

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS

Thursday, 5 July 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Cathrine Russell (Chair), Councillors Sally Beardsworth, Gareth Eales and Zoe Smith

Councillor Arthur McCutcheon - observing

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

Members of the Public David Huffadine Smith
Mary Huffadine Smith
Toby Birch

Press James Averill, Democracy Reporter

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jane Birch and Janice Duffy.

The Chair advised that Ian Bates, Director, Umbrella Fayre, had accepted the offer to be a Co Optee to the Panel.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr David Huffadine-Smith addressed the Scrutiny Panel.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

5. PRESENTATION TO SET THE SCENE

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing gave the Scrutiny Panel a presentation that set the scene for the Review. He highlighted the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions, made comment and heard:

- The life expectancy of a rough sleeper is 47
- In response to a query, the Scrutiny Panel heard that details of projects that support homeless people and rough sleepers will be given to future meetings.
- On average, around 10-12 individuals sleep in the night shelter per night.

- The Scrutiny Panel was given a case study of two youths that arrived from York; they were given a bus ticket back to York the following day.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard of two rough sleepers that had died last year
- The Scrutiny Panel commented that on occasions, sleeping rough is a life style choice

Phil Harris was thanked for his informative presentation

At this point Mr Huffadine-Smith addressed the Scrutiny Panel he queried the statistical information regarding rough sleepers, commenting that in his opinion there were around 60-80. He felt November was not the best time to carry out a Rough Sleepers Count and was concerned that only those that are bedded down can be counted. Mr Huffadine Smith made reference to hidden homeless and he expressed his opinion that ex-Servicemen have difficulty adapted to civil life. He went on to refer to ex-Prisoners and Foreign nationals. He concluded his address by referring to slavery and suggested that people need to be engaged with at the point of their need.

Mr Huffadine Smith asked to send his written response to the Scrutiny Panel. The Chair asked Mr Huffadine Smith to include evidence within his written address.

6. CORE QUESTIONS

The Scrutiny Panel considered the draft core questions and made updates.

AGREED: That the core questions, as attached, are sent to the expert advisors, as detailed on the Scope of this Review

7. SITE VISITS

The Chair advised that the following site visits had been arranged and asked Councillors to confirm with the Scrutiny Officer their availability:

Tuesday 7 August 2018

Hope Centre 9:30am and then onto Oasis House

Women's Refuge 11:45am meeting residents etc

Emmaus Centre, MK, 13 August meeting at Emmaus at 10:30am

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Community Impact Assessment for this Review was approved and would be published on the Overview and Scrutiny WebPage.