

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 18 November 2024

Councillor Catherine Pope (Chair)

Councillor David Brocklebank	Councillor Darren Maltby
Councillor Roy Allan	Councillor Grahame Pope
Councillor Andrew Dunkin	Councillor Kyle Robinson-Payne
Councillor Rachael Ellis	Councillor Sam Smith
Councillor Roxanne Ellis	Councillor Russell Whiting

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lorraine Brown and Councillor Jim Creamer

Officers in Attendance: M Hill, B Hopewell and E McGinlay

Guests in Attendance: A Crosbie

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Creamer.

74 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2024.

RESOLVED:

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

75 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

Councillor Rachael Ellis declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of the Gedling Play Forum. Councillor Roxanne Ellis declared a non-pecuniary interest as Vice-Chair of the management committee of Gedling Play Forum. Councillor Whiting declared a non-pecuniary interest, having a family membership of Gedling Play Forum.

76 PARTNERSHIP REVIEW - GEDLING PLAY FORUM

The Chair welcomed Anne Crosbie from Gedling Play Forum to the committee as part of the Council's partnership review programme.

Anne gave an overview on the key areas of their work at Gedling Play Forum, highlights of which were as follows:

Members viewed a video which showed images of the craft workshops hosted by the Gedling Play Forum. Some photos showed the Gedling Play Forum also held craft stalls at other events as well.

It was noted that Gedling Play Forum had held various events over the last 12 months, some of which included the Calverton Village Get Together, Calverton Family Fun Day, Gedling Gala, Chinese New Year at the Civic Centre, and a Lantern Workshop at St Paul's.

Members noted that Gedling Play Forum also offered various Skill Sharing Workshops on Rust Dyeing, Beaded Kumihomo, Rag Rugging, Boxes and Books, Sustainable Sewing, Alterations and Patterns Masterclass and more.

Anne detailed the various partners that worked alongside the Gedling Play Forum, some of which included Positively Empowered Kids, Calverton Parish Council, St Georges Centre, Emmanuel Church Community Kitchen, The Ark, Phoenix Farm Methodist Church, Gedling Library and more.

The Chair then gave Members the opportunity to ask questions of the Gedling Play Forum.

Members asked what the annual running cost of the Gedling Play Forum were.

It was noted that the annual running costs were around £25,000 per year, including salaries.

Members noted that the Gedling Play Forum required a new van and asked how they intended to acquire one.

It was noted that the Gedling Play Forum had submitted a funding bid with Awards For All with the goal of acquiring a second hand electric van, matching their ethos and ambitions with green energy.

Members asked whether the Gedling Play Forum had worked with any schools in the area.

The Gedling Play Forum had worked with Lambley Primary and Arno Vale Primary Schools in the past but agreed that they would like to work closer with schools going forward.

Members queried how the Gedling Play Forum had publicised their work and whether this would be expanded.

The Gedling Play Forum primarily used their social networking groups and had recently published a new website which had seen a lot of traffic. It was noted that their skillsets were not best suited to publicity and training was required in which they had received some funding to help with training.

Members asked how many people on average the Gedling Play Forum helped each year.

It was noted that they had a membership of approximately 500 families across the borough which could extend to around 7000 people via events and Membership.

RESOLVED:

To thank the Gedling Play Forum for attending the meeting and the information provided.

77

SECTION 21 NOTICE UPDATE.

The Housing and Welfare Manager introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, providing an overview of the current homelessness situation in the borough and the impact of Section 21 notices.

A presentation was given, highlights of which were as follows:

It was noted that the Homeless Reduction Act had been introduced in 2017 which allowed Council to try and prevent people from becoming homeless. It was then noted that although the act was introduced, homeless applications continued to increase with Section 21 notices being the second most common reason for causing homelessness in the borough.

Members noted that there had been an increase in temporary accommodation (TA) placements, which fell in line with the increase in homeless applications.

It was noted that the council allocated social housing applications via a banding system, based on priority need. Members noted that the waiting list had increased from 543 in October 2021 to 768 in October 2024.

It was noted the current pressures on the Council's housing department, some of which included:

- The country is in the middle of a housing crisis.
- The council doesn't own its own housing stock.
- Increased demand for affordable housing.
- Cost of private rented sector.
- Increased demand for temporary accommodation.

- Low turnover of existing social housing stock.

Members noted what the Council had been doing to address the current pressures. Some of which included:

- Drafting of a new 5-year Housing Strategy.
- Additional staff resources, including specialist refugee officer.
- Reviewing the Council's Allocations Policy.
- Negotiating larger and adaptable homes on new housing sites.
- Operating a Sanctuary scheme to enable households at risk of violence to remain safely in their homes.

The Chair then gave Members the opportunity to ask questions.

Members queried whether the council had considered whether they expected an increase in Section 8 notices following the abolition of Section 21 notices.

The Housing and Welfare Manager agreed that landlords might pursue other means of evicting tenants and would be monitored.

Members noted that there had been an increase in evictions since the announcement that Section 21 notices would be abolished, asking whether the Council had made any preparations for the potential increase in homelessness following the increase in evictions.

The Housing and Welfare Manager highlighted that there had not been an increase in evictions in the borough following the announcement and had not made any preparations at present.

Members queried how successful the council had been with working with developers to secure larger social housing properties to reduce those with larger families being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Housing and Welfare Manager explained that the council had not placed larger families in bed and breakfast for prolonged periods of time, noting that there were no overcrowding policies in temporary accommodation so the council would initially try to place larger families in TA before moving them on to more suitable, permanent accommodation. It was noted that the council received 10% social housing on new developments with the goal of negotiating larger properties going forward.

Members noted the increase in homeless applications since 2017, and asked whether the council had analysed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

The Housing and Welfare Manager explained that an analysis on the impact of the pandemic had not been conducted but noted that as with

all homeless applications, the reasons for their homelessness would vary from case to case.

Members queried whether the Council checked whether a member of the public are ex-service personnel and could be entitled to help from the Royal British Legion.

The Housing and Welfare Manager confirmed that they conduct checks on applicant history and would present their options as part of the advice given.

RESOLVED:

To thank the Housing and Welfare Manager for the information provided.

78 UPDATE ON SEWERAGE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the committee, detailing the implementation of the sewerage review working group recommendations.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

79 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, providing and update on the scrutiny work programme.

Members expressed an interest in receiving a report on the effectiveness of hybrid working at the meeting in July 2025. It was noted that staff feedback on hybrid working would also be of interest.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

80 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.

None.

The meeting finished at 6.55 pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: