



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES and VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
WEDNESDAY 11 JANUARY 2017**

Present: Councillors: S Allen (Chairman), J Bull (Vice Chairman), A Ali, R Bisby, R Brown, JR Fox, H Fuller, M Hussain, D King, A Shaheed and J Whitby

Also Present: Neil Boyce, Parish Councillor Co-opted Member

Officers in Attendance:	Adrian Chapman	Service Director, Adult Social Care and Communities
	Belinda Child	Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing
	Sharon Malia	Housing Programmes Manager
	Adam Cliff	Empty Homes Officer
	Jo Bezant	Prevention and Enforcement Manager
	Hayley Thornhill	Senior Policy Manager
	Pat Carrington	Principal / Head of Service
	Debbie McQuade	Assistant Director of Adult Operations
	Tina Hornsby	Head of Performance and Informatics
	Paulina Ford	Senior Democratic Services Officer

Chairman's Statement

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had received a request from the Leader of the Council to add an urgent item to the agenda. The subject of the item was to establish a Cross-Party Task and Finish Group to Review the Management of Rough Sleeping. The reason for the urgency was due to the issue arising over the Christmas period and after the agenda for the meeting had been published and therefore the usual 5 clear days' notice of the matter had not been given. The Chairman agreed to the request and proposed that the item be heard after item 4, and before item 5 on the agenda.

Copies of the report had been circulated to members of the Committee and published on the Council's website.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Martin and Councillor Hussain was in attendance as substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of Interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of Meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2016 for the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee were approved as an accurate record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2016 for the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities were approved as an accurate record.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no call-ins for this meeting.

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED IF THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES IT IS URGENT

As agreed by the Chairman at the beginning of the meeting the following item was considered by the Committee as an additional agenda item.

5. Establishment Of A Cross-Party Task And Finish Group To Review The Management Of Rough Sleeping

The Service Director for Adults and Communities presented the report which set out proposals for the establishment of a cross-party scrutiny Task and Finish Group to review current approaches to managing rough sleeping and to make recommendations based on that review to improve or enhance those approaches. It was hoped to bring the recommendations back to the Committee in March.

A request for nominations for the Task and Finish Group would be sent to the Group Secretaries, but due to the tight timescales and urgency of the review members of the Committee were asked if they would like to be considered and the following put themselves forward as possible nominations for the Task and Finish Group: Councillors King, Bull, Ali, Shaheed, and Allen.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommended that a Cross Party Task and Finish Group be established to review the management of rough sleeping and agreed to the Terms of Reference of the Task and Finish Group as attached at appendix 1 the report.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee agreed that the Senior Democratic Services Officer would write to Group Secretaries to seek nominations to the Task and Finish Group as a matter of urgency.

6. Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference and Work Programme

The Senior Governance Officer presented the report which provided the Committee with an explanation of the new scrutiny committee arrangements including the terms of reference for each scrutiny committee. Members were advised that under the new scrutiny arrangements the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee now had the additional responsibility of adult social care which had been transferred from the Health Scrutiny Committee previously known as the Scrutiny Commission for Health Issues. The work programme was also provided with the report and included items outstanding from the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee which would now come under the remit of this committee.

The report also recommended that the Committee appoint Parish Councillor, Neil Boyce as a non-voting co-opted member to represent the rural communities.

The Committee agreed to the appointment of Parish Councillor Neil Boyce as a non-voting co-opted member to represent the rural communities. Neil Boyce was in attendance at the meeting and the Chairman invited him join the Committee for the remainder of the meeting.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted:

1. The Terms of Reference for each of the newly established Scrutiny Committees attached at Appendix 1 of the report and in particular the Terms of Reference for the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee.
2. The work programme for the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2016/2017 municipal year attached at Appendix 2 of the report and; agreed to review the work programme to ensure it reflects the remit of the Committee as stated in the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommend the appointment of Parish Councillor Neil Boyce as a non-voting Co-opted Member to represent the rural area on this Committee for the remainder of the municipal year and the 2017/2018 municipal year. The appointment to be reviewed at the beginning of the 2018/2019 municipal year and then annually going forward.

7. Adult Social Care Transformation Overview

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director of Adult Operations accompanied by the Head of Performance and Informatics and provided the Committee with an overview of the work of the Adult Social Care Service which formed part of the Adults and Communities Department. The report also included progress made in delivering Adult Social Care and the transformation programme for Adult Social Care.

The Assistant Director of Adult Operations accompanied by the Head of Performance and Informatics responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- With regard to navigating through the Adult Social Care System, Officers were still working on the alignment of services which would include social workers, therapists and clinical staff which would be accessed through the 111 service where they would identify the best point of entry for the service user. There had been a delay in developing the alignment which was originally planned for February as further work was required on developing the system (Directory of Services) was required. The Clinical Hub which included the 111 and Out of Hour's service new service has been brought together under Hert's Urgent Care.
- Members expressed concern around the security of sharing data and were advised that data sharing would only proceed with those who had given their consent and a robust system would be put in place. A data sharing agreement between partners was currently being prepared.
- Progress had been made regarding the streamlining of home care across the city to improve efficiency. Provider forums were looking at ways to appoint a single key provider to each area to provide cover for a set number of hours. The key provider may then use smaller companies to fulfil the contract but they would have to comply with the original contract terms.
- The Digital Front Door online access to services would not work for everyone such as the elderly, those with dementia and those with learning difficulties who often experience difficulties accessing the care and benefits they needed. Members were advised that steps would be taken to ensure information was available in suitable formats to suit all

service users as it was acknowledged that one size did not fit all. Information could also be passed on through local communities.

- Members referred to the section on *Service Use Experience* and the results of the nationally specified survey of those receiving Adult Social Care services, paragraph 5.9.2, '*what went less well*'. Members sought to understand why there was a 4% difference in the local survey results showing 65% of customers said *they felt as safe as they wanted* compared to the 69% of the all England average result. Members were advised that work was being done with other authorities who also had lower scores and it had been identified that further information needed to be obtained regarding what customers were afraid of. The next survey would therefore include a supplementary question to ask what they were afraid of. Another authority who had conducted a similar survey found that the biggest fear from the elderly was about falling rather than the fear of crime.
- Members noted that the cost of placements for adults with the most complex needs had increased significantly over the last 18 months and sought assurance that it would not increase further. Members were advised that the increase had been partially due to a shortage of providers and the lack of market competition. There was a lot of work currently being undertaken with providers to achieve an acceptable rate to providers and the authority, taking into account the National Living National Wage and the increased costs experienced by the providers themselves.
- A lot of work was being undertaken with the Carers Trust to try and identify the unknown carers who had not come forward for support or completed a self-assessment to ensure the service was as far reaching as possible. Some carers however did not want to be seen as a carer. As part of the Section 75 arrangement Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust were also doing a lot of work to ensure carer's needs were recognised and assessed. Childrens services were also doing work with schools to try and identify young carers who had little or no support.
- Social prescribing had been talked about in Peterborough for some time now and there will be some pilot schemes in both Peterborough and Cambridge for people with diabetes and heart problems which would involve prescribing sports programmes to help improve patient wellbeing.
- In Adult Social Care staff turnover was quite low and staff did not tend to leave unless retiring. Support was offered to unqualified social workers to help them obtain their social work degree and there were currently only three vacancies across the organisation.
- Co-operation with the Parish Councils and using Parish Councils, GPs and Community Centres to disseminate information into the community was discussed and the part Parish Councils could play was recognised.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

8. Empty Homes Strategy 2017 - 2019

The Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing introduced the report which provided the Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise the council's new draft Empty Homes Strategy. The main difference within the new draft strategy was the inclusion of Empty Homes Assistance to the owners of empty properties that were of the type that were in high demand across the city. Assistance would contribute to improving the house condition and the property would then be placed on a private leasing scheme and would be made available to families in housing need.

The Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- In 2012 the criteria for using an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) changed. The minimum time a property had to be empty increased from six months to two years.

Officers advised Members that the power to use the EDMO had been used considerably and found to be quite effective. The extended timescale did allow for more time to collect information however properties could deteriorate considerably during a two year period. Nationally, Empty Homes Officers were calling for a reduction in the time scale.

- The Housing Team worked very closely with the Planning Department to consider available options to address demand outstripping supply for housing. Both quick interventions and medium to longer term interventions were being looked at including modular buildings, brown fill sites and office accommodation.
- Several years ago Empty Home Grants were offered however these were not very popular and were discontinued. Work has been undertaken to identify reasons why people were reluctant to bring homes back into use. One reason was the costs involved and the grant element had therefore been reconsidered. Several empty homeowners had now been identified who would take up the offer of Empty Homes Assistance.
- Historically it had been proven that a dedicated Empty Homes Officer was the most successful. There was currently only one Empty Homes Officer but he was working within a support network.
- The financial assistance proposed was part of the Council's Repairs Assistance Programme which was an element of the Capital Programme and was therefore the Council's money. The assistance took the form of a loan which was given to the homeowner which was then paid back to the council from the rental income on a monthly basis.
- The obstacles to empty home owners returning empty properties into service were many including the property going through probate or owners having insufficient time or funds.
- The Empty Homes Assistance scheme had not been advertised yet as it had not yet been approved. Once approved it would be advertised. It was currently being piloted on a limited basis and once approved it would then be offered to homeowners who had been identified as being suitable and having a need and subsequently would then be rolled out city wide to the 540 empty homes on the list.
- Cross Keys Homes had been eligible as a housing association to apply for funds from central government under a programme that lasted two years after which time they had to take on the management and refurbishment of the property themselves. However the take up was poor due to the restrictions of the scheme whereas the current scheme was more transparent and accessible.
- The actual number of empty homes was determined from Council Tax records as homeowners notified the council when a property was empty to qualify for a discount. Properties were also reported by residents, Councillors and colleagues.
- Peterborough had 20% of housing in the social sector. Comparable national figures were not available at the meeting.
- Further investment in homelessness was raised as it was felt that this would result in a better payback over a couple of years. Officers advised Members that homelessness was a big issue and any investment in bringing empty properties back in to use would assist with this.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing provide information on the following:

- The percentage of Social Sector housing in Peterborough compared to nationally.
- 40% of households were unable to afford to buy a home on the open market, how does this compare nationally.

9. Selective Licensing

The Prevention and Enforcement Manager introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the introduction and progress of the Selective Licensing Scheme.

The Prevention and Enforcement Manager responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- There had been 6140 applications received so far, 140 had currently been rejected as being either incomplete, incorrect or applying for the wrong kind of licence. Some applicants had not meet the criteria and others were being encouraged to re-apply. Also applications were declined where properties did not appear on the Gazetteer although this had now stopped. New properties were not always passing the evaluation process.
- Data detailing unknown properties was unavailable as these were not known. Modelling work was currently being undertaken using algorithms to try and identify where the unknown properties were. The Council welcomed lawful landlords who fitted all the criteria however the landlords the Council was most interested in were the private landlords who did not meet the criteria and had not applied for a licence who may be pursued through the heightened application fee or through the courts, however this relied on further intelligence from the public, Councillors, walking the streets and the algorithms. This was a five year scheme. The 6140 applications had to be dealt with as well as the unlicensed properties to be followed up.
- The number of gas safety certificates granted immediately prior to the licence application (938 in November) suggested that the scheme was already working. Some landlords requested an extension to allow them to obtain the gas safety certificate as they were experiencing difficulty locating a gas engineer.
- It had been noted that landlords not resident in Peterborough were having difficulty accessing assistance with the application. Officers advised that they should contact their agent who should be assisting them with the application. Officers worked closely with agents to ensure all landlords were engaged in the process.
- Members suggested that the income generated from the Selective Licencing Scheme should be reinvested in areas covered by the Selective Licencing Scheme and be used towards regeneration of those communities. Members were informed that the licence fees could only cover the processing of the licence and under legislation this must be non-profit making. The income was ring-fenced and could not be used for any other purpose. Regeneration would come from landlords reinvesting in their properties.
- Separate financial records were kept for the scheme and a full financial breakdown could be provided once the scheme had been running for a year.
- The public register of all licenced properties would include the address, the person responsible for the property (owner/agent) the licence conditions, size and facilities within the property. The register would not include tenant information.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted and endorsed the report.

10. People and Communities Strategy Progress Update

The report was presented by the Senior Policy Manager and the Principal / Head of Service and provided the Committee with an update on the progress of the People and Communities Strategy published in April 2016. The Strategy set out the framework of how the council will transform the way in which services are delivered and the role that community and other partner organisations will have in meeting the needs of residents.

The Senior Policy Manager and the Principal / Head of Service responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- Building Block 4: Developing a sense of “place”. Members felt that this could also include a sense of purpose. Officers advised that the strategy was evolving over time and this suggestion could be considered and developed further.

- Building Block 7: There had not been a large volume of asset transfers however those that had gone ahead were working well. The buildings were expected to form cornerstones of the community and would be shared between different groups. Where there was no suitable building within the vicinity the Council were considering selling off other assets to the secure capital to purchase a suitable building if there was a need. There was some resistance within the communities regarding the possibility of finding themselves responsible for the continued upkeep of a building.
- There were no funds available to bring buildings up to standard prior to transfer and some buildings were in a poor state. Buildings in poor repair and not needed would be disposed of. Those in poor repair where a need had been identified could be sold and the capital receipt could be used to fund an alternative facility.
- Officers had been recruited to work within communities to take stock of the good work already happening in the communities to avoid duplication and build on that good work. It was also about identifying organisations wishing to co-operate and work together and identifying ways to support this. Roadshows were being delivered in communities to identify gaps and to engage with the local community and partner organisations.
- A full time dedicated co-ordinator had been appointed for six months initially to work within the Community Capacity Team to focus on support for Parish Councils. The position would then be reviewed to see if it was adding value.
- It was important to keep the Pilot areas separated to see how they work, what has had an impact and where the savings come from. Methods of evaluation were being considered.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted the report and recommended that the Senior Policy Manager and Principal / Head of Service consider incorporating a “sense of purpose” into the building blocks of the strategy.

11. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council’s Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee’s work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested further information on the following Executive Decisions:

- Direct Payment Support Service – KEY/11DEC15/02
- Business Advice Charging Policy – KEY/25JUL16/01
- Market Position Statement – KEY/08AUG16/01
- Implementation of Public Space Protection Orders – KEY/9JAN17/01
- Shared Lives – Non Key Decision

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 March 2017.

7.00 - 8.45 pm

CHAIRMAN