

The objectives of this Scrutiny Panel was to review ways in which the Council and its partners engage with rough sleepers and long term homeless individuals, 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 how and why people become homeless
- 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), local groups, organisations and voluntary services 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.

The Scrutiny Panel was made up of non-Executives, myself, Councillor Zoe Smith (Deputy Chair); Councillors Sally Beardsworth, Jane Birch, Gareth Eales and Ian Bates from the Umbrella Fair was co-opted to the Review.

The Review took place between May 2018 and May 2019.

This was an informative and at times, intense Review, with clear evidence received, exploring why individuals become homeless, a social and community phenomenon which is growing every year. I thank all those who contributed and gave their time to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel to provide this information and all those who provided comprehensive written evidence. I would particularly like to convey my thanks to those individuals who shared their experiences with the Panel about their experiences when sleeping rough and being homeless; this information has greatly informed the evidence base of this high-profile Scrutiny Review

The Scrutiny Panel held interviews with Cabinet Members, senior officers at Northampton Borough Council and a number of key external expert witnesses. Desktop research was carried out by Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer.

After each meeting the Scrutiny Panel would watch a short film, such as a TED film on research into Housing First, homelessness and rough sleeping. The value of these short films was very useful and provided additional information to the Panel.

The result is an important piece of work which, when presented to Cabinet, offers several key recommendations around reducing homelessness and managing rough sleepers in the borough.

I would like to thank everyone who participated and contributed to this very important piece of work.



Councillor Cathrine Russell

Chair, Scrutiny Panel 1 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

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

- Councillor Zoe Smith (Deputy Chair); Councillors Sally Beardsworth, Jane Birch and Gareth Eales who sat with me on this Review.
- Ian Bates, co-optee, for bringing his expertise and knowledge to this Review
- From Northampton Borough Council:
Councillor Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Safety
Councillor Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing
Vicki Rockall, Community Engagement and Community Safety Manager
Emma Forbes, Housing Options and Advice Manager
- Rich Tompkins, Detective Chief Inspector, within Public Protection, Northants Police,
- Robin Burgess, Chief Executive, Hope Centre
- Tara Scarth, Client Services Manager, Hope Centre
- Steve Jones, Northampton Jesus Fellowship
- Chris Luke, Midland Heart for providing information to inform this Scrutiny Review
- Officers and staff for making members of the Scrutiny Panel so welcome when it visited as part of the Site Visits
- Various individuals that spoke about their experiences when homeless and/or rough sleeping
- Members of the public who attending meetings of the Scrutiny Panel:
Thomas Appleyard, David Howard, David Huffadine-Smith, Mary Huffadine-Smith, Toby Birch, Dagmar King, Morcea Walker, Richard Johnson and Street Pastors.