

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES and VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
WEDNESDAY 07 MARCH 2017**

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

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

Officers in Attendance:	Adrian Chapman	Service Director, Adult Social Care and Communities
	Belinda Child	Head of Housing, Prevention & Wellbeing
	Sean Evans	Housing Needs Manager
	Sarah Scase	Rough Sleeper Outreach Officer
	Sarah Hebblethwaite	Housing Needs Deputy Manager
	Hayley Thornhill	Senior Policy Manager
	Detective Inspector Rob Hill	Prevention & Enforcement Service
	Claire George	Prevention Enforcement Service Manager
	Paulina Ford	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Joanna Morley	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Martin and Councillor King.

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 11 January 2017 for the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee 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.

5. Review of Emergency Stopping Place Provision for Travellers within Peterborough.

Councillor Whitby a member of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report which was submitted to the Committee following a review of emergency stopping place provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Peterborough. The purpose of the report was to seek the Committee's approval for submission of the recommendations contained within the report to Cabinet.

The members of the Task and Finish Group which reviewed the Emergency Stopping Place provision for travellers within Peterborough responded to comments and questions raised by Committee Members. A summary of responses included:

- The provision of emergency stopping places had to be a two part approach; firstly that a reasonable standard and quality of provision be made available for the travelling community and secondly that this provision would therefore mean that there would be zero tolerance of any illegal acts and enforcement would be swift and robust.
- The Task and Finish Group had not been able to identify any possible new locations.
- Members stressed the need for enforcement as the cost of providing stopping places would not be accepted by the general public without it.
- The need for additional funding was highlighted not only for investment in the current Dogsthorpe site but for the rental or acquisition of land for additional sites, when identified.
- Any work undertaken in regard to the provision of Emergency stopping places would be cross directorate and would involve Growth and Planning working together with the Prevention Enforcement Service.
- A similar Task and Finish Group had been set up in 2014 and a considerable amount of time had been spent talking about enforcement, however it was felt that the real problem was the lack of provision. The Committee wanted the Council to prioritise this issue and stress to Cabinet the need for additional resources, without which the issue would keep cropping up.
- The previous investigation of the issue looked at three sites but the only feasible one was the current site at Dogsthorpe. Current Council owned land did not offer any suitable sites so a larger budget was required to look at purchasing or renting private land.
- Concerns were raised about whether landowners would be reluctant to sell or rent land once they realised what the land was being earmarked for. Additionally it was felt there would be problems from neighbourhoods who would not want a site on their doorstep even if compulsory purchase orders were made. It was pointed out that in reality everyone had these sites in their 'backyards' at the moment because there were unauthorised encampments all over the City wherever there was vacant land.
- In spite of initial scepticism having an organised site at Dogsthorpe had been a recognised success.
- The cost of the unauthorised sites to the City was extremely high but by providing designated stopping places the Council had an opportunity to be pro-active and save money in the long term.
- Travellers could be charged for use of a planned site with good facilities and year round availability
- Unauthorised encampments were bringing bad publicity to the City and there were additional effects on areas of natural beauty that were being marred by the erection of concrete bollards to prevent access.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee strongly endorse and recommend the Task and Finish Group report for approval at Cabinet on 20 March 2017 and that Cabinet seriously consider the recommendations within the report to try and alleviate any future increases in illegal encampments.

6. Review of the Management of Rough Sleepers

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group introduced the report and extended his thanks to the extremely dedicated Officers who had helped with the Task and Finish Group Report which had been completed within an extremely tight deadline of three weeks. The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group also acknowledged the work and the successes of the Council's effective housing team as well as those working for external organisations such as the Light Project which often went unnoticed but should be recognised. Despite their amazing efforts, the level of homelessness remained high; people were desperate and it was imperative that the Council helped them.

The members of the Task and Finish Group which reviewed the management of Rough Sleepers and the Officers who assisted them responded to comments and questions raised by Committee Members. A summary of responses included

- There was a need to be realistic and manage expectations as there would always be rough sleepers as for some people it was a lifestyle choice.
- Committee members felt that the recommendations of the Task and Finish group needed to be strengthened by more information including specific numbers of additional resources needed and timescales.
- The only 'Housing First Bed' available had been occupied by the same entrenched sleeper since last March. Officers had suggested one more additional bed as a realistic offer but welcomed the idea of further additional beds.
- Direct access hostels were available all year round, not just when the weather was bad. Entrenched rough sleepers however only tended to take up the provision when the weather was especially bad.
- EU nationals who did not exercise their treaty rights were served paperwork which would ultimately lead to them being removed by the Home Office. Before this happened EU nationals were offered a reconnection service that put them back in touch with people and their communities back home.
- Housing officers worked closely with the Police when rough sleepers committed other acts of anti-social behaviour and in general had a good relationship with them.
- Recommendation 13. It was felt by some committee members that there was a lack of evidence in the report to show the direct correlation between the homeless and the availability of affordable housing and therefore it would be difficult to support the recommendation that the level of affordable housing be increased from 30 to 35%. Housing officers were concerned that there would not be enough supply as there was a very low number of affordable rented homes coming through for next year.
- It was suggested that the amount of affordable housing set was a Major Policy and therefore outside the remit of the Task and Finish Group.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorse and recommend the Task and Finish Group report for approval at Cabinet on 20 March 2017 subject to amendments being made to the following recommendations:

Recommendation 3

This to be reworded to specify that **one** additional officer is required to support the existing outreach officer at a cost of £29,000 per annum. This would provide extra resource in the week and provide cover for weekends and when the officer is on leave.

Recommendation 4

This to be reworded to be more specific as to exactly what type of additional night shelter accommodation is required if the demand increased and under what circumstances.

Recommendation 11

This to be reworded to be more specific and recommend an increase from one to two additional Housing First Beds.

Recommendation 13

To further evidence and explore the relationship between the lack of affordable housing and increase in rough sleeping to support the recommendation to increase the target for affordable homes to be built in Peterborough that are identified in the emerging Local Plan from 30% to 35%, and that of the 35% at least 70% are affordable rented.

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7. Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2017-2020

Chief Inspector Rob Hill introduced the draft Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2017-2020 which set out the priorities for the Safer Peterborough Partnership (SPP) for the next three years.

The Chief Inspector responded to comments and questions raised by Members. A summary of responses included:

- It was noted that the concerns of the respondents to the survey were focussed on local issues which was in direct contrast to the priorities highlighted in the report which were much more global.
- Only 149 people responded to the survey so the Safer Peterborough Partnership needed to take into account a much wider range of crimes than those highlighted by the respondents. Members were advised that it was intended that low level crimes would be dealt with by the Prevention Enforcement Service (PES) whereas high level more strategic crimes would be looked at by the Safer Peterborough Partnership.
- Members wanted local issues to be made more prominent in the priorities section of the report otherwise citizens would feel that the Police were not taking their issues seriously enough.
- Low level crime often built up into high level crime if it went unattended.
- The survey showed that residents were not unduly concerned about the threat of terrorism however it was noted that the diverse communities in Peterborough worked very well together and just one incident could be very divisive so officers needed to maintain the emphasis on preventing terrorist activity.
- PES had reviewed how it worked with Parish councils and instead of sending emails to update parishes on the crimes in their areas, police officers would now be available to attend meetings if contacted to discuss particular issues of concern.
- Committee members felt that a mechanism was needed to provide regular updates to the Committee on the most pressing issues in the City.
- Restorative Justice was one way of stopping people reoffending once their sentence had been served but Councillors felt that the figure of 1800 restorative reparations quoted in the report needed to be put into context so that Committee members could assess how successful it was.
- Restorative Justice was not really understood by the wider public but was a process which operated outside of normal criminal dispersal solutions but which organised meetings between victims and offenders. The process was voluntary on both sides and although the SPP offered mediation it was in effect outside of the control of the SPP.
- Members felt that there was a lack of data and evidence to support the conclusions that the Safer Peterborough Partnership had come to in their report and that there was a disconnect between the issues identified in the survey and the global issues that were prioritised in the report.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee recommend that the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2017-2020 be rewritten to take into account the comments made by the Committee and be brought back to the Committee in June 2017 prior to presentation to Cabinet and approval at Full Council.

2. The Committee request that Officers take particular note of the following:
- a) That the Plan be rewritten, rather than adding an addendum, to address the mismatch, perceived by Committee Members between the concerns of local Peterborough residents as identified in the survey and the national priorities highlighted in the report.
 - b) That more comprehensive information should be provided on:
 - Operational PES targets and;
 - The basis on which the strategic priorities were formed.
 - c) That the following should be included as appendices to the report:
 - The Questionnaire
 - The Needs Assessment Report

8. 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:

- Personal Care and Support KEY/02MAY16/01
- Assessed Needs Contracts with Care Homes KEY/20FEB17/01

9. Draft Work Programme 2017/18

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED:

The Committee requested that the following items be included for discussion at the planning meeting for the 2017/18 works programme:

- Supporting Vital Adults in Rural Areas
- Day Opportunities Framework Agreement
- Tackling Environmental Crime Action Plan

CHAIRMAN
7.00 - 8.45 pm

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