

Meeting	Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Date	13 November 2023
Present	Councillors D Myers (Chair), Vassie (Vice-Chair), Baxter, Kelly, Rose, Runciman, Smalley, Wann, Wilson and Steels-Walshaw
In Attendance	Councillor Pavlovic – Executive Member for Housing, Planning, and safer Communities Tony Thompson – Salvation Army Charlie Malakey – Salvation Army
Officers in Attendance	Neil Ferris – Corporate Director of Place Martin Kelly - Corporate Director of Children's and Education Denis Southall - Head of Housing Management Services Abid Mumtaz - Head of All Age Commissioning & Contracting Caroline Billington - All Age Commissioning Manager Philippa Gowland - Senior Solicitor and acting Court Business Partner

13. Declarations of Interest (17:33)

Members were asked to declare at this point in the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registerable interests they might have in respect of the business on the agenda, if they had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

Councillor Steels-Walshaw declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 3 *Update Report on Homelessness / Resettlement Services 2023 including winter provision, commissioning issues and strategy update* as she worked as the Service Manager for Changing Lives -York Drug and Alcohol Service as outlined in her register of interest and would therefore leave the meeting for the consideration of that item.

14. Public Participation (17:35)

It was reported that there had been one registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Councillor Rowley informed the Committee that he shared an office with the Salvation Army and that he could not support ending the contract work with the Salvation Army due to the expertise they bring and raised concerns of future funding should government funding come to an end.

15. Update Report on Homelessness / Resettlement Services 2023 including winter provision, commissioning issues and strategy update (17:39)

The Committee were joined by Tony Thompson and Charlie Malakey from the Salvation Army.

Cllr Steels-Walshaw left the meeting for this item due to her conflict of interest which she declared in minute 13.

Officers introduced the report providing an update on the Council's homelessness and resettlement services. They noted that the high cost of housing in York was a significant factor in creating precarious housing situations, but that, the Council maintained a excellent service which was considered good practice. It was confirmed that the Council was seeking to move towards a housing first approach, as evidence showed that housing first was effective at reducing individuals need to return to homelessness services. Officers also noted that the Council continued to work with nationally recognised experts and organisations to support the Councils services and strategy.

The Committee raised concerns about the decision to allow the contract the Council had with the Salvation Army to elapse, as well as, the way in which this was communicated, and finally the decision to bring services in house using new grant funding. Officers confirmed that both the Council and the Salvation Army agreed that communication surrounding the elapsing of the contract was regrettable and that the Council would continue to have a positive relationship with the Salvation Army and supported its charitable work in the city. In relation to the contracted provision the Council had determined that it would provide the service which had previously been contracted, through its Navigators team and that this would provide a more holistic service linking partners and other Council services more seamlessly.

The Committee shared its concerns that the Council would lose the expertise that the Salvation Army had provided while contracted to perform street patrols. They also raised concerns that some homeless individuals will have built up a relationship with the Salvation Army and might not wish to communicate with Council officers. Officers confirmed that the Navigator team already worked with individuals who came to services from initial street patrols undertaken by the Salvation Army and also undertook street patrols.

Mr Thompson and Mr Malakey were asked by Members what the Salvation Army's charitable work within the city would now include to support the homeless, now that the contract they had from the Council had elapsed. They confirmed that they were looking into the viability of continuing their work including things such as drop in services. They confirmed that this work was under review due to the communication issues around the elapsing of the contract, meaning that the Salvation Army had not been planning for services post the contracts end. They informed Members that they did not believe service users had been consulted on changes to the services they and the Council provided and that this would have had a negative impact on homeless individuals.

Members enquired as to the work the Salvation Army does as a charity, including work at the natpad, additional street patrols, and drop ins. Officers confirmed that this work was not what the Council had been contracting the Salvation Army to undertake and would continue to support the Salvation Army's charitable work. Officers noted that the work the Salvation Army had been contracted to do was one small but important part of the Council's homelessness services and that this work would be delivered as part of the Council's services through the Navigators team. They confirmed that the Council provided a 24 hour comprehensive service.

The Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Safer Communities confirmed that the previous administration had granted a temporary extension to the Salvation Army's contract while the Council reviewed its strategies to support homeless individuals. He confirmed that as part of developing a rough sleepers strategy he was committed to working with partners to create a wrap around service that ends the need for rough sleeping. He noted that work would focus on preventing people becoming homeless and that as the housing first strategy developed there could be a role for a procured service.

Resolved:

- i. That the chair and vice chair write to the chair of Audit and Governance Committee to request that they consider additional

- to their committees work plan a review of how the Salvation Army contract elapsed;
- ii. That the Committee requested that the draft rough sleepers strategy be brought to the Committee for consideration prior to being finalised;
 - iii. That the Committee requested that its Members be invited to attend the rough sleeping policy conference.

Reason: To ensure that Council services continue to support homeless individuals.

16. Re-Commissioning of the Reablement Service in York (19:36)

The Committee considered the report which current Reablement services and the commissioning approach for contract renewal. Officers confirmed that the Council was exploring a four year contract when going out to procurement, they noted that a four year contract would be attractive to providers.

The Committee enquired as to whether the Council had considered bring the service in house and highlighted challenges relating to training and staff retention in the private sector. Officers confirmed that bring services in house were considered and an option would be considered two years into the contract. They also confirmed that training would be a condition in the contract and that staff retention should be better with the longer contract.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the report.

Reason: To ensure the Committee is aware of the Council Re-Commissioning of the Reablement Service in York

17. Work Plan (19:50)

Members considered the Committee work plan. Members discussed the possibility of adding an item to the work plan to discuss technology in reablement and about the ability have a report from TUEV on the diagnosis pathway KPI for autism strategy and to include neurodivergence.

Resolved:

- i. That an item be added to the work plan to consider technology options in reablement;
- ii. That the Committee request TUEV provide an update on diagnosis pathway KPI for autism strategy and to include neurodivergence.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a programme of work.

Cllr Myers, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.33 pm and finished at 8.03 pm].

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