NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS

Tuesday, 15 May 2018

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:	Councillor Cathrine Russell (Chair), Councillor Zoe Smith (Deputy Chair); Councillors Mohammed Aziz Sally Beardsworth and Jane Birch
Officers	Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

1.   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all those present to the inaugural meeting of the Scrutiny Panel – Homelessness and Rough Sleepers.

2.   APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Eales and Councillor Janice Duffy.

3.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4.   DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESS

There were none.

5.   SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Scrutiny Panel, considered in depth, the draft scope for the Review – homelessness and rough sleepers, making a number of updates and further inclusions.

AGREED: That the scope of the Review – Homelessness and Rough Sleepers, is presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2018 for approval.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

**SCRUTINY PANEL 3   -   HOMELESSNESS AND
ROUGH SLEEPERS**

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

To review the way in which the Council and its partners engage with rough sleepers, consider the best way in which 'Housing First' can be used to reduce rough sleeping in the borough, and understand the nature and extent of 'hidden homelessness' and how it can best be addressed.

Key Lines of Enquiry

➢ To gain an understanding of why people sleep rough
➢ To gain an understanding of the causes and extent of rough sleeping in the borough, the impact that rough sleeping has on the health, safety and life expectancy of people who are sleeping rough, and the implications for safeguarding and community safety.
➢ To gain an understanding of the work that is currently being undertaken by Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and local groups, services and organisations to engage with rough sleepers
➢ To consider the effectiveness of the action that is being taken (by NBC and local groups, services and organisations) to help people who are sleeping rough to come off the streets
➢ To gain an understanding of the 'Housing First' model and consider how best it could be used to reduce rough sleeping in the borough
➢ To gain an understanding of the nature and extent of 'hidden homelessness' in the borough, including the profile of the people affected and what contact (if any) they have had with NBC, Northampton Partnership Homes or local advice agencies
➢ To explore various ways of connecting with, and engaging with, harder to reach groups
➢ To gain an understanding of the specific needs and assistance provided for young people, between the age of 16-25, including care leavers

➢ To gain an understanding of the specific needs and assistance provided for ex-Offenders
➢ To understand how data, statistics and demographics are gathered and used to meet the needs of rough sleepers, men and women, who are homeless

2. Outcomes Required

- To understand how rough sleepers are engaged with and to make recommendations for improvement, as appropriate.
- To understand the 'Housing First' model and to make recommendations on how it could be used to reduce rough sleeping in the borough
- To understand the nature and extent of 'hidden homelessness' and to make recommendations on how it could be tackled
- To understand how people become homeless

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:
     Rough sleeper engagement
     Homelessness in Northampton
     Housing First
     Tackling Hidden Homelessness
  ➢ Relevant national and local background research papers
  ➢ Definitions – Rough Sleepers, homeless, and Hidden Homelessness
  ➢ Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
  ➢ Barriers to housing people and maintaining successful tenancies
  ➢ Relevant Council Policies and Strategies

> ➢ Statistics:
>
>> Rough sleeper data
>> Hidden homelessness data and information
>> Homeless data, including LGBT statistics
>
> ➢ Relevant Legislation:
>
>> Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
>> The Health and Social Care Act 2012
>
> ➢ Relevant published papers on homelessness and rough sleeping, for example Central Government's paper – Rough Sleeping (England) 2018, Housing First - A Good Practice Briefing - Shelter
> ➢ HomelessLink paper https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Annual%20Review%202017_0.pdf

- Best practice external to Northampton
- Case studies – hidden homeless and rough sleepers

- Internal expert advisors:

  > ➢ Cabinet Member for Housing, NBC
  > ➢ Housing Options and Advice Manager, NBC
  > ➢ Cabinet Member for Community Safety, NBC
  > ➢ Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Community Safety Team

- External expert advisors:

  > ➢ Head of Protecting Vulnerable Persons, Northamptonshire Police
  > ➢ Director, NACRO
  > ➢ Director, NAS
  > ➢ Director of Public Health, Northamptonshire County Council
  > ➢ Director, Adult Social Care, NCC (specifically in relation to ex-Offenders)
  > ➢ Director, Housing First (England)
  > ➢ Manager, Hope Centre
  > ➢ Service Manager, Salvation Army
  > ➢ Service Manager, Jesus Army

> ➢ Chief Executive, Central Northamptonshire CAB
> ➢ Homelessness Charities such as:
>   - Shelter
>   - Crisis
>   - Joseph Rowntree Trust
>   - Big Issue
> ➢ Healthwatch Northamptonshire
> ➢ Director, Maple Access Centre
> ➢ Director, SAAFA
> ➢ Skype interview, or similar, link with American organisation regarding the Housing First initiative
> ➢ MPs – Michael Ellis, Andrea Leadsom, Andrew Lewer
> ➢ Community Co-Chairs, all Northampton Community Forums
> ➢ Representative of the Landlords Forum

- Site visit(s) to the Hope Centre, Women's Refuge, Oasis House; other organisations that support homeless people and rough sleepers, Emmaus Centre in Bedford. Representatives of the Panel to accompany the Out Reacher Workers and attend the Rough Sleepers count. Site visit to Re-Store Café. The Deputy Chair to visit Manchester.

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

- Ian Bates, Director, Umbrella Fair Committee, 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 2018 – March 2019

- 15 May 2018   - Scoping meeting
- 5 July   - Evidence gathering
- 6 September   - Evidence gathering
- 8 November   - Evidence gathering
- 24 January 2019   - Evidence gathering
- 14 March   - Approval final report

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

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm and will be held in various locations around the borough.

9. Responsible Officers

Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing
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 2019. 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 2019)