

COMMENTS FROM ENVIORMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL ON 16TH JULY 2024 TO CABINET ON 30TH JULY 2024

EC19: **CABINET REPORT- HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**

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The Housing Services Manager introduced the Strategy to the Panel and advised that all Local Authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every five years.

The Senior Housing Manager gave a presentation to the panel on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, a copy which is attached.

The Senior Housing Manager advised the timeline of the strategy which included a review which was conducted in the autumn and winter of 2023/24 and published in April 2024. He added as part of the timeline, the draft strategy was completed in July 2024 and therefore was on track. The Senior Housing Manager explained to the Panel sessions had been held to encourage input from Council employees, Local Partners, Public Survey and people with lived experience of homelessness, with a total of 118 individuals contributing.

The Senior Housing Manager highlighted to the Panel the Key Strategy Aims were prevention, intervention, accommodation, recovery, and system support/service culture. He highlighted the values and behaviours included in the strategy were dignity, transparency, flexibility, collaboration, and empowerment.

The Chair, Councillor Bullen thanked the Senior Housing Manager for the presentation and the detail of the Strategy produced along with all the work involved.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rust thanked all the Housing Team for their hard work and by ending homelessness person by person and putting them at the heart of the strategy.

Councillor Kemp commented the report was ambitious and included detail in depth. Councillor Kemp asked if the Strategy included more help for people renting in the private sector along with if there were any plans for help with mortgages and if the Borough council would be guarantor for rent. She further asked if the Strategy included improved access to mainstream health services.

The Senior Housing Manager responded to Councillor Kemp's questions. He advised the Strategy focused on improved partnerships with the private sector. He commented guaranteed rents could be considered with an effective scheme. The Senior Housing Manager stated regarding mortgages, this not a trend currently but if this became a further issue then would be investigated further. He commented further regarding the working relationships with the private sector which included Citizen Advice Bureau and Inclusion Health.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rust added Shelters and Citizen Advice Bureau are already existing services which help with managing tight budgets and as a Borough Council we provide the 'Beat the Bills' scheme.

Councillor Kunes asked if we provide accommodation for customers where the properties do not have restrictions, for example pets or smoking allowed.

The Senior Housing Manager clarified Housing First provides a service for people who are unable to progress in a hostel environment or settings where there are extensive restrictions. He added Housing First work with support accommodation providers to provide accommodation to ensure there is no negative impact.

Councillor Kemp sought clarification if Care Leavers had been identified in the Strategy.

The Housing Services Manager provided assurance that there was already policies and frameworks in place in relation to Care Leavers and needs have been identified however policy allocation is being reviewed.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rust referred members to the Care Leavers Covenant which highlighted what we will be doing for Care Leavers, and this overlapped existing policies.

The Chair, Councillor Bullen commented that it needs to be recognised that the Borough Council are addressing the issues with Homelessness and Rough Sleeping and working hard to end homelessness one by one.

The Senior Housing Manager elaborated further that ending homelessness was the overall goal on the horizon and the strategy works towards that.

RESOLVED: That the 2024-2029 Strategy is adopted and that the role of the Environment and Community Panel group - Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group in overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan within the strategy is endorsed.

EC20: **CABINET REPORT- ALIVE WEST NORFOLK ARRANGEMENTS**

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The Corporate Governance Manager/ Assistant to the Chief Executive presented the report on Alive West Norfolk Arrangements.

The Corporate Governance Manager/ Assistant to the Chief Executive outlined the aspirations of Alive West Norfolk post five year start up remain challenging. The report concluded Alive West Norfolk requires subsidy from the Borough Council. She highlighted the need and requirement to invest in improvement of facilities in Lynnsport, St James pool or Oasis pool however there was no capital.

She outlined the recommendations to Cabinet in the report and explained the governance and operations of Alive West Norfolk are recommended to be returned to in-house management with the management and structure to be determined following the appointment of the new Chief Executive. She confirmed to the Panel the options which had been considered as part of the review.

The Corporate Governance Manager/ Assistant to the Chief Executive explained the complexity to administer Alive West Norfolk and the static levels of activity and visit levels. She explained the key elements to the Panel such as all of the Alive West Norfolk Staff being on the Borough Council terms and conditions already therefore further costs would not be incurred.

The Chair thank the Corporate Governance Manager/ Assistant to the Chief Executive for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Councillor Kemp endorsed the recommendations and agreed Alive West Norfolk would be more profitable in-house. She asked what consultation would be taken and what action would be taken to include and encourage people without surplus income.

The Interim Assistant Director Leisure, Arts and Lynnsport clarified consultation has been taken with users and non-users and encouraging young people to exercise. He confirmed he was still awaiting the results from the survey. He added in regard to value for money there has been continuous financial pressures in recent years and this had led to price rises for the customer at the same time as the quality of the facilities had gone down. This resulted in perceptions of reduced value for money amongst users. If facilities were improved this would increase income and give the council more flexibility on pricing policies.

Councillor Heneghan confirmed due to the amount of gyms in the area, and she looked forward to seeing the result of the survey and hoped we prioritised what it was users wanted. She endorsed Alive West Norfolk to come back in-house.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ring commented the detail of this report demonstrates the need for Alive West Norfolk to be brought back in-house. He highlighted to the Panel these facilities do not go well in a business together. He highlighted in the next four to five years what we could deliver and return in profit. He made further comment that we are fortunate to own these facilities and added we can provide an efficient service with bringing Alive West Norfolk in house to deliver and identifying Health and Wellbeing.

The Chair, Councillor Bullen referred to the report and asked about the 10% activity being down since Covid and what the contributions were.

The Corporate Governance Manager/Assistant to the Chief Executive advised there were a number factors including people being reluctant to return to areas that could be high risk areas and also lack of disposable income due to increase in energy bills. She added there was varies causes and difficult to specify.

RESOLVED: The Environment and Community Panel supports the report and recommendations to Cabinet