where officers exercised discretion records would be kept to ensure that any perception that discretion was being applied unfairly as between different individuals could be investigated.
5. The Committee welcomed the fact that tenant representatives had been involved in the review of the policy and that officers had considered their views.

2023-24 Quarter 1 Performance Report

6. Having considered the report on Key Performance Indicator (KPI) results and progress against Business Plan actions, and having heard from the Leader of the Council and Lead Cabinet Members for Resources, Heads of Service and the Deputy Director for Planning and Building Quality, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee supported by affirmation the report to be considered by Cabinet.
7. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee recognised that the Council's performance was currently under intense scrutiny by external individuals and organisations and welcomed an assurance from the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources that the position at the end of Quarter 1 gave him no cause for concern.
8. The Vice-Chair expressed delight at the 42% reduction in the number of days to re-let void properties (AH211) during the period April-June 2023.
9. The Committee supported the Leader of the Council in her determination that the Cabinet would work with Parish Councils and others in order to overcome the challenges faced in achieving the objective of biodiversity net gain.

Final report from the Young People Task and Finish Group

10. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee received and commented upon the findings of the Young People Task and Finish Group. The Committee's report (Young People in South Cambridgeshire) and recommendations appear elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda. The Committee was keen to see engagement with young people continue beyond the work undertaken by the Task & Finish Group during the past 12 months.

Report Author:

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