

Meeting	Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	27 January 2020
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Pavlovic (Vice-Chair), Baker, Mason, Musson, Vassie and Wells

33. 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.

34. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting of the committee held on 23 December 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

35. Public Participation

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

36. Finance and Performance Quarter 2 Monitor 2019/20

The Committee considered a report that provided detail of the 2019/20 forecast outturn position for both finance and performance across Housing & Community Safety. The Committee discussed several areas of the forecasts for 2019/20 and how the data in the report had been presented. Members raised questions regarding how the delivery of affordable housing was being recorded and if CYC would meet its delivery target by the end of the financial year. Members also requested that data on affordable housing be broken down, to identify the difference between those available at 80% market rate and those that are available at social rent.

In response to Member questions, officers stated that there would be reserve funding released for retrofitting Council owned properties, focussing on the buildings with the lowest energy efficiency rating initially. Members were keen to ensure that the appropriate indicators were put in place to help gauge the effect of the programme. The Chair requested that Members consider any questions they had regarding the Environmental Retrofitting item (scheduled for the meeting on 24 February 2020) so that any issues could be addressed by the officer report.

The Committee also requested that officers include further information on the Rapid Rehousing Pathway within the report on Temporary Accommodation (also scheduled for 24 February 2020 meeting)

Resolved:

- i. The Committee noted the continued effective financial management across Housing & Community Safety;
- ii. The Committee noted the performance information provided in the report.

Reason: To ensure expenditure was being kept within the approved Budget.

37. Aims and Objectives of the Housing Poverty Scrutiny Review

The Committee received a report asking them to consider and agree their remit for the Housing Poverty Scrutiny Review. The Committee discussed a range of topics including the current housing register and access to affordable rental housing.

Officers explained the criteria for each of the bands in the current housing register and explained how the application process for available housing was undertaken. Members enquired about the impact that housing related debt could have on someone successfully receiving a council property. Officers confirmed that housing related debt accrued in both council properties and the private sector would be a barrier against receiving a council property.

Members also enquired about the increased number of people on the housing register when comparison local authorities in the report had seen a reduction. Officers stated that they were unsure of how other authorities had compiled their data and agreed to contact the Local Authorities listed, to understand the differences in policy and administration.

Members enquired about the impact of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), officers confirmed that the private rental sector in York was impacting affordability in the city. They noted that there were a large number of people receiving LHA that were paying the difference between private rental prices and the allowance from the LHA. Members raised concerns regarding the impact this could be having on the financial stability of those receiving LHA. Officers noted that a national government review could lift the maximum amount that could be received from the LHA from April 2020.

Members discussed the proposed remit for the scrutiny review and noted the need for the Council's Housing Delivery Programme to aim for higher than 40% affordable homes as passed by Council in September. Members also noted the need to explore the breakdown of affordable homes to identify those being built for sale at 80% market rate and those at social rent. Members also suggested that the remit could consider what individuals are choosing to do when they reach 18 years of age and if they are able to access housing outside of family homes.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed that the remit for the Housing Poverty Scrutiny Review task group would be:

- i. 'To better understand the extent to which house prices, rent levels and the costs of running a home contribute to the number of households in York in poverty'.

The Committee agreed that the objectives for the Housing Poverty Scrutiny Review would be:

- ii. To establish the costs of running a home (gas, electricity, service charges etc) and analyse this in addition to the data we have on average earnings, house prices and rent.
- iii. To carry out a comparison exercise with similar local authorities?
- iv. To assess the impact and take up of the Local Housing Allowance and other Government-imposed rules that we must adhere to?
- v. To establish what levers the Council and other local partners have to reduce the cost of housing and/or the cost of running a home, e.g. shared or novel forms of ownership, council tax support, energy costs?
- vi. To identify the factors that impact on the pace and the percentage of delivery of affordable homes (noting the net position with the losses through Right to Buy)?

- vii. To engage with:
- a. CYC Business Intelligence Team
 - b. Citizen's Advice York
 - c. Credit Union
 - d. Housing associations
 - e. CYC Housing Management Officers
 - f. Estate Agents
 - g. Residential Landlords Association
 - h. Local Authorities that have had successful affordable house building programmes
 - i. Individuals with lived experience

The Committee agreed that the Housing Poverty Scrutiny Review task group would include Cllrs Musson, Mason and Baker, however all Members of the Committee should be included in meetings wherever possible.

Reason: So that the Committee can undertake a Housing Poverty Scrutiny Review.

38. Work Plan

Members considered the committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2019-20 municipal year.

Members requested that:

- Updates on Council accommodation sites including James House and Ordnance Lane be part of the Temporary Accommodation item scheduled for the 24 February 2020.
- That the Safer York Partnership are asked to include a cycle safety update as part of their bi-annual report scheduled for the March meeting of the Committee
- An appropriate officer from Finance be invited to the 20 April 2020 meeting of the Committee to contribute to the Housing Delivery Programme update item
- An update on the outcomes of the Older Persons Accommodation report also be added to the April meeting.

Resolved:

- i. That the Work Plan was approved, as submitted, subject to the above clarification;

Reason: To ensure that the Committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 7.04 pm].