



## Report of the Chair

Special Scrutiny Programme Committee – 18 November 2019

### Pre-decision Scrutiny – Role of the Committee

<b>Purpose</b>	This report provides guidance on pre-decision scrutiny ahead of consideration of the Cabinet report on:  a) Housing Commissioning Review Findings.
<b>Content</b>	This covering report explains the role of the Committee in undertaking pre-decision scrutiny.  The actual Cabinet report which is being considered by Cabinet on 21 November will be circulated when the Cabinet agenda is published.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note the pre-decision scrutiny process and role of the Committee</li><li>• consider the Cabinet report and proposals</li><li>• agree any views on the proposed decision(s) that are to be raised with Cabinet</li></ul>
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#### 1. Introduction

1.1 The Scrutiny Programme Committee will carry out pre-decision scrutiny or delegate to relevant Scrutiny Panels.

1.2 Aware that Cabinet would be making a decision on findings from the Housing Commissioning Review the Committee met on 1 August to discuss progress with the Review and the likely future direction of the Housing Service. The Committee wrote to the Cabinet Member with feedback on the initial findings of the Housing Commissioning Review so that these views could be taken account of, ahead of decision-making.

Points raised related to:

- Sustainability of District Housing Offices (DHOs)
- Impact of Universal Credit
- Housing Management Costs
- Maintenance of Tenants' Gardens
- Tenant Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement
- Housing Application, Assessment and Waiting List
- Introducing Charges

The full letter of the issues and points raised by the Committee, in August, is **attached**.

1.3 The Housing Commissioning Review Findings report is scheduled for decision by Cabinet on 21 November. The report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation will be circulated when the Cabinet agenda is published. The report will seek approval for proposals following the Commissioning Review, and progress to implementation, and to undertake formal tenant consultation.

## **2. Role of the Committee**

2.1 The purpose of pre-decision scrutiny:

- It entitles scrutiny to discuss proposed Cabinet reports, where a clear recommendation(s) exists, before decisions are taken by the Executive.
- Acting as a 'critical friend', it enables scrutiny to ask questions about a report to develop understanding and inform and influence decision-making, for example asking about:
  - the rationale for the report
  - robustness of the proposed decision and decision-making process
  - potential impact and implications (including policy/budget issues, social, economic and environmental impact) and risks
  - how different options have been considered
  - the extent of consultation undertaken
  - implementation and measures of success etc.
- It enables scrutiny to provide a perspective and report its views and any issues to Cabinet. The chair, on behalf of the Committee, can attend the Cabinet meeting to share the views of scrutiny on the report prior to Cabinet decision. This may include giving support, providing other suggestions on the way forward, or flagging up any concerns.

- The views of scrutiny are required to be formally considered by Cabinet before it makes the decision and feedback should be given including explanation for any rejection of views expressed.

2.2 The Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation will attend the Committee meeting to present the report and respond to questions, along with relevant officer(s) involved in the development of the report who can assist the Committee and provide appropriate advice. The Head of Housing & Public Health, Mark Wade, and the Housing Landlord Services Manager, Jane Harries will attend.

2.3 The Committee (through the chair) will write to the Cabinet Member with its views following pre-decision scrutiny. The Chair will have the opportunity to attend the cabinet meeting on 21 November to verbally feedback the Committee's views, conclusions and recommendations about the report.

### **3. Cabinet Response**

3.1 Cabinet must formally consider scrutiny views at its meeting. It may decide that any issues raised by scrutiny can be dealt with at the meeting and decision taken. It may decide that more time is needed to consider the views of scrutiny and defer decision to the next (or a special) meeting of Cabinet.

3.2 The relevant Cabinet Member is expected to write back to the Committee with feedback from Cabinet, and should include explanation of any rejection of scrutiny views.

### **4. Legal Implications**

4.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution "pre-decision scrutiny gives scrutiny the opportunity to influence Cabinet decision making as a critical friend". "The views of the scrutiny committee are formally presented (either in a written report or verbally by the scrutiny Chair) to the Cabinet meeting for the Cabinet to consider and inform its decision making".

### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no specific financial implications raised by this report. Financial implications of the actual cabinet report(s) are contained within those reports.

**Background Papers:** None

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Letter from Scrutiny Programme Committee to Cabinet Member dated 21 August 2019

Appendix 2 – Cabinet Report – Housing Commissioning Review Findings (to follow)