

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE –**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**1400 hours on Tuesday 4 June 2019, Committee Room 2**

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**Present:**

Councillor Penny Holbrook (Chair)

Councillors Marje Bridle, Roger Harmer, Mahmood Hussain and Mary Locke

**Also Present:**

Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities

Superintendent Ian Green, West Midlands Police

Emma Postin, ASB Partnerships Manager

Pamela Powis, Senior Service Manager – Community Safety

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer, Scrutiny Office

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

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**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.civico.net/birmingham](http://www.civico.net/birmingham)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Deirdre Alden, Shabrana Hussain and Gary Sambrook.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIR, DEPUTY CHAIR AND MEMBERS**

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To note the resolution of City Council appointing the Committee, Chair and Members to serve on the Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the City Council in 2020:

Labour (5): Councillors Penny Holbrook (Chair), Marje Bridle, Mahmood Hussain, Shabrana Hussain and Mary Locke.

Conservative (2): Councillors Deirdre Alden and Gary Sambrook.

Liberal Democrat (1): Councillor Roger Harmer.

- (ii) To elect Cllr Mahmood Hussain as Deputy Chair for the purposes of substitution for the Chair, if absent, for the period ending with the Annual General Meeting of the City Council in 2020.

#### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **5. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

(See document 1)

Noted.

#### **6. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACTION NOTES - 9 APRIL 2019**

(See document 2)

##### **RESOLVED:**

The action notes of the meeting held on 9 April 2019 were agreed.

#### **7. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS**

(See document 3)

Cllr John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities, Superintendent Ian Green, West Midlands Police, Emma Postin, ASB Partnerships Manager, and Pamela Powis, Senior Service Manager – Community Safety, attended for this item.

Cllr Cotton apologised for the late circulation of the report. He went on to say that the recent consultation had elicited the largest ever response to a consultation on Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), with 1,112 responses received, and over 86% in favour of the proposals.

Two key issues were emerging – firstly, the scale of public concern regarding ASB, harassment and intimidation and secondly, the desire of people to protect the rights of vulnerable people. There is a need to ensure there is a balance between these issues and the Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods is talking to other agencies about a Charter of Care to ensure rights are upheld and respected by all agencies.

Superintendent Ian Green echoed these points and said he is working with the ASB Partnerships Manager and her team about approaches. There is a moral argument around the use of PSPOs with homeless individuals and about what support can be

put in place to get people off the streets and new powers are needed to put positive requirements on people.

During the discussion and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- The idea is to attempt to enforce help rather than use the criminal system;
- Officers told Members that they had been looking at this since 2017 and the proposal for a PSPO is based on evidence and consideration of which tool would be best to use;
- The Street Intervention Team (SIT) has been in place for over 18 months and was brought in to look at homelessness and begging from an engagement point of view, to talk to people and offer help (for example signposting to hostels, benefits, medical and/or mental health services);
- There is documented evidence that there is a core group of people who have not accepted help and can earn large sums of money through begging, leading to members of the public being intimidated and fights between the street community over the best begging spots;
- The idea of the PSPO is for individuals who are in breach for begging or alcohol to be pushed into support services, with the SIT taking people to arranged appointments and warning letters given out which will signpost to services;
- Members were told that there is a journey involved in trying to work with who is out there. The Police know who the rough sleepers are and those who have come out of prison or ex-military usually accept help. After 12 months of engagement it is understood there is a cohort of individuals who are making money out of committing ASB acts and do not engage. The PSPO gives what is needed to approach these individuals – warning letters are hand delivered and there are case files documenting what approaches and support have been offered;
- Other routes will still be followed, e.g. for those new to the streets, but the PSPO gives another power;
- With regard to local ASB issues, Members were told that PSPOs are not appropriate for one-off incidents but are used for repeated behaviour. Police Community Support Officers now have powers to manage lower level ASB issues;
- In terms of what is happening in other cities, visits have been made to Manchester and Leeds and representatives from Liverpool have been to Birmingham to look at the SIT;
- In response to a question about the proportion of people professionally begging versus those who are genuine, officers said based on evidence they would say 60% have accommodation already;
- There are cases where support has been accepted by individuals if they are told action will be taken if they do not engage;

- If the PSPO is implemented, it would be in place for three years with reviews every 12 months;
- Members were concerned this will only work while we have the SIT and asked what would happen if this was removed in the future but were assured that there is a strong record of investing in these services and where they had been taken out in some other parts of the country had led to large scale problems;
- Members asked about the timescale for a Charter of Care and whether the Committee could look at this and were told that a date is being sought to get this to the Homelessness Partnership Board for an initial discussion and it will be shared with Scrutiny;
- Concern was expressed about the quality of accommodation being offered to individuals who might think being on the streets is a better option than poor quality accommodation and that it is unfair to penalise someone who cannot cope in accommodation we are commissioning;
- Superintendent Green told Members he had worked closely with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods on Housing First and the Police will receive more reports around issues in this type of accommodation and will enforce around known drug problems;
- In terms of possible displacement, it was not felt that an offer of support would result in displacement to other parts of the city, but that if this does happen there are partnership groups throughout the city which would identify this and feed back;
- The Chair thanked those who had attended for the session and confirmed that a second session would be held in July, to which they would be invited, along with taking evidence from witnesses who are opposing the PSPO.

**RESOLVED:**

The report was noted with a second session to be arranged for the July meeting.

**8. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

(See document 4)

The work programme was discussed and the following priorities were agreed for 2019/20:

- A further session on Public Space Protection Orders for the July meeting;
- HMOs - Article 4 Direction, also for the July meeting;
- Waste Management;
- Local Neighbourhoods;
- Performance Reporting - quarterly.

**RESOLVED:**

The work programme was noted.

**9. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
DATES OF MEETINGS 2019/20**

The Chair proposed moving committee meetings to Thursday afternoons and it was agreed that an alternative schedule of dates would be circulated to Members.

**10. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF  
ANY)**

None.

**11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

**RESOLVED:**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 1458 hours.