

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING DELIVERY TASK GROUP

Minutes from the Meeting of the Homelessness & Housing Delivery Task Group held on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023 at 10.30 am in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT:

Councillors Miss L Bambridge, C Bower, A Bubb, S Collop,
A Holmes and J Rust (Chair)

Also present:

Duncan Hall, Assistant Director
Nikki Patton, Housing Strategy Manager

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Rust be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

RESOLVED: That Councillor A Bubb be appointed as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

4 **NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 19 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

5 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

7 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to report.

8 **MEMBERS ATTENDING UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor M de Whalley.

9 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Chair's correspondence to report

10 **CONSIDERATION OF THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE TASK GROUP
AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS**

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The Assistant Director reminded the Task Group that discussions had been held about bringing this Group to a close and having some other form of reporting arrangements in place around progress on delivering against the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy. Ultimately the decision was for the Task Group to decide whether to terminate the Task Group or not.

Councillor Bower added that the updates given by officers at the Panel Meetings were appreciated. She considered that unless there was a time when homelessness and housing delivery needed to be looked at more closely, the reports to the Panels were sufficient.

Councillor Bambridge added that the Group had carried out a fair amount of work and she would be sorry if it did not continue. She referred to the news which had said that there were far more people rough sleeping from when the survey was carried out in November. She was added that the housing providers needed to be engaged with again.

Councillor Mrs Collop agreed with the comments made by Councillor Bambridge that the Task Group should not cease but felt that the structure needed to change.

Councillor Bubb added that he considered that the Group should not be disbanded but the meetings should be reduced to 2 per year. The Task Group should receive the reports which had been talked about so that if something urgent occurred then the Group could convene to look at it. He also suggested that there could be a standard item on the Environment & Community Panel agendas relating to the Homelessness & Housing Delivery even if there was nothing to report.

Councillor Holmes added that it would be a bad sign to close this Group down, but it did need to have a purpose. He stated that in view of the forthcoming elections it might be a good time to review the terms of reference for the Group. By keeping the Group, it kept the issue in the public eye.

The Chair acknowledged that she had joined the Group after it had been established but she never understood the real point of what the Group was meeting for and what the Group had achieved. She agreed that it might be the right time to review the Terms of Reference for the Group before the elections.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor de Whalley spoke against disbanding the Group. He stated that it was a credit to the Group and officers that the number of rough sleepers in West Norfolk was low compared to other authorities to the east and west. He added that there was a lack of social housing, squeeze on private tenancies, housing associations that were struggling, a cost-of-living crisis and very significant issues with mental health support in this County. He supported the adjustment of the Terms of Reference ready for the new Councillors in May.

Councillor Bubb proposed that an item be placed on the Environment & Community Panel agenda meeting after the elections to review and update the Task Group's Terms of Reference. This was seconded by Councillor Bower.

The Assistant Director stated that officers were more than happy to continue with the Group and added that there had never been a more important time for officers and members to work together in the most effective way on refining and developing the approach on how these issues were dealt with.

Since the last meeting, consideration had been given to the type of information Members required and the best way to do that in advance of a meeting, giving the Task Group time to scrutinise the information given.

He suggested that the meetings might have a more strategic approach, and the E&C Panel had an agenda item for an update from the Group.

Councillor Holmes suggested that a short paper should be prepared with a revised terms of reference for the Task Group post-election to consider would be a good idea.

RESOLVED: (1) That the E & C Panel be informed that the Homelessness & Housing Delivery Task Group should continue and not be disbanded.

(2) That officers prepare a paper with some revised terms of reference for the Task Group post-election to consider.

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged.

The meeting closed at 10.52 am