
Meeting	Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	24 February 2020
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Pavlovic (Vice-Chair), Baker, Wells and Musson
Apologies	Councillor Mason

39. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or discloseable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

40. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting of the committee held on 27 January 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

41. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

42. Homelessness and Winter Night Provision - February Update

Members considered a paper which provided an update on the current homelessness situation and the winter night provision for rough sleepers and homeless people in York. The paper outlined how the Council proposed to spend additional funds to reduce rough sleeping, and meet the demands of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The Head of Housing, the Resettlement Services Manager and a representative from the Salvation Army, were in attendance to present the report and to respond to questions.

The following information was provided in response to questions from committee members:

- There were typically between 5 – 13 rough sleepers each night in York and had been 6 vacancies in emergency homelessness provision the previous evening.
- That the current hand over date for James House was the 3 March 2020.
- It was noted that individual circumstances would not prevent a rough sleeper from accessing the emergency winter night provision. However, should service users be abusing alcohol or drugs, this would not be allowed under the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- The guest from the Salvation Army noted an opportunity to use shipping containers, that had been donated by the Fire Brigade, to provide shelter for those unable to continue in the tier 2 provision.
- In response to reports of rough sleepers not utilising hostels due to a lack of security or fear of violence, officers stated that they try to persuade service users that it is the first step in the process.
- ‘Housing First’ was a scheme offered as an option for service users to receive the offer of accommodation with very little expectation on that individual and building benefits around them.
- The guest from the Salvation Army noted that rough sleepers were unlikely to seek early medical attention and could be more reliant on the emergency services. It was noted that the Salvation Army had attempted to include a first stage nurse in their walkabouts to help combat this.
- Officers also noted that the Supported Accommodation Scheme had excellent links with mental health services in the city.

Resolved: Members noted the report.

Reason: In order to be informed of the Homelessness and Winter Night Provision.

43. Environmental Retrofitting

Members considered a paper which explained the process of retrofitting, which is the term generally used to describe the process of carrying out construction work to improve the energy efficiency of an existing building. Members considered the various different approaches to retrofitting and the key

considerations that needed to be made when deciding on an appropriate retrofit approach.

The Head of Building Services was in attendance to present the report and to respond to questions.

The following information was provided in response to questions from committee members:

- That there was an aspiration to achieve net zero carbon in the Council's housing stock by 2030.
- A third of the housing stock in York was below EPC rating 'D' standard. It was noted that due to the age of York's housing stock, there were additional complications (particularly with building materials) and that more work was required to find the appropriate solution.
- Officers noted the extent of the challenge to retrofit all properties and stated that the Executive would need to decide on the best approach to maximise carbon reduction and achieve value for money and future savings. As an example, Officers noted that improving an EPC rating from C to B, could result in an approximate saving of £700 per annum in fuel bills.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Scrutiny Officer would check whether the Executive report on the direction of travel for this project could be received at this Committee for pre-decision scrutiny.
- (ii) Members noted the report.

Reason: To ensure the Committee are informed of this project.

44. Work Plan

Members considered the work plan for 2020. The following were agreed as alterations and/or additions to the Work Plan for 2020.

23 March

- Environmental Retrofitting (TBC – potentially 20 April Committee meeting, dependent upon when this will be considered by Executive)

- Housing Fraud – Internal Audit Actions – to be considered in May

18 May

- Housing Fraud Awareness Raising

Cllr Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].