

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2019

A MEETING of the REGENERATION & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2019 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Paul Wray

Councillors Steve Cox and Charlie Hogarth

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

DMBC

- Andy Brown - Senior Strategy & Performance Manager
- Adam Goldsmith - Head of Service (Local Investment Planning)

St Leger Homes Doncaster

- Steve Waddington - Director of Housing & Customer Services
- Jenny Hobson - Homelessness Reduction Act Implementation Manager

		<u>ACTION</u>
8	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Nevett, Duncan Anderson, Iris Beech, Eva Hughes and Kenneth Keegan	
9	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	There were no items on the agenda that contained exempt information.	
10	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest made.	
11	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER, 2019</u>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 th October 2018 were agreed as a true record.	

12	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
13	<u>HOMELESSNESS UPDATE</u>	
	<p>A report was presented with an update on homelessness following the Panels own scrutiny review held between November 2016 and January 2017.</p> <p>It was explained that there had been significant changes to legislation, which had been introduced through the Homeless Reduction Act and had fundamentally changed the responsibilities for Local Authorities.</p> <p>The following areas that had changed were highlighted as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty To Provide Advisory Services</u> – Requires free homelessness advice and information services to be provided to all residents and to provide advice designed with certain vulnerable groups in mind. <p>Members were assured that SLHD were already providing advice to presenting individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Change of Timings Associated of ‘Threatened With Homelessness’</u> - Extends the period during which someone might be threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days. <p>It was explained that the idea behind this was that individuals and households were able to be processed more quickly with more time to support them and prevent the threat of homelessness if possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Prevention Duty</u> – It was explained that this was a new legal statutory duty placed on the local authority to prevent homelessness. • <u>Assessments and Personalised Housing Plans (PHP)</u> – It was outlined that this was about Local Housing Authorities carrying out an assessment of the circumstances and needs of all eligible applicants who were homeless or threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days. It was explained that each individual required a PHP, which outlined what ‘reasonable steps’ the authority and the applicant needed to take (as agreed with the individual). • <u>Duty to Refer</u> – Members were informed that under the act, from 1st October 2018, public bodies in England had a duty to refer an individual’s case (with consent) to the local housing authority if they were threatened with homelessness. <p>It was explained that it was about creating a culture around early intervention and prevention. It was added that further to the changes in legislation, the context of homelessness locally had changed, in particularly with the most complex individuals. It was explained that</p>	

there was a new partnership approach through the Complex Lives Alliance to support those sleeping rough in Doncaster. It was reported that to date this had worked successfully.

An outline of the structure of the Complex Lives Team was provided to the Panel. It was explained that the Complex Lives Alliance had created the capacity to enable the management of more complex cases providing an important resource. It was further added that in the last six months the team had become more integrated through;

- Co-location with Complex Live team of SLHD Homelessness Single Point of Access
- CCG specialist Mental Health nurse (from the 1st April).
- DMBC Housing Benefits Officer seconded to team.
- NACRO worker seconded to team

It was commented that the team had become more effective through bringing a range of more specialist functions to work alongside them, for example, permanent and part-time positions.

It was reported that in the height of summer 2018, there had been 65-67 individuals sleeping rough in Doncaster (predominantly within the Town Centre) and this had since reduced to 12-15. It was continued that there was a comprehensive winter plan, which had been put in place to support this issue following pressures seen from the 2017/18 winter period.

Members were provided with the following update on to the Scrutiny Recommendations made as a result of the Panels review.

Recommendation 1. The Homelessness Strategy to be added to the Panel's work plan in 2017/18.

It was reported that there had been a delay to the Homeless Strategy moving forward and changes made to homeless legislation and Rough Sleeping Strategies.

Recommendation 2. That an update on the successful funding bid from central government be provided to the Panel during 2017/18

Members were informed that the Rough Sleepers Grant Allocation bid had been successful and the sub region was allocated £400K over the two years 2017/18 and 2018/19. It was agreed that £48K per annum should be used to have a South Yorkshire approach. Each local authority was then allocated £38K per annum to be utilised to support the prevention of rough sleeping. In Doncaster, it was decided to utilise this funding to support the creation of the Complex Lives Team.

Since then the Government had announced other funding opportunities following the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Rapid Rehousing Pathway – It was noted that Doncaster's bid for this

was based upon enhancing the current resettlement pathways, building capacity within the Complex Lives and associated teams. Members were informed that currently there were 115 cases in the complex lives cohort, not all of which were supported all of the time. It was reported that through the intensive work of St Leger Homes Home Options Team, the Complex Lives Team and the wider alliance, that rough sleeping in Doncaster had significantly reduced from the summer peak. There was a brief discussion around opportunities to rehouse those individuals after leaving prison and the additional support that was needed.

Private Rented Sector Access Fund – It was reported that a bid which had been led by Barnsley (on behalf of Doncaster, Rotherham & Barnsley) had been successful and would help to identify private landlords registered with housing association that properties landlord were willing to release to housing associations.

Rough Sleeping Initiative – Members were informed that in January 2019, a joint bid had been put forward by Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley for the second round of the Rough Sleepers Initiative to enhance our provision. It was reported that the outcome of this bid was still being waited on.

Recommendation 3 – That support be given to the Principle of Housing First and an update be provided to the Panel 2017/18

Reference was made to the update provided within the report.

Update on Current Homeless Position

It was explained that the main reason for homelessness continued to be the loss of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. Other reasons included;

- Relationship Breakdown
- Eviction by Parents
- Eviction by Friends

It was confirmed that although the above 4 main reasons for homelessness had not changed, there were now more routes to address it. Members heard that over the last 12 months, the need to provide additional temporary accommodation over and above the commissioned provision had significantly increased.

It was noted that after the 2017/18 winter period, the use of dispersed accommodation had increased to 45 properties and to support the 2018/19 winter period it had increased to 84 properties for temporary accommodation. It was explained that there had been a significant increase in the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation (due to the statutory duty to provide accommodation).

Assurances were sought around whether the Complex Live Team had the capacity to deal with the number of individuals that it supported.

Members were informed that it was a hardworking team but that it was essential to have partner buy in. It was explained that the team had experienced success but that the work would need to carry on. It was recognised that it was challenging dealing with marginalised and entrenched people in the community through intense work. It was felt that a positive solution had been developed through the team which would form a crucial role in terms of prevention in the future. There was an understanding that national issues had influenced homelessness, for example, welfare reform.

There was a brief discussion around what was in place when prisoners were released. Reference was made to 'Through the Gates' programme, which had been delivered by the Probation Service and had been removed due to cuts in national funding

It was explained that Outreach Workers picked up individuals being released and if they were from outside of Doncaster they were supported to return back to that place. It was explained that the Complex Lives Team worked with Community Rehabilitation Company to look at how that could be improved. It was commented that individuals would be supported back into a property or to their place of local connection. Concern was raised around when the individual had no local connection. Members were informed that the Complex Lives cohort consisted of all Doncaster based people.

It was outlined that certain factors were taken into account when supporting the individual, such as considering where they wanted to live as well as deciding what the most appropriate course of action was for them. It was commented that those individuals were placed in accommodation through a planned process to be supported and monitored through a whole multi-agency protection approach.

In terms of which properties were chosen, Members were informed that it was about firstly choosing what was available, looking at the community and balancing that with the needs of those who were presenting. Members were reminded that the local authority needed to balance a number of things with ensuring that they fulfilled their statutory requirements.

A Member expressed that they were pleased to hear that the needs of the community were taken into consideration. Reference was made to incidents when complaints had been made from residents close to individuals placed into temporary accommodation. It was stressed that residents should matter as much as the individual being placed into the accommodation. Members were assured that the Complex Lives team would support that and where there were issues around anti-social behaviour then that would be taken up with the individual. It was explained that when an individual was in temporary accommodation, they were placed under a license that set out the level of behaviour that was expected.

Concern was raised by a Member around what information was shared

	<p>on an individual. Assurances were provided that information was shared at an appropriate level and by the applicable agencies/bodies (dependent on what it was in relation to e.g. accommodation or recruitment etc).</p> <p>Clarification was sought around whether existing stock could be renovated to supplement available housing. It was explained that where opportunities arose this approach was taken, an example of this was the recent development with DCST where we have refurbished a property to make it suitable for move on / clustered semi-independent accommodation for children leaving care. Members were informed that there was nothing in place locally to support individuals to renovate properties before moving into them, but this may be considered in the future</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel note the report</p>	
14	<p><u>HOUSING NEED STUDY HEADLINE FINDINGS</u></p>	
	<p>A presentation was provided to the Panel on the headline findings from the Housing Needs Survey. This included the breakdown of the overall housing target (920 homes per year) by size, type and tenure and on an area by area basis. It was explained that the findings of the Housing Needs Study would be used to inform policy decisions on how the Council and its partners would respond to the boroughs housing need.</p> <p>The presentation provided headlines under the following areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Prices • Affordability • Tenure Options – Cost/Income Required • Household Moves • Household Incomes • Stock Profile • Stock Condition • Housing Needs - Dwelling Mix • Affordable Housing Needs • Older People’s Housing <p>In terms of Older People Housing, it was noted that 8 out of 10 older people were wanting to remain in their own home (with appropriate support when needed). Members were informed that type of housing formed 17% of the housing target (of which included residential care at 6%). It was commented that there was a need to invest public money or facilitate the provision of those services so older people would be able to live in their houses for longer.</p> <p>A Member of the Panel commented that more affordable properties were needed within their ward. It was commented that it was always</p>	

	<p>about viability from a planning perspective. Concern was also raised that unaffordability could be linked to the job market.</p> <p>Members were informed that the report would be completed soon before being shared with other departments to help inform Council proposals and decisions. It was confirmed that there would be an Executive Summary and that the key points of the report would be circulated wider in an appropriate format.</p> <p>Clarification was sought on the distribution of housing and how areas of the borough were made aware of what was being developed. It was explained that when land was put forward to be considered for housing, it was assessed for sustainability and looked at as part of the overall housing required (and broken down by proportions in that area).</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the information contained within the report; and. • That an update be provided as part of the Workplan 2019/20 to look at the whole document or focus on certain areas. (with an invite to Planning and Director of Regeneration and Housing). 	<p>Senior Governance Officer</p>
<p>15</p>	<p><u>AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME UPDATE</u></p>	
	<p>The Panel received a report, which provided a high level update on the process and current position on the development of the Council's future affordable housing delivery programme to meet unmet housing needs across the Borough.</p> <p>It was explained that there was a need for more affordable homes articulated through the Doncaster Housing Strategy 2015-2025. This would be considered from information provided from a range of sources to inform the future programme including the Housing Needs Survey as well as other sources.</p> <p>It was explained that the ongoing existing programme formalises that since 2013/14, 991 units of affordable homes would have been delivered.</p> <p>It was continued that the delivery programme would aim to meet the varied housing need and through the Doncaster Growing Together programme. It had also been recognised that accommodation was not presently being met for certain groups that included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care leavers • Adults with Learning Disabilities and Autism. • Physical Disabilities linking to the Accessible Housing Register • Homeless/at risk of Homeless <p>It was reported that land within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)</p>	

	<p>would be prioritised for affordable housing, although, the future programme may also incorporate General Fund land following land and assets reviews. It was commented that in terms of resources there was not the right amount of housing land or enough of it in the right place and that factors moving forward potential may include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to acquire land. • Work with housing association partners to deliver more specialist accommodation, • Increase the number of units provided through s106 • Look at homes or non-residential units and look at alternative delivery models working with institutionally investors. <p>It was added that there was a limitation on what could be achieved until more detail was made available when a programme had been worked up over forthcoming months.</p> <p>Clarification was sought as to whether there was budget for homes that needed adaptations. Members were informed that this was already undertaken for new builds, for example, Bristol Grove. It was outlined that new properties would come out of what those needs were identified as and could start to incorporate accessible homes within the programme .</p> <p>Reference was made to the principals of lifetime homes and the Panel were informed that efforts were being made to minimise the costs of future changes. For example, level access (for wheelchair access) and ramps might not be placed in every property but steps would be taken to make future adaptations easier.</p> <p>It was recognised that the Housing Needs Study would provide important information that would inform policy and decisions. It was also recognised that nationally there was an ageing population. Members were reassured that where gaps were identified steps would be taken to identify to enable a more appropriate delivery. Reference was made to the Capital Programme Build Programme and was noted that at some point the Council may consider bringing back more empty properties back into use.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel note the report.</p>	
16	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN MARCH 2019</u></p>	
	<p>The Panel received a report updating Members on the Panels work plan for 2018/19.</p> <p>A copy of the work plan was attached at Appendix A of the report taking account of issues considered at the Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny workplanning meeting held on the 13th June, 2018.</p>	

	<p>There was a brief discussion around the Forward Plan.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel note the Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Workplan 18/19 - October 2018 update.</p>	
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