

MINUTES OF HOMELESSNESS SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP

27 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT

Members of the Group: Councillors Roodhouse (Chair), Mrs Garcia, Mrs New and Sandison

Officers: John Hier (Housing and Regeneration Manager) and Veronika Beckova (Democratic Services Officer)

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair.

9. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Claire Edwards and Bill Basra, Priority Families Co-ordinator.

10. BRIEFING NOTE FROM BILL BASRA, PRIORITY FAMILIES CO-ORDINATOR, WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The sub-group received a briefing note (agenda item 4) from Bill Basra, Warwickshire County Council's Priority Families Co-ordinator.

The briefing note was discussed in detail by the sub-group.

11. UPDATE FROM THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION MANAGER

The Housing and Regeneration Manager provided the sub-group with the P1E statistics (agenda item 5 – appendix) which were discussed in detail at the meeting.

The following additional points were made:

- The homelessness prevention trailblazer project will be officers' priority for the next three years. It is anticipated that the project will commence by Summer 2017.
- It has been recognised that individuals now approaching the Housing Options Team for housing advice are more vulnerable and there are high numbers of people with mental health issues.

At the last meeting of the Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of the Crime and Disorder annual update, it was highlighted by the Rugby Community Safety Partnership Manager that about 40% of people being released from prison have no fixed abode. There are 8 to 12 prison releases per month into Rugby.

The committee was asked to bring the issue to the sub-group's attention. The Housing and Regeneration Manager advised the group that the Housing Options

Team receive approaches from ex-prisoners and prison accommodation officers when prisoners are due for release. The process for accommodating ex-prisoners is set out in the Allocation Policy with each case being assessed on its own merits.

The sub-group has requested stats on ex-offenders in housing need approaching the council. The information will be circulated via email by the Housing and Regeneration Manager.

12. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations were made by the sub-group:

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Focus on early intervention through the Trailblazer Project and work with partners to better understand the complex, multiple issues of people approaching the service.

Recommendation 2: Run an annual workshop with partner organisations to promote joint working and improve services for customers.

Recommendation 3: Continue working with local landlords via the Private Sector Leasing Scheme to provide more housing options and to continue to reduce the use of B&B accommodation.

Conclusions

It was agreed that members will be kept informed of the progress of the Trailblazer project via the Housing Member Conversation.

Recommendations and related actions will also be uploaded to the Rugby Performance Monitoring System to allow members to monitor ongoing progress.

'Mental health support in housing' will be submitted as a review topic to the annual Overview and Scrutiny Workshop taking place on Wednesday 8 March.

A report on the outcomes of the review will be submitted for consideration to Cabinet in June and to Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July.

Members of the sub-group thanked John Hier and the other officers involved for their hard work.

13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The sub-group has conclude its work and agreed that no further meeting is required unless one is requested by the Communities and Homes Portfolio Holder.

CHAIR