

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 Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 11.00 am in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor S Sandell (Chair)
Councillors A Bubb, S Collop, A Ryves and Mrs V Spikings

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor J Rust – Portfolio Holder for People and Communities

Officers:

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director
Nikki Patton – Housing Services Manager
Andy King – Senior Housing Manager
Richard Cooper - Housing Data Analyst

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Lintern.

2 **NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes from the meeting held on 13 November 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

3 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to report.

6 **MEMBERS ATTENDING UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

7 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Chair's correspondence to report.

8 **UPDATE ON THE TIMETABLE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**

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The Housing Strategy Officer updated the Task Group on the timeline to produce the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. He advised that there was a requirement to publish the Strategy every five years. The last Strategy was published in January 2020 and there was a deadline to publish the next one by January 2025.

There were two dual pressures that needed to be taken into account.

1. Clear need to work at pace; and
2. Additional need to get things right – this was something that came out of the work that was carried out to review the level of homeless provision in the Borough and with this in mind the timeline was being extended towards publishing the Strategy.

He explained that he wanted to introduce three things:

- Greater emphasis on lived experience
- Wider net of contributors
- Check-back stage.

The Task Group noted the next steps for the adoption of the Strategy.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

9 **UPDATE ON HOMELESSNESS FIGURES**

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The Housing Strategy Officer took the opportunity to thank the Housing Data Analyst for putting together the figures for the Task Group.

The Housing Strategy Officer provided an update to the Task Group and provided information in relation to:

- The number of people sleeping rough in King's Lynn & West Norfolk, nationally (excluding London) and London Borough.

It was noted that the number of reported rough sleepers throughout the month continued to remain comparatively low, despite an increase in support needs and pressures around move-on accommodation.

- The number of approaches for assistances
- Accommodation options

It was explained that there was a significant delay in accessing long-term accommodation, which was causing households to remain in the first and second stage of accommodation for longer periods of time.

- Housing first - lack of available properties
- Social Housing – lack of properties made available by housing associations, increased need in the borough.
- Private rented – increased difficulty in accessing due to affordability and lack of supply.

There had been a 41% decrease in available housing (2021-2023) and a 325% increase in households with a Full Housing Duty owed awaiting social housing (2021-2023).

The Chair asked with regards to rough sleeping whether the Council were seeing people coming into the Borough from other areas. In response it was explained that this was something that required further analysis. To illustrate, the two people recorded as sleeping rough at the 2023 national rough sleeping snapshot had both arrived at the borough shortly before the night of the snapshot estimate.

Councillor Mrs Spikings asked whether the figures took into account people sleeping in cars. In response it was explained that the way which Purfleet Trust, who operated the outreach service, carried out a daily sweep of areas where they considered that there would likely be people sleeping rough and information was relied on from CCTV and from members of the public, who could report this via Streetlink which was a national website. A report then went through to the local authority who could send out their outreach service.

Councillor Mrs Spikings asked how many people would know about Streetlink? In response it was explained that this needed to be considered as part of the Strategy and how to engage with people about rough sleeping. The Housing Strategy Officer acknowledged that there was work to be done in this area.

The Housing Strategy Manager explained that there was also a lot of multi-agency working across statutory and voluntary services, which the Council worked with in terms of making sure that information was shared and vulnerable people were not sleeping in cars, etc. Streetlink was publicised and more work needed to be done as part of the emerging strategy.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Collop, the Housing Services Manager provided an update on the properties at Reid Way. A full report would be provided to the Task Group at the next meeting. The Council was also looking to purchase other units of accommodation.

In response to a question from Councillor Bubb, the Senior Housing Manager advised that he wished to do further work to have a clearer understanding of how many people were new to rough sleeping and had slept rough elsewhere.

AGREED: (1) That the updated be noted.

(2) That a report on the accommodation at North Lynn be provided at the next meeting.

10 **UPDATING OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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The Housing Strategy Manager explained that updating the Terms of Reference had been an action from the previous meeting.

She advised that under the membership of the Task Group, it should read seven members.

AGREED: That the revised Terms of Reference be agreed with the amendment noted above.

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be arranged when required.

The Housing Strategy Manager advised that there would be a monthly data report sent to the Task Group and a meeting of the Group held quarterly.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am