

Foreword

Draft V1

The objective of the Scrutiny Review was to review how the Borough Council and its partners prevent homelessness and to 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

The review was a focussed piece of work that linked to the Council's corporate priorities and examined a range of information. The Scrutiny Panel looked at evidence from Local Authorities noted for best practice, heard from Authorities, organisations and groups regarding the assistance that they provide to homeless people and rough sleeper. Interviews with the Cabinet Members and senior staff from Northampton Borough Council and various external witnesses were held. Baseline information was received and desktop research carried out.

Homelessness is a growing problem, more and more people face the prospect of living in temporary accommodation or just sofa surfing with their friends or relatives. Homelessness is due to a number of factors, further details are provided within the report of the Scrutiny Panel.

Evidence received showed that being homeless is physically and mentally difficult and that homeless people are among the most vulnerable.

The Scrutiny Panel was made up from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: myself, Councillor Terrie Eales (Deputy Chair); Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Mohammed Aziz, Vicky Culbard, Janice Duffy, Elizabeth Gowen, Dennis Meredith, Sam Kilby-Shaw, together with another non-Executive Councillors Councillor Cathrine Russell. Pete Smith, Head of Partnerships, Homelesslink was co-opted to the Scrutiny Panel.

This review was carried out between May 2016 and March 2017.



Councillor Zoe Smith
Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Homelessness (Pre Decision Scrutiny)

Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review:-

- Councillors Councillor Terrie Eales (Deputy Chair); Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Mohammed Aziz, Vicky Culbard, Janice Duffy, Elizabeth Gowen, Dennis Meredith, Sam Kilby-Shaw, together with another non-Executive Councillors Councillor Cathrine Russell. Pete Smith, Head of Partnerships, Homelesslink (Co-Optee) who sat with me on this in-depth Scrutiny Review
- Councillor Mike Hallam (at the time of the review was the Cabinet Member for Community Safety), Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing, Debbie Ferguson, Community Safety Manager, Julie Seddon, Chair of the CSP, Emma Forbes, Housing Options Manager, NBC, Mike Kay, Chief Executive and Shirley Davies, Executive Director, NPH, Detective Superintendent Steve Lingley, Northants Police, Inspector Rich Tompkins, RISE Team, Police Sergeant Julie Parsons, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Lesley Hagger, Director, Children's Services, Northamptonshire County Council, Robin Bates, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Matthew Steele, Revenues and Benefits, LGSS, Akeem Ali, Director of Public Health, NCC, Manager, Maple Access Centre, Robin Burgess, General Manager of the Hope Centre, Theresa Kelly, Manager, NAASH, John Rawlings, on behalf of the Chief Executive, HealthWatch Northants, for providing either written or oral evidence to a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.