

**Report of the Chair of Housing and Community Safety Policy and
Scrutiny Committee**

Summary

1. This report highlights the work of the Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee from October 2019 to February 2020, its established task groups and work plan for the remainder of the municipal year.

October 2019

2. At the October meeting of the committee, Members received an update from the Safer York Partnership, outlining pieces of work that had been delivered against each of its strategic priorities. Members also received a referral from the Area Planning Sub Committee regarding social housing on private developments, which subsequently would develop into a task review for this committee. However, the focus of the October meeting was a round-table discussion on the issue of County Lines. The committee welcomed Councillors Taylor and Webb from the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee alongside the Police Commander for York and Selby and the Interserve Justice Manager. This was a useful exercise and provided an opportunity to bring key stakeholders and agencies together to discuss the issue.

November 2019

3. Members received an update on the Older Persons Accommodation Survey and how this research could help influence the future direction of the programme. A year on from its implementation, the committee also received a positive update on the Extension of HMO licensing to any one household of five or more people and resolved to receive a further update in the next municipal year. Members also discussed a paper on empty properties in York and the work to help bring them back into use.

Finally, following a request from the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee, Members agreed to take part in a corporate poverty review, which for this committee involved looking at Housing Poverty.

December 2019

4. In our last meeting of the calendar year, Members received an update on homelessness and winter night provision for rough sleepers and single homeless in York, requesting a further report and analysis of our winter night provision to come back to the committee in February. Members received a Housing Need and Availability Update, which subsequently would help inform the objectives of our Housing Poverty Task Group and finally, discussed a scoping report on the task group looking into Affordable Housing on Private Developments, agreeing our aim and objectives.

January 2020

5. The Committee began the New Year by receiving the biannual performance monitoring report for Housing and Community Safety, giving the committee a chance to scrutinise the forecast and outturn positions for both finance and performance. The committee also received the scoping report for the task review into Housing Poverty, establishing its aim, objectives and membership.

February 2020

6. In our most recent meeting, the committee considered two reports including an interesting introduction to Environmental Retrofitting and an updated report analysing the performance of our winter night provision, as mentioned earlier. The committee asked that a more detailed report on Environmental Retrofitting comes back for a pre-decision scrutiny discussion.

The Work Plan

7. The committee has a busy work plan for our next three meetings as we move towards the end of the municipal year. The committee intends to look at the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, Housing Delivery Programme, new ICT system and the Older Persons Accommodation Programme. As mentioned above, the committee hopes to take part in some pre-decision scrutiny on Environmental Retrofitting and some awareness raising around Housing Fraud.

Task Review Groups

8. The committee currently has two on-going task reviews, one looking at Affordable Housing on Private Developments and one looking at Housing Poverty as part of a wider corporate scrutiny review.
9. The review into Affordable Housing on Private Developments set the aim of understanding the situation regarding the delivery of affordable dwellings on private developments. In doing so, the committee highlighted that they wish to look at what influence the Council has in this area alongside investigating the approaches of other authorities in which the system is different. The task group is made up of Cllrs Fenton, Pavlovic, Wells and Baker and held its first informal meeting in January to plan the work.
10. The second review into Housing Poverty intends to look at the extent to which house prices, rent and associated costs of running a home contribute to the number of houses in poverty in York. The review will involve some fact finding initially before comparing our data to other local authorities and providing important information to the context of the wider review into poverty. This task group is made up of Cllrs Musson, Mason and Baker, however it was agreed that all members of the committee are able to take part.
11. Both of these task reviews will involve a high level of stakeholder engagement including housing associations, other local authorities, landlords, residents, developers and Council officers. We also hope to engage with York University's Centre for Housing Policy on both of these issues.