



CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

6 November 2014

PRESENT:

Directors

Robert Buckley (Chair)
Elizabeth Bird
Sheila Bouitieh
Joanne Carr
Pauline Dillon
Kathryn Ferdinand
John Hamilton

Advisers

Neil Bouch	Director of Customers and Communities
Kevin Johnson	Head of Customer Services
Deborah Ewart	Housing Services Manager
Louise Taylor	Involvement and Diversity Manager
Stuart Gibson	Governance and Risk Officer

Apologies

Eileen Gill

25 MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the committee was noted.

26 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 11 September 2014 were approved as a correct record.

27 MATTERS ARISING – TALISMAN REVIEW OF VOIDS

The Committee received an assurance that both TGHC and Mears would aim to adhere to timescales set for future reviews.

28 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PERFORMANCE UPDATE: APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2014

The Committee received a performance update for the period April to September 2014.

During the period, 936 new cases were opened, a decrease of 17% compared to the same period last year. There were 481 cases currently being investigated across the borough, a decrease of 3% compared to the same period last year.

The top three types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues recorded during the period were noise nuisance (245), domestic abuse (137) and animal nuisance (137).

300 formal and Legal Actions were taken, which equates to two actions being taken each working day. There were 742 referrals to other agencies in relation to supporting customers during the investigation of ASB cases.

The Committee also received an update on the following ASB procedure developments: -

- Customer satisfaction
- Hate Crime incidents
- Domestic Abuse
- Events
- Customer Assessment Tool
- Vetting and Exclusions
- Legal Tools and Powers
- Fire Safety Initiative

The Committee asked if there were any clear reasons why the number of new cases had reduced. It was noted that there could be a number of reasons such as staff training and demolitions, however the Company still needed to complete detailed analysis to be absolutely clear.

The Committee noted that there had been a lot change in commissioned services from the voluntary sector. The Company couldn't tap into these as early as it used to be able to and as a consequence was taking legal action earlier. These were incurring additional costs which the Company will need to keep an eye on. The Committee felt that the Company should look at modelling when it was not taking action earlier and the impact of this. The Committee was informed that this and access to support when cases are more complex would be fed into the 5-year business plan.

RESOLVED – That the performance update on tackling anti-social behaviour be noted, subject to some changes being made to the presentation of the bar and pie charts in the Appendices to the report to make them easier to read.

(Joanne Carr declared an interest in this matter due to being a volunteer at Mental Health North East)

29 RESPONSE TO TALISMAN REVIEW OF VOIDS SERVICE

The Committee received a formal response to the recommendations made in the TALISMAN review of the voids service which was presented to the Committee on 11 September 2014.

Officers met with representatives of TALISMAN on 21 October 2014 to discuss the recommendations. At that meeting, the representatives from TALISMAN said that they were satisfied with the draft response and the Company's approach to the recommendations.

The wider implications of the Company's approach to tenancy management are already in discussion as part of objective setting and planning for the next business plan. This work is focused on the strategic objective of sustaining tenancies and will be informed by the recommendations identified by TALISMAN.

The Committee felt that this was an indication of the good work that TALISMAN were doing though it was also felt that some of the detail in the recommendations were too operational for Board.

The Committee was informed that any changes to the rechargeable repairs process resulting in changes to policy would require Council agreement.

The Committee was also informed that any additional decoration would be more costly and the Company would need to be able to present a business case to the Council that the benefits outweighed any additional costs.

RESOLVED – That the response to the TALISMAN review of the voids service be noted.

30 COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2014/15

The Committee received an update on complaints and compliments performance over the first two quarters of 2014/15.

Details of the number of complaints recorded, responding within 10 working days, customer satisfaction with complaints management, compliments, service improvements, the Complaints Scrutiny Panel and progress against the complaints review recommendations were reported.

RESOLVED – (i) That the update on complaints and compliments performance be noted.

(ii) That employees who have been complimented by customers on three or more occasions receive a letter of congratulations from the Chair on behalf of the Committee.

31 MOVING FORWARD CUSTOMER TRAINING PROGRAMME 2014/15 – UPDATE

The Committee received a six month update on the Moving Forward Customer Training Programme for 2014/15.

Details of the current position, feedback from attendees, Lets Get Digital, external training and future plans were reported.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

32 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY – UPDATE

The committee received an update on customer involvement activity for the second quarter of 2014/15.

During the period, 64 involvement activities took place. Customers have been involved in activities on over 2,830 occasions, however some may have been involved in more than one event.

There have been a number of outcomes from customer involvement during the period and details of these were reported.

Details of Opportunities Knocks, Service Improvement Groups, external recognition and future activity were also reported.

Mears have been involved in a number of community activities during the quarter. In particular, Mears worked with a range of partners including the Company to hold the Local Employment Advisory Forum (Leaf) at Gateshead College's Campus at Gateshead Stadium. An evaluation of the event was submitted.

The Committee expressed its disappointed that no residents attended the afternoon session. However, it was also pointed out that the poster and appendix only referred to a morning session. It was suggested that when planning next year's event Mears should consider this. It was also felt that Mears should reconsider the name as it wasn't advisory.

RESOLVED – That the update on customer involvement activity be noted.

33 FORWARD PLAN

A forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of this committee during the next year was submitted.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

34 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday 26 February 2015 at 10am in Room S21, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead.