

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 30 September 2019

Councillor Liz Clunie (Chair)

Councillor Paul Feeney	Councillor Mike Hope
Councillor Michael Boyle	Councillor Marje Paling
Councillor Rachael Ellis	Councillor Martin Smith
Councillor Andrew Ellwood	Councillor Jennifer Thomas

Apologies for absence: Councillor Sandra Barnes, Councillor Simon Murray and Councillor Sam Smith

Officers in Attendance: H Barrington, P Whitworth and H Lee

54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Barnes, S Smith and Murray.

55 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

56 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

None.

57 HOUSING NEEDS AND HOMELESSNESS

Paul Whitworth, Housing and Welfare Support Manager attended the committee to inform members about a range of issues relating homelessness and the availability of temporary accommodation.

He provided a comprehensive overview of the issue. There were 577 homeless applications in 2018/19 and so far 2019/20 there have been 289. Currently there are 159 ongoing cases. 121 households were placed in temporary accommodation in 2018/19 and 76 have required temporary accommodation this year. Presently there are 37 households in temporary accommodation.

The housing needs section works to prevent families becoming homeless using a variety of mechanisms. This can include mediation with landlords or family members, sourcing privately rented accommodation, advising where there are rent or mortgage arrears and assisting with Homesearch applications.

Priority homeless will be given access to temporary accommodation, some of which may be outside the borough. Currently the range of temporary accommodation available includes the authority's own 2 bedroom apartments, property leased from housing associations, Hound Lodge hostel in West Bridgford and as a last resort bed and breakfast accommodation, this is mainly in hotels.

There are a number of difficulties when trying to secure permanent accommodation. Complex cases which can include people with criminal convictions, mental health issues, a history of rent arrears, large families and those needing properties that are adapted to meet their physical needs are difficult to place. High rent, affordability of rent if on benefits and the requirement for large deposits is also an issue.

During discussion the following points were highlighted:

- Gedling Homes is the largest social landlord in Gedling but there is a range of other smaller providers registered as social landlords. Nottingham City Council does have some rented accommodation in the borough but this is solely for use by their residents.
- The necessity to establish a local connection when applying for social housing.
- Work is undertaken with the Landlords Forum to encourage landlords to provide suitable accommodation.
- Different mechanisms are used to encourage potential cases to seek help early include advertising on buses. The use of social media is being considered.

RESOLVED to:

Thank Paul Whitworth for the very interesting and informative presentation.

The Committee welcomed Councillor Wheeler to discuss matters relating to his Health and Wellbeing Portfolio. Mike Hill, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance also attended the meeting.

Councillor Wheeler outlined the areas of responsibility in his portfolio and gave a presentation and answered questions received in advance of the meeting.

It was explained that the decrease in attendance at leisure centres was due to the closure of Calverton and Arnold leisure centres for remedial building work. The opening of a new private sector gym on a major bus route has had a knock on effect on Redhill attendance.

The fall in DNA membership was discussed. Both Calverton and Carlton Forum have over achieved DNA income during Quarter 1. Arnold Leisure Centre was slightly below and Redhill was below target. To counteract this there has been investment in Redhill and the new facility is currently being promoted. There are currently 4251 live DNA members compared to 4,246 in Quarter 5 last financial year. The use of a meeting for users to gather comments/complaints and compliments rather than a comments book was suggested.

It was explained that the target for processing of Housing Benefit claims may have slipped because more claims are made during Quarter 1. This was probably due to people receiving a new annual Council Tax demand and claiming a reduction. High levels of staff sickness will have had an effect. New claims are declining due to the transition to Universal Credit but there has also been an increase in changes of circumstance.

Access to temporary accommodation had been examined earlier in the committee.

The lack of social housing and how Gedling Borough does not have its own housing stock, except for small amount of temporary accommodation, and relies on Gedling Homes housing stock and a number of registered social housing landlords to provide accommodation was discussed.

RESOLVED to:

Thank Councillor Wheeler for his presentation.

The Director of Organisational Development and Democratic Services introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the

meeting, summarising performance at the end of Quarter 1 of the financial year.

How performance information is made available for Members and the time table for the publication of the data was described. It was explained that this report refers to the first quarter of the financial year and some indicators will show little progress however it was expected that all the actions identified for the year would be met.

There were a number of indicators above or below target. The number of additional homes provided at 135, the highest level of completions since 2014/14 Quarter 2, and the number of school-age work experiences placements already above the annual target of 6 were highlighted as examples of particularly positive performance. The average time to process Housing Benefit change in circumstances was below target but it expected that the indicator will be back on track by the end of Quarter 2.

Attention was drawn to the Appendix which highlights achievements that have made a difference to people's lives.

It was explained how the information in this report could be used by the committee particularly when preparing questions for Portfolio Holders and developing the work programme.

The interpretation of the data and particularly how trends are identified was questioned and it was agreed that some clarification would be available at the next committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

- To note the progress against actions and performance indicators in the 2018/2019 Gedling Plan as at the end of Quarter 1.
- To ask for clarification regarding how trends are interpreted.

60 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/2019

Members considered the Scrutiny Annual Report which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members discussed the report and requested an update on the Gedling Homes pilot 'right to buy' scheme, one of the items included in the summary of scrutiny at committee section.

It was then agreed that the report should be submitted to Council.

RESOLVED to:

- Refer the report to Council.

61

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

CABINET RESPONSE TO HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING REVIEW

Members were informed that the report was not yet finalised and would not be available at the committee. It was agreed that the Chair of the committee would follow this up.

INFORMATION REQUESTED AT THE JULY COMMITTEE

Members received a range of information requested at the July committee.

Additional information relating to the Carlton Contact Centre opening times was requested.

INFORMATION UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS ITEMS AT COMMITTEE

The progress of the Arnold shop/pub watch digital radio scheme was noted.

SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS

Members were updated on the progress of the working groups.

SCRUTINY IN COMMITTEE

Members were advised that Councillor D Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection would be attending the next committee meeting. There was a brief discussion regarding what information members would like including when he attends. It was agreed that issues around knife crime and how neighbourhood wardens work with the police should be included.

The inclusion of the Forward Plan and its use when developing the work programme for the committee was explained.

RESOLVED:

- The Chair would contact the Portfolio Holder for the Environment regarding the Household Recycling Review response.
- To note the information from the July Committee and request additional information regarding the Carlton Contact Point

- To note the information relating the digital shop radio scheme.
- To note the information regarding the working groups.
- Request information relating to knife crime and how the Police work with neighbourhood wardens when Councillor Ellis attends the committee.

62 REPORTS AND NOTICES RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AS REQUIRED UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OR LAW.

Members considered a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, which included information on items referred to the chair as required by the constitution.

63 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 7.55 pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: