

**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, 13th April, 2022 at 2.00 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Collop (Chair)  
Councillors Miss L Bambridge and C Bower

**1 WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She advised that the meeting was being recorded and streamed live on You Tube.

At the Chair's request, the Democratic Services Officer carried out a roll call to determine attendees.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bubb, Morley and Rust (although Councillor Rust would be attending under Standing Order 34).

**3 NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 1 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

**4 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**6 URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**7 MEMBERS ATTENDING UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor J Rust on all items.

## 8 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Chair's correspondence to report.

## 9 **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE - TO FOLLOW**

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N Patton advised that following an internal audit of housing strategy recommendations had been made to include reference to monitoring and these had been included within the Terms of Reference for the Task Group. She outlined where the amendments had been made in the document under the purpose / role of the group:

'The effectiveness of the Council's newly commissioned services in relation to preventing homelessness:

- The Rough Sleeper Out-reach & In-reach Service
- The Benjamin Foundation Young Persons Tenancy Support Service
- Housing First Service'

If agreed by the Task Group, the amended Terms of Reference would be taken to the Environment & Community Panel for adoption.

The Chair stated that she had concerns in relation to the first line of the Terms of Reference where it stated that 'the expectation is that the group would meet (initially) monthly until the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy has been agreed and the Local Plan review is finalised.' The Group had stated it wished to meet monthly, but this had not been happening. She considered that the Group should meet monthly particularly during the months September – April, which was agreed by the Task Group.

In accordance with Standing Order 34, Councillor Rust agreed with the suggestion. She added that the more regularly the Task Group met, the more informed they would be and although it seemed that things were not happening during the summer months, the Task Group were not aware that they were.

The Assistant Director advised that thought would be given to scheduling those meetings in and pointed out that there were times of the year when there were more pressures to deal with. He also added that a lot of the work was long-term planning and involved monitoring those contracts which had been previously mentioned.

He added that it might be shorter meetings during the winter period, to keep the Task Group up to date.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the Task Group agreed the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for presentation to the Environment & Community Panel.
- (2) That a schedule of meetings be prepared on a more regular basis, but monthly during September – April.

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### **UPDATE ON THE HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - TO FOLLOW**

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N Patton advised that the Action Plan had been updated and circulated, which included what actions had been completed, what actions were underway and what actions were yet to commence.

She drew the Task Group's attention to a couple of red areas which had not yet commenced. This was the Action Plan, which was attached to the strategy when it was adopted in 2020. It was a 4-year strategy and action plan. Much of the action plan had been completed or was underway. There would be an updated version of the new action plan looking forward in terms of the areas which needed to be focussed on for the next 12-24 months.

In terms of the current action plan and the actions yet to commence, N Patton provided an explanation in relation to:

- Private Sector Leasing Scheme.
- Tenancy training.
- Young Persons Shared Accommodation Model.

One of the pressures which was being seen at the moment related to the significant number of families approaching the Council for assistance due to challenges around the private rented sector. There were several issues which included a very buoyant housing market with landlords selling properties; lifestyle changes, new energy efficiency measures, and generally there was more demand for private rented properties.

Other key areas were around the Council's responsibilities and duties with regards to the Domestic Abuse Bill and the Young Persons Service.

The Chair then invited questions from the Task Group.

Councillor Bambridge stated that several years ago, there was funding available to landlords so that properties could be taken over by RSL's, and asked whether this was still in place? In response, it was explained that there was not any funding or Government funding available, but it did tie in with the private sector leasing scheme, which was looking to be set up in West Norfolk.

In accordance with Standing Order 34, Councillor Rust addressed the Committee and asked what were the numbers of young people that the Council had not been able to help and how many would need to be helped in the future.

In response, N Patton explained that she did not know the exact numbers but could find out via the system. But what was known was that there were a number of protocols that had been set up with providers and officers worked closely with Children's Services as well, together with the work that was done with the Benjamin Foundation. The Council also provided funding to a young person's service.

Councillor Rust added that she was concerned that it did not appear that there was a knowledge of the level of support that the Council needed to provide and the number of young people that might not have been supported.

The Assistant Director added that the Council had commissioned services for young people, and he acknowledged the difficulties they faced in terms of accessing housing. He added that it was just information that could not be provided now without any advance notice. He asked if Councillor Rust could put in an email exactly what information she required.

The Chair referred to the Action Plan, and the delivery date for 10 more units was Spring 2022 and asked if these were the units at Reid Way. It was confirmed that it was the properties at Reid Way.

Councillor Bower stated that the Planning Committee had recently approved planning permission for an HMO.

**AGREED:** N Patton to provide an update from Broadland Housing Association via email.

11 **UPDATE ON THE DRAFT SUPPORT ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY FOR NORFOLK**

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N Patton explained to the Task Group that the draft Support Accommodation Strategy for Norfolk had been considered at the recent E&C Panel meeting with a recommendation to endorse the Strategy at a forthcoming Cabinet meeting.

12 **GENERAL UPDATE**

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### Rough Sleeping Initiative Yr5

N Patton provided an update on the Rough Sleeping Initiative, which had been submitted to Government for funding and a response was awaited.

### Ukraine Housing Response

D Hall provided an update to the Task Group on the Ukraine Housing Response. The Council had an internal working group looking at this. In terms of the sponsorship scheme, Officers from the Housing Standards Team were undertaking inspections. The Council had a welcome centre in King's Court to help with benefits and other signposting.

N Patton advised that as of last week there was over 50 inspections to be undertaken in the borough and over 37 had been undertaken.

### 13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged.

**The meeting closed at 2.35 pm**