

## BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

# HOUSING AND HOMES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1400 hours on Tuesday 12 December 2017, Committee Rooms 3&4

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### Present:

Councillor Victoria Quinn (Chair)

Councillors Gurdial Singh Atwal, Andy Cartwright, Matthew Gregson, Des Hughes, Mohammed Idrees, Mary Locke, Gary Sambrook and Ron Storer

### Also Present:

Councillor Peter Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes

Matt Green, Director of Skylight Birmingham and Coventry, Crisis

Rob James, Service Director, Housing

Rose Kiely, Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Kalvinder Kohli, Service Lead, Commissioning Centre of Excellence

Jayne Power, Research & Policy Officer, Scrutiny Office

Tim Savill, Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits

Jean Templeton, Chief Executive, St Basil's

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### 1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chairman advised the meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.birminghamnewsroom.com](http://www.birminghamnewsroom.com)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Roger Harmer and Penny Holbrook.

### 3. ACTION NOTES – 14 NOVEMBER 2017

(See document No 1)

The Chair advised Members that a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive regarding the outstanding actions in relation to Waste Services and that when a response is received this will be circulated.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- Response from Chief Executive to be circulated when received;
- The notes were agreed.

#### **4. THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

(See document No 2)

Tim Savill, Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits, presented the report, which provided an update on the impact of Universal Credit (UC), how the Council is supporting its tenants and provided an analysis of rent arrears and planned mitigations to limit the impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The following were among the main points raised:

- The Council is undertaking a pilot initiative to examine existing cases in receipt of UC which will help to mitigate the impact of the change on tenants and the HRA;
- Members were told that the cost to the Council of the six month pilot initiative is £75,000;
- The Council is in receipt of a grant from DWP to help fund personal budgeting support and assisted digital support – around £130,000 for each element for the remainder of the financial year;
- Part of the pilot will be to look at the effectiveness of Alternative Payment Arrangements;
- Members requested that officers provide regular updates to Committee for the duration of the pilot;
- Officers in Housing are working closely with Revenues & Benefits on the pilot and have been doing some work with existing tenants to get them UC ready;
- In response to concerns around the impact on larger families, Members were advised that families with two or more children will stay on Housing Benefit until at least January 2019;
- Officers will send on to Members a note which had been sent out from the Library Service and NAS with details of routes to access support, together with local contact details to assist Members in supporting people in their surgeries;
- The Chair invited the partners around the table and the Cabinet Member to contribute to the discussion;
- Jean Templeton, Chief Executive of St Basil's, talked about the linkage between transition to UC and preventing homelessness. In terms of young people, 18-21 year olds will not be entitled to housing costs under UC (apart from some specific exemptions) and some work is being done with DWP around how to protect vulnerable young people;
- The Cabinet Member told Members that the Council has an Eviction Prevention Panel for its own tenants which seeks to take steps to prevent eviction being necessary and details of this would be provided to Committee;

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- Committee to receive monthly updates for the 6 month duration of the pilot;
- Members to be provided with details of the work being done with existing tenants to get them Universal Credit ready;

- Note from Library Service and NAS detailing routes people can use to access support to be circulated to Members;
- Details to be provided of local numbers and email addresses which Councillors can use to help people attending their advice surgeries;
- Members to be provided with details of how to contact the Eviction Prevention Panel.

## 5. HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

(See document No 3)

Councillor Peter Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes, Rob James, Service Director, Housing, Kalvinder Kohli, Service Lead, Commissioning Centre of Excellence, Matt Green, Director of Skylight Birmingham and Coventry, Crisis, and Jean Templeton, Chief Executive, St Basil's, attended for the following items:

- (a) Progress Report on Implementation: Rough Sleeping & Prevention
- (b) The vision moving forward – Homeless Prevention Strategy and Pathway Update; Regional Update

Kalvinder Kohli presented the Progress Report on Implementation: Rough Sleeping & Prevention. The Cabinet Member Assessments for each of the recommendations were agreed as follows:

- Recommendation 01 – 3
- Recommendation 02 – 3
- Recommendation 03 – 3
- Recommendation 04 – 3
- Recommendation 05 – 3
- Recommendation 06 – 3
- Recommendation 07 – 3
- Recommendation 08 – 3
- Recommendation 09 – 3
- Recommendation 10 – 3
- Recommendation 11 – 3
- Recommendation 12 – 1

Members requested further reports back in January, February and April, with regular updates thereafter.

With regard to the vision moving forward, the following were among the main points raised:

- The Homelessness Prevention Strategy will be presented to City Council in January and officers will be getting sign-up from the remaining Cabinet Members;
- In terms of regional work, Jean Templeton advised Members that the West Midlands Task Force is looking at the pathway model and taking a person centred approach;

- Various task groups, chaired by different authorities/partners, have been set up and the Steering Group is made up of all the local authorities and partners;
- With regard to Housing First, Matt Green, Director of Skylight Birmingham and Coventry, Crisis, told Members that he had done some comparison of Birmingham with other areas. He had found that Sunderland had de-commissioned Supporting People and put money into Housing First but it hadn't worked;
- He went on to say that Housing First is part of the system but only for certain people.

**RESOLVED:-**

That further reports would be brought back as follows:

- Recommendation 01 – January
- Recommendations 02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09 & 10 – February
- Recommendation 05 – April
- Recommendation 12 was signed off as achieved but Members requested that regular updates be brought back to Committee.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18**

(See document No 4)

Members discussed the work programme. The following points were raised:

- The Chair suggested to Members that an additional meeting be arranged to consider the budget proposals before the consultation closes on 15<sup>th</sup> January.
- The Chair advised that following resolution of the industrial dispute, a Waste Update would be requested for the January meeting.
- In response to a question from Cllr Sambrook about programming in Tenant Engagement, Rob James advised that a green paper was about to be issued and the Housing Minister is currently talking to tenants around the country and, consequently, Members may wish to defer this item. It was agreed that Committee would keep a watchful eye on this.

**RESOLVED:-**

- Additional meeting to consider the budget proposals to be arranged before 15<sup>th</sup> January;
- Waste Update to be requested for January;
- The Work Programme was noted.

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

None.

**8. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted.

**10. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

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The meeting ended at 1650 hours.