

---

Meeting	Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	11 December 2020
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Pavlovic (Vice-Chair), Baker, Mason, Vassie, Musson and Norman (substituting for Cllr Wells)
Apologies	Councillor Wells

---

## **6. 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.

## **7. Minutes**

Members approved the minutes from the meeting held on 2 November 2020 noting two typos to be amended. Members also discussed the Committee's work plan, it was noted that the Committee would have a forum meeting on 16 February 2021 and was intending to consider Affordable Housing on Private Developments at that meeting. The next full meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 23 March 2021. It had been proposed that the Committee received an update on Community Safety at the meeting on the 23 March 2021, there was also a request from the Committee that this include river safety in the city.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **8. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been three registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. However, due to technical issues one of these speakers was unable to speak at the meeting.

Tom de Simone spoke in relation to item 5 on the agenda and suggested the Committee support option 3 in the report as the best option presented. He thanked the Council for bringing forward a programme for insulating

council properties in the city, but noted that the work would only be the beginning and York would need to retrofit the majority of its houses to reach net carbon zero by 2030. He also noted his support for the option providing the possibility of creating new green jobs and the benefits of the programme to helping individuals in fuel poverty and improving public health.

Ivana Jakubkova also spoke in relation to agenda item 5 and asked that the Committee support option 3 to deliver quality retrofitting over quantity with the funding available to the project. She noted the need to develop skills in the sector as retrofitting can be done badly and that cities like York could take a lead in delivering quality retrofitting. She noted that she was involved in holding the event York Open Eco Homes and would be happy for the Council to attend to show the work they had done in regards to retrofitting.

## **9. Homeless Winter Night Provision 20/21**

Officers introduced the report, outlining the work the Council had taken with partners to eliminate rough sleeping in York. They outlined the role COVID-19 had played in how the Council had supported rough sleepers and how they had been able to access additional accommodation from hotels in the city when hotel business was down.

Members discussed the breakdown of figures in the report and compared the number of Priority Needs Acceptances and the reasons for the loss of a last home. Officers outlined the work that could be undertaken with those that lose a home from advice to providing housing, they noted that many cases could be resolved before someone would need to be housed by council services. It was also noted that those that came under the Priority Needs Acceptance were those the Council had a duty to house.

Members enquired about several reasons for the loss of last accommodation that were on course to rise in 2020-21 from where they were in 2019-20. One area identified was domestic violence, officers did note that numbers fluctuate and a wider sample of data would show this more accurately. However, they also explained that COVID-19 had exacerbated a significant issue in domestic violence. It was also noted that when someone presents as homeless to the Council it can be only one of several issues affecting the individual and therefore, the Council wished to improve a multiagency front door approach to support residents.

Groups that face increased vulnerability such as young LGBTQ people and members of the BAME community were discussed and whether the Council was able to identify people from these groups or if they could be masked in

larger groups of data. Officers noted the challenges of 'hidden homelessness' and agreed with Members that council data could provide greater analysis to ensure vulnerable groups were being successfully supported and would look to work with groups and specialist services in the city to provide support.

Resolved:

- i. The Council is to seek to create greater ties with groups working in the city with vulnerable groups to ensure greater support for vulnerable individuals.
- ii. That the Committee recommend to Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee that the Committee have added to its work plan a report on the development and evolution of the council's Homeless and Housing Services.
- iii. That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Council support those that are homeless or facing homelessness in the city.

## **10. Council Housing Energy Retrofit Programme**

Officers provided a presentation to the Committee on the options that would be considered by the Executive on 15 December 2020. Members considered and discussed the 3 options in the report and it was outlined that option 3 was recommended by officers. This is because it would allow the council to access West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) advice for the programme, retrofit properties, and develop skills in the city.

Discussion took place around the prospect of developing skills and whether the Council could ensure small and medium sized local businesses would be able to have access to these skill development and contracts. It was noted that the Council would need to follow its procurement rules but the project would aim to provide long term confidence to a growing supply chain and a key element of the Council's strategy would be to work with local businesses' to develop the right skills and grow a successful small and medium sized enterprise market.

The Committee discussed engagement with residents and it was noted that while the Council was targeting specific Council properties, they would only work with residents interested in having the property they were living in retrofitted. Members also enquired about how the Council would measure success of the project and it was noted that in the first phase of project if

the council choose option 3 then success could constitute a reduction in fuel poverty and more energy efficient properties.

Members discussed how the Council might learn from retrofitting projects both in the UK and abroad, noting a specific project in Malmo Sweden. Questions were also raised about the private rented sector and it was confirmed that Government consultation suggested that rental properties would need to reach an energy rating of C or above by 2028 and new properties by 2025. In regards to Council houses being retrofitted, Members enquired as to whether the Council would have any mechanism to recover expenditure on the programme should a property be subject to Right to Buy. Officers noted that some mitigations were in place including the expectation of a larger amount received from a sale receipt due to the retrofit increasing the value of the property. Members also discussed further steps to tackling health inequalities and climate change related to housing in the city and potential avenues to investigate such as local energy plans and district heating.

Resolved:

- i. The Committee recommended that the Executive agree to option 3 in the report;
- ii. The Committee also requested that the Executive consider how to ensure local SME's can be engaged with later stages of retrofitting work, that the council seek to undertake a people centred approach to the work, and to aim to ensure the Council adequately recoups the cost retrofitted houses that are subject to Right to Buy to enable more of the Council's properties to be retrofitted.

Resolved: To ensure that the Council achieves its goal of reaching Net Carbon Zero by 2030 and support residents by reducing fuel poverty.

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.37 pm and finished at 7.27 pm].