

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1400 hours on Tuesday 9 October 2018, Committee Room 6

Present:

Councillor Penny Holbrook (Chair)

Councillors Akhlaq Ahmed, Deirdre Alden, Marje Bridle, Roger Harmer and Mahmood Hussain

Also Present:

Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities

Councillor Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

Jim Crawshaw, Head of Housing Options/Private Sector Housing

Tanya Faruki, Technical Operations Manager – Rent Service

Julie Griffin, Acting Service Director, Housing

Tracy Holsey, Head of Income Collection – Rent

Kalvinder Kohli, Head of Service - Commissioning

Jayne Power, Scrutiny Officer, Scrutiny Office

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

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) 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 Gurdial Singh Atwal and Eddie Freeman and an apology for lateness from Councillor Deirdre Alden.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES – 4 SEPTEMBER 2018

(See document no 1)

The notes were agreed.

5. ACTION TRACKER

(See document no 2)

The action tracker was noted.

6. UPDATE ON UNIVERSAL CREDIT

(See document no 3)

Councillor Tristan Chatfield, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities, Tanya Faruki, Operations Manager - Technical, and Tracy Holsey, Head of Income Collection Rent, attended for this item.

The following were among the main points raised:

- Members heard some positive examples of interventions to support people and assist with mitigating the impact of changes on both tenants and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA);
- In response to a question on whether Universal Credit is helping people into work, officers said they would ask DWP if any data was available and report back to Committee;
- In terms of learning from the experiences of other Local Authorities, officers said that it was very early yet but they are talking to other LAs;
- Funding for the Council's Universal Credit pilot comes from the HRA;
- The Chair commented that it would be useful to see what the total cost of the pilot is;
- Councillor Chatfield confirmed he would be happy to bring a further report back in 6 months' time.

RESOLVED:-

- Committee to receive a report back on any data available from DWP with regard to Universal Credit helping people into work;
- Further report back to Committee to be programmed for 6 months' time.

7. HOMELESSNESS

(See document no 4)

Councillor Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, Julie Griffin, Acting Service Director, Housing, Jim Crawshaw, Head of Housing Options/Private Sector Housing, and Kalvinder Kohli, Head of Service – Commissioning, attended for this item.

(a) Progress Report on Implementation: Rough Sleeping & Prevention:

Councillor Thompson introduced this item and highlighted the on-going problem of homelessness both locally and nationally, however a lot of work is being done to address this, with all of the recommendations in the review being either achieved or progress made.

She went on to say that on the following day – World Homeless Day – she was hosting a meeting with Cabinet Members from across the region.

Kalvinder Kohli, Head of Service – Commissioning, told Members that although the evidence of progress had been provided in an attempt to address the original recommendations, it was becoming increasingly difficult to track the recommendations as they were written in view of the changing landscape.

In going through each of the recommendations, the following were among the main points raised:

- The Government is intending to issue a new strategy with funding attached (including some new money);
- Kalvinder would be meeting with Paul Jennings, Chief Executive of the Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group, to discuss their contribution to the homelessness agenda and the role of GPs;
- It is becoming apparent that there are more young people (under 25s) on the streets and this is being addressed through engagement with individuals;
- With regard to the Housing First pilot, a project board has been set up with Birmingham as the governing body and administering the fund;
- It is intended that over the next 12 months, a cross-directorate and cross-agency review of arrangements in place in the city will be undertaken;
- The wider case management system will be reviewed, together with escalation protocols for frontline services;
- In terms of data collection and the use of data to assist with prevention, more feedback can be provided on this as part of the update on the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act programmed for Committee in December;
- The new role of Co-ordinator provided as part of the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding will be based in Jim Crawshaw's team and peer navigators, with lived experience, will also be engaging with vulnerable people;
- The Mayor has made homelessness a priority and Birmingham is the lead on rough sleeping on the Taskforce;
- Members were told that there is no automatic accommodation for single people with no vulnerability and that although a number of rough sleepers would meet the vulnerability trigger point, they do not necessarily present as homeless;
- Families have automatic priority need, as do pregnant women and care-leavers;
- The need to be conscious of hidden homeless as well was highlighted and the acknowledgement that there is a challenge in providing accommodation which is suitable;
- The Chair suggested that the issue of accommodating single people be picked up as part of the Committee's work on PRS;
- In response to concerns raised with regard to care-leavers and whether there is any tracking of what happens to young people after they leave local

authority care or evidence of how many end up homeless, Members were advised that care-leavers have personal advisors who develop a pathway plan for them and ensure a network of support;

- With regard to the mapping of services, the Councillor Thompson said that she would re-circulate the services directory previously sent to all elected members;
- Members would be interested in seeing how commissioned services link together and what the structure is and it was suggested that further details could be brought back to Committee at a later stage;
- Reference was made to the figure of £86m in respect of the cost of the direct effect of homelessness on health;
- It was agreed that the report would be accepted as delivered but that all those recommendations not fully delivered would be held as review/action points, with timescales, to be brought back to Committee.

(b) Update on Allocations Scheme:

Jim Crawshaw, Head of Housing Options/Private Sector Housing, updated Members following the introduction of the new Allocations Scheme last year.

The following were among the main points raised:

- The Allocations Scheme is currently being independently reviewed with completion due end of October/beginning of November and a report will be brought back when it is completed;
- The importance of managing expectations was stressed;
- In response to an issue raised with regard to converting flats back into single dwellings, Julie Griffin, Acting Service Director, Housing, suggested a piece of work could be done on the current stock profile and whether this is still fit for purpose;
- Further report back to be programmed as part of the update on the Homelessness Reduction Act in December.

RESOLVED:-

- Members agreed to sign off the recommendations in the Rough Sleeping & Prevention scrutiny review with the proviso that a list of review/action points in respect of undelivered and on-going elements will be recorded and brought back to Committee in December;
- Update on the Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in December to include a further update on Allocations and current stock profile;
- Homelessness Services Directory to be re-circulated to Members;
- Clarification to be provided with regard to the £86m figure in terms of direct effect of homelessness on health.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19

(See document No 5)

The work programme was discussed and the following points were raised:

- It was agreed that for the November meeting agenda, Performance Reporting would be taken before the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Waste and Recycling;
- The second PRS session in December will focus on the use of PRS to address homelessness;
- Councillor Harmer referred to the recent report to Cabinet on the Druids Heath Regeneration and the possibility of this Committee doing a short piece of work, particularly on the potential effect on Perry Barr. The Chair suggested this could be picked up at the December session as a live example.

The work programme was noted.

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

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Councillor Deirdre Alden raised an item of urgent business with regard to on-going issues in Waste Services, in particular missed collections and problems reporting these to the Contact Centre.

The Chair undertook to write to the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Waste and Recycling requesting an interim update and response regarding contact centre waiting times.

RESOLVED:-

- Chair to write to Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Waste and Recycling.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Agreed.

The meeting ended at 1611 hours.