

**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 Monday, 19th December, 2022 at 3.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Miss L Bambridge, A Bubb, S Collop, M de Whalley, A Holmes and A Kemp

**Under Standing Order 34:**

Councillor M de Whalley  
Councillor A Kemp

**Officers:**

Duncan Hall, Assistant Director, Regeneration, Housing and Place  
Nikki Patton, Housing Strategy Manager  
Wendy Vincent, Democratic Services Officer

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Mrs S Collop be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

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

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

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Bower and J Rust.

4 **NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 13 April 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.

8        **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Chair's correspondence.

9        **MEMBERS ATTENDING UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillors M de Whalley and A Kemp were present under Standing Order 34.

10       **UPDATE REPORT**

[Click here to view a recording of this email on You Tube](#)

The Task Group received a PowerPoint presentation on General Homelessness (copy attached to the Agenda).

In response to a question from Councillor Bambridge regarding the increase on the spend on bed and breakfast accommodation and extra funding being available, the Assistant Director explained that there was recently some additional funding which would go towards meeting the costs and recognising the pressures faced by local authorities. The Assistant Director outlined the impact on families specifically in relation to education, the cost of obtaining food and no facilities to prepare meals.

Following a further question from Councillor Bambridge relating to reasons why families were being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, the Assistant Director explained that the reasons were due to a number of factors including being served with a Section 21 notice and highlighted the importance of people contacting the Borough Council at an early stage to seek assistance with problems being experienced.

Councillor Bubb referred to the 420 people presenting as homeless and asked if they were likely to be the same or different people. In response, the Assistant Director advised that it was likely to be different people.

Following a further question from Councillor Bubb on the rate paid for bed and breakfast accommodation, the Assistant Director explained that this would depend on the provider who determined the cost.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Kemp referred to the current number of voids (102) in relation to Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) and asked what assistance the Borough Council could offer to turn the void properties round quicker. In response, the Assistant Director outlined the work the Borough Council were currently undertaking particularly around skills and would continue to progress in the future.

The Assistant Director provided an overview of the opportunities with West Norfolk Property and West Norfolk Housing companies.

The Housing Strategy Manager informed the Task Group that the Borough Council were actively working with FCH and were aware of the pressures and provision of longer term accommodation. It was noted that people were spending longer in temporary accommodation and FCH was prioritising works and agreeing a number of measures to support quicker turn round times in the immediate short term response. It was highlighted that there longer term measures being discussed and the Council would continue to liaise with FCH to identify how the pressures could be alleviated. The Housing Strategy Manager outlined the campaigns the Council was involved in.

In response to a question from the Chair on potentially more people presenting as homeless because of not being able to pay their mortgage, etc, the Assistant Director explained that the Council would monitor the situation closely,

Councillor Bambridge commented that early engagement with the Council seeking assistance did work and that informing residents was key to them receiving the required support.

Following comments from Councillor Bambridge relating to problems experienced by all social landlords in King's Lynn, the Housing Strategy Manager explained that it was generally recognised that this were challenges in employment and sourcing materials and turning round voids. The Task Group was advised that FCH was the biggest social landlord with largest amount of stock in the Borough and there was a plan in place to address those issues. The Assistant Director added that there were supply chain issues relating particularly to new development and that pre-Covid there were workforce issues in the building and other trades and explained that work with Lovells and other housing associations had looked at apprenticeships and growing their own and that further work was required.

Councillor Kemp commented that there was a lack in skills and that different contractors would take a long time to resolve the issue and add to the cost.

The Assistant Director responded to questions and comments from Councillor de Whalley regarding staff and challenges faced in supporting customers' needs and when the Council sought assistance from external agencies.

The Chair referred to the Task Group's Terms of Reference and the need to meet on a more regular basis.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance and supporting the Task Group.

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date to be scheduled towards the end of February 2023.

**The meeting closed at 4.13 pm**