

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**  
**held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 20 February 2020**

Present:

Members: Councillor N Akhtar

Councillor F Abbott  
M Councillor M Ali  
Councillor R Ali  
Councillor R Bailey  
Councillor J Blundell (substitute for Councillor T Mayer)  
Councillor J Clifford (substitute for Councillor Miks)  
Councillor R Thay  
Councillor S Walsh

Councillor D Welsh, Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods

Employees (by Directorate):

People J Crawshaw, S Hall  
Place M Andrews, S Bennett, V Castree

Others Present: N Byrne – Citizen  
O Okwuadigbo – Future Lets (Coventry University)  
S Palmer – Midland Heart

Apologies: Councillors T Mayer, C Miks and T Khan

## **Public Business**

### **36. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **37. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January, 2020 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **38. Housing Development in the City**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note which provided an update on the development of new social housing in Coventry. The Briefing Note also provided

an update on student accommodation in the City and the impact on the Private Rented Sector and voids across the City, as well an update on fire safety in high rise buildings.

The Briefing Note detailed:-

- New social housing in the City – Including the number and tenure of affordable homes provided in Coventry since 2015.
- Development by Registered Providers – Representatives from Citizen and Midland Heart were present at the meeting
- Student Accommodation Update – Including the expected completions of purpose build student accommodation in the City since 2017/18 – A representative from Future Lets (Coventry University) was present at the meeting
- Fire safety in high rise flats

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers and the representatives present on aspects of the Briefing Note, including:-

- Developments being undertaken by registered providers, including locations and types of development taking place throughout the City, together with parking provision for those new developments
- The impact of the new student accommodation on the housing market in the City (The Scrutiny Board noted that there was currently only anecdotal evidence on the impact)
- Growth rates at both Universities in the Cities and future proposals
- Details relating to the housing stock held by Coventry University and contingency plans put in place to ensure new accommodation is completed and ready for occupancy in time
- The capacity levels of social providers for increased customer services requirements
- The Local Plan and planned and statutory review dates
- Refurbishment programmes and work undertaken in relation to decampment
- Rent levels in Coventry compared to other Cities
- The number of overseas students in Coventry
- Modular housing developments
- Current good working relationships between the City Council and its partners at a strategic level

The Chair, Councillor Akhtar, thanked the representatives present at the meeting for their attendance and the information provided.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the information provided in the Briefing Note and at the meeting be welcomed and noted**
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods be recommended to undertake the necessary research (using local**

**resources if possible/appropriate) to ascertain the impact of the new student accommodation on the housing market in the City.**

### **39. Housing and Homelessness Update**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note which provided an overview on progress made in delivering the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. The Briefing Note also provided a detailed update specifically on progress made to tackle Rough Sleeping and the commissioning of Homelessness Support Contracts.

In Spring 2019, Coventry City Council secured funding through the Rough Sleeping Initiative to employ a Rough Sleeping coordinator and two outreach workers; one based with the Migrant and Refugee Centre and having remit to work with those who have no resource to public funds. The team have been working to deliver the new Rough Sleeping Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet in December, 2019. Previously in Coventry many agencies were supporting rough sleepers independently and were fragmented from each other. The team have worked hard to bring people into shared space to ensure a joined up and co-ordinated approach. The team work daily with The Salvation Army Rough Sleeper Team and The Arc, based at “Steps for Change” in the City Arcade. Other close partners include Crisis Skylight, Change, Grow Live, The Cyrenians, WM Police, DWP, Council street cleansing and enforcement teams, Langar Aid House, Coventry Winter Night Shelter, Jesus Centre, the Probation Service, Coventry Comfort Careers, Turnaround and Kairos.

During the first six months of operating, the team have got to know the individual rough sleepers and their needs as part of a coordinated case-management approach whilst building rapport with them individually. A requirement of the funding is that Councils undertake unofficial counts every two months as well as the formal annual count in November. The outcomes of these accounts are:-

July 2019 –	58 people sleeping rough
September 2019 –	42 people sleeping rough
November 2019 -	24 people sleeping rough (official annual account)
January 2020 -	20 people sleeping rough

Since July 2019 the team has helped accommodate 45 rough sleepers directly with a further 16 accommodated as part of the Housing First pilot. Of these 45 individuals, 43 of them have not returned to sleeping rough. The team have also supported 18 rough sleepers who had no recourse to public funds to gain settled or pre-settled status, this entitling them access to public services. The Rough Sleeper Action Group has been recently established with partners supporting people to move on by discussing the current most entrenched rough sleepers in the City to find individual solutions to resolve their issues. Recognising the team’s success in using additional funds secured in 2019 to provide short term stays for those between temporary accommodation and Housing First flats to avoid them returning to the streets, a further £464,899 has been secured for 2020/21. This will enable the team to build on their success.

The Briefing Note also provided an update on the commissioning of homelessness support contracts which have been awarded as follows for an initial contract period of 01/04/2020 – 31/03/23, with possible extension periods:-

Lot 1 – Salvation Army for complex needs supported accommodation and assertive outreach

Lot 2 – People, Potentials, Possibilities (P3) for family's floating support

Lot 3 – St Basil's for young peoples (18-25) supported accommodation and floating support

Lot 4 – People, Potentials, Possibilities (P3) for older singles (over 25) floating support

Performance indicators, monitoring and contract management provisions have been included in the contract specification/conditions for all of the contracts. All four services will go live on Monday 6 April, 2020.

The Briefing Note also included an update on key areas of work related to the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan.

The Scrutiny Board questioned officers on aspects of the Briefing Note including:-

- Local housing allowance
- Criteria and method for counting rough sleepers and work undertaken to engage with rough sleepers in the City
- TUPE arrangements in relation to staff effected by the new contracts
- Monitoring of the new contracts, including KPI's
- Work undertaken in relation to empty properties
- Number of people assisted with no recourse to public funds
- Work undertaken with residents of Caradoc Hall to make them feel welcome and integrate them into the local community

The Scrutiny Board commended the officers on all of the work undertaken in this regard and asked that their thanks for all of the hard work in this regard be forwarded onto appropriate officers.

**RESOLVED that Scrutiny Board note and welcome the update and progress outlined in the report.**

#### 40. **Work Programme 2019-20 and Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board considered their Work Programme for 2019/20

**RESOLVED that an item on City Fibre and reinstatement of the highways be included on the agenda for the next meeting.**

#### 41. **Any other items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)