

Secure Sub-committee

Tuesday, 4 February 2025

Present: Councillor A Newman (Chair)
Councillors T Neira, R O'Keefe, Linda Bell, Louise Bell,
J Mudzingwa, O Scargill, J Walker, J Day, N Huscroft
and C McGinty

In attendance: Councillor J Harrison, Cabinet Member for Housing,
P Mennell (Director of Housing & Property Services),
L Archer (Head of Housing Need), Richrd Brook
(Housing Growth Manager), and David Foster
(Head of Propety Services)

S21/25 To receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensation Granted

Councillor Neira declared a registerable personal interest in Item 5: Homelessness in North Tyneside and Item 6: Consumer Standards for Registered Providers and Tenant Satisfaction Measures as she was a North Tyneside Council tenant.

Councillor O'Keefe declared a registerable personal interest in Item 6: Consumer Standards for Registered Providers and Tenant Satisfaction Measures as she was a North Tyneside Council tenant.

S22/25 Appointment of Substitute Members

There was no substitute members reported.

S23/25 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 December 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute S18/24 'Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in North Tyneside' and Minute S19/24 'Work Programme', It was **agreed** that the sub-committee endorse

the draft terms of reference circulated at today's meeting and for a one-day 'deep-dive' study group meeting to be held in March.

S24/25 Homelessness in North Tyneside

The Secure Sub-committee considered an update report supported by a presentation on homelessness in North Tyneside, with a specific focus on temporary accommodation and prevention work.

Homelessness remained an area of high demand, both nationally and across North Tyneside, reflecting the impact of the wider housing market. There were increased demands on services, which was reflected in expenditure. Plans were in place at North Tyneside to respond effectively to this, with ongoing delivery of actions to ensure continuous improvement of services.

To give context 'A person is homeless if there is no accommodation available for them to occupy.' Homelessness was diverse, a national issue, symptomatic of the wider housing market and involved increasingly complex cases.

The priority of the Homelessness Service was to prevent homelessness & sustain accommodation, whenever possible. The strands of the service provided a Tenure neutral service; Advisory service; Triage cases, based on priority; 24 hours 'out of hour' provision, including SWEP provision; In-house temporary accommodation; Range of specialist services; and Commissioned service & partnership work.

With regard to homelessness prevention this covered Early presentation of the customer; Fulfilling detail of the Homelessness Plan; Focus on tenancy sustainment, including specialist team; an Early Help Offer; Care Leaver Parent pathway; Specialist terms – Armed Forces, Domestic Abuse, Mental Health, RSAP, AFEO and Private Rented Officer; Referral to specialist services (internal and external; Mediation and 'Personalisation pot'.

The subcommittee was presented with a breakdown of the statistics for the years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024-25 (YTD) covering the number of homeless presentations, domestic abuse presentations, the main reason for presentation, the number of priority homeless acceptances, temporary accommodation placements, average length of stay in temporary accommodation and the

number, categories during to include, also details of the Homelessness Service Plan covered under the following headings: Property; People; Performance; Processes; and Finance.

Officers provided the following useful contact details in relation to the homelessness service:

- Freephone: 0800 011 6511
- Email: homeless.prevention@northtyneside.gov.uk
- Customer First Centres (by appointment)

Following the presentation, members of the sub-committee were given an opportunity to discuss any recommendations they wished to take forward including a new homelessness policy.

During discussions, members of the sub-committee asked a number of questions which were responded to appropriately, including:

- Clarification in respect of stages 1, 2, & 3 of the process including triage and the priority for a person with no accommodation on the same day.
- The position regarding rent arrears and the provision of a small grant fund which the Authority did not claim back.
- The definition of sofa-surfing and on how people accessed services, which depended on the circumstances and the application submitted.
- The process for dealing with potential overcapacity and how this was managed including the option to look at other areas outside the borough, if necessary.
- The housing market and loss of housing stock made it more difficult to manage in respect of allocations and length of stay, which was quite different to 20 years ago.

The Chair thanked officers for the comprehensive report and for their hard work in delivering this important service for what has become increasingly difficult. He commented that homelessness might be a topic the sub-committee may wish to revisit in more detail next year.

It was **agreed** that the contents of the report and presentation on Homelessness in North Tyneside, be noted.

Satisfaction Measures

The Secure Sub-committee considered a report supported by a presentation on Consumer Standards for Registered Providers and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

The report provided an overview of the Regulatory Framework of Consumer Standards for all Registered Providers of social housing; and the provisional results of the 2024-25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) survey that was completed in December 2024. The presentation detailed a high-level assessment of how North Tyneside Council was performing against the Consumer Standards and identified areas for further focus.

The report also provided the results of the 2024-25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) survey that was completed in December 2024. The provisional results for the service were positive, with satisfaction increasing across many areas of the Authority's service and demonstrating a continual trend of improvement from the previous survey completed in 2023-24.

The Regulator of Social Housing (Regulator) was responsible for ensuring that social landlords delivered services against the consumer standards. Following significant events, including the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017 and the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in 2020, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced a proactive role for the Regulator to ensure that Registered Providers meet the Consumer Standards. With effect from 1st April 2024, it gave the Regulator new powers to inspect and to intervene when they believed necessary, removing the 'serious detriment test' and giving the regulator new enforcement powers and tools.

The Regulator would now ensure compliance with the Consumer Standards through a programme of inspection that would include the Regulator issuing a consumer grading. All Registered Providers would be inspected within a four-year period (by April 2028). In addition to programmed inspections, the threshold for self-referral on consumer matters had been clarified in the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard, with landlords expected to communicate with the regulator in a timely matter on all material issues that related to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the consumer standards.

A self-assessment against the standards was being prepared to provide a

comprehensive assessment of how the Authority was performing against regulatory standards and would make recommendations that progress against its performance and service improvement activity that was monitored by Cabinet, relevant scrutiny committees and the Authority's tenants to provide assurance around key areas of risk.

The Regulator of Social Housing set out 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to capture tenants' views and provide an overview of how Registered Providers were performing across key areas. The measures allowed tenants to hold their landlord to account, see how well they were performing and provide an insight into where improvement is required. The Authority had a statutory duty to publish the results by the end of June 2025.

The survey was carried out between 23 September and 20 November 2024 with a computer-generated randomly selected sample of 5,000 tenant households chosen to take part. Paper self-completion questionnaires were distributed to the selected sample, followed by reminders three weeks later. The Regulator acknowledged that this methodology was statistically likely to produce results lower than face-face or telephone surveys and took this into account. For this reason, any comparison with other Registered Providers results needed to be caveated.

There were 22 TSMs in total. Twelve measures were classed as tenant perception measures (TP) and were collated from the annual tenant perception survey. The remaining ten measures were collated from management data collated by the service and were categorised by the following:

- Building Safety check completed
- Keeping properties in good repair
- Complaints handling
- Responsible neighbourhood management

Members of the sub-committee made positive comments regarding the feedback on safety with a 90% improvement on anti-social behaviour. Also, how this Authority compared favourably overall to other local authorities.

The Chair thanked officers for the comprehensive report and presentation.

It was **agreed** that North Tyneside Council's position against the Consumer

Standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures be noted; and
(2) a progress report against the self-assessment action plan to be provided on an annual basis, be approved.

S26/25 Work Programme 2024-25

The proposed work programme set out at Appendix A to the report was received and Members of the sub-committee were invited to put forward any further items they wished to be considered for inclusion in the work plan.

Further to Minute S23/25 above, an Anti-Social Behaviour Study Group to be established for inclusion in the 2024-25 work plan.

It was **agreed** that the proposed work programme at Appendix A be noted; and
(2) an Anti-Social Behaviour Study Group for inclusion in the sub-committee's 2024-25 work plan, be noted.

S27/25 Date and time of next meeting

6.30pm on Monday 10 March 2025.