

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - HOMELESSNESS (PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY)**

**Thursday, 26 May 2016**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillor Zoe Smith (Chair), Councillor Terrie Eales (Deputy Chair); Councillors Vicky Culbard, Janice Duffy, Terrie Eales, Elizabeth Gowen and Samuel Shaw

**OFFICERS** Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing  
Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

**1. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sally Beardsworth.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESS**

There were none.

**4. DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL**

It was proposed by Councillor Elizabeth Gowen and seconded by Councillor Vicky Culbard that Councillor Terrie Eales is elected Deputy Chair of this Scrutiny Panel.

**AGREED:** That Councillor Terrie Eales is elected Deputy Chair of this Scrutiny Panel.

**5. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW**

The Chair presented the draft scope of the Review for consideration.

The Scrutiny Panel suggested potential questions to be put to the expert advisors at future meetings:

What is the Council doing in respect of empty homes in the borough?

It was acknowledged that the way Rough Sleepers are counted would be included within the presentation to the next meeting, but it was felt this could be a core question also

The Scrutiny Panel noted that “legal highs” are a cause of homelessness and a barrier to getting a home.

The Scrutiny Panel scoped its review, making suggestions and additions to the draft scope. The scope would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2016 for approval.

**AGREED:** (1) That the scope of this Scrutiny Review is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2016 for approval. A copy of the Scope is appended to the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 6:20 pm



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

### SCRUTINY PANEL 3 - HOMELESSNESS (PRE DECISION SCRUTINY)

#### 1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- Pre-Decision Scrutiny: To review how the Borough Council and its partners prevent homelessness and respond to those without homes in the borough

#### Key Lines of Enquiry

- To gain an understanding of the work currently being undertaken by Northampton Borough Council (NBC), partnerships, statutory and voluntary organisations to address homelessness
- To assess the extent of homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough assess the initiatives currently in place to tackle homelessness
- To examine the Council's Severe Weather Provision
- To gain an understanding of the effect on the health, wellbeing and the safety of homelessness people, including rough sleepers
- To gain an understanding of the causes and barriers to support homelessness
- Identify any specific groups that are not accessing services

#### 2. Outcomes Required

- To reduce homelessness in the borough of Northampton
- An understanding of the local authority homelessness role and the services provided in Northampton
- A review of existing homelessness services in Northampton, in order to assess their quality and effectiveness and identify any significant gaps in service

### 3. Information Required

- Background data
- Background reports
- Best practice data
- Desktop research
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Site visits (if applicable)

### 4. Format of Information

- Background data, including:
  - Presentation to set the scene: To identify the prevalence of the problem locally
  - Relevant national and local background research papers
  - Definitions – Homelessness and Rough Sleepers
  - Homelessness Legislation
  - Causes of Homelessness, including Rough Sleeping
  - Relevant Council Policies and Strategies
  - Statistics:
    - Rough sleeper data
    - Homelessness data
  - Relevant Legislation:
    - Welfare Reform Act 2012
    - Localism Act 2011
    - Homelessness Act 2002
    - The Health and Social Care Act 2012
  - Relevant published papers on homelessness and rough sleeping
- Best practice external to Northampton
- Internal expert advisors:
  - Cabinet Member for Housing, NBC
  - Housing Options and Advice Manager, NBC

- Head of Revenues and Benefits, LGSS
  - Cabinet Member for Community Safety, NBC
  - Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team
  - Case Managers, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
- External expert advisors:
    - Head of Protecting Vulnerable Persons, Northamptonshire Police
    - Director of Public Health, Northamptonshire County Council
    - Manager, Hope Centre
    - Manager, Maple Access
    - Manager, NAASH
    - Drug and Alcohol Challenge Officer, the Bridge
    - Operations Manager, Midland Heart Housing Association
    - Service Manager, Salvation Army
    - Chief Executive, Central Northamptonshire CAB
    - Emmaus, Homelessness Charity
    - Shelter
    - Crisis
    - Healthwatch Northamptonshire
  - Site visit to temporary accommodation(s) and Oasis House

## **5. Methods Used to Gather Information**

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site visits
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-
  - Key witnesses as detailed in section 4 of this scope

## **6. Co-Options to the Review**

- Senior Officers, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and Homeless Link to be approached suggesting that they are co-opted to this Review for its life.

## **7. Community Impact Screening Assessment**

- A Community Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

## **8. Evidence gathering Timetable**

May 2016 – March 2017

- 26 May 2016 - Scoping meeting
- 21 July - Evidence gathering
- 22 September - Evidence gathering
- 24 November - Evidence gathering
- 26 January 2017 - Evidence gathering
- 30 March - Approval final report

Various site visits will be programmed during this period, if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

## **9. Responsible Officers**

Lead Officer            Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing  
Co-ordinator           Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

## **10. Resources and Budgets**

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing, to provide internal advice.

## **11. Final report presented by:**

Completed by March 2017. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

## **12. Monitoring procedure:**

Review the impact of the report after six months (approximately November/December 2017)