

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2017 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent.

Present: Councillor Curran (Chairman); Councillors Campbell, Dixon, Falcon, Martin and K Coleman-Cooke

In Attendance: Councillors L Fairbrass and J Fairbrass

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Hayton and Cllr M. Saunders who was substituted by Cllr K. Coleman-Cooke.

15. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

16. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Campbell proposed, Councillor Martin seconded and Members agreed the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 6 February 2017.

17. ROUGH SLEEPING IN THANET - ISSUES RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Victoria May, Housing Options Manager gave a presentation on rough sleeping in Thanet and issues relating to homelessness and anti-social behaviour. The power point slides being attached at Annex 1 to this minute item.

Mrs May made the following points:

- The Housing Options Team took 881 homeless applications in 2016, 570 of which were from single people, of which 386 were from men and 184 from women. The Council accepted a full homeless duty to 85 people.
- There were an estimated 33 rough sleepers in Thanet.
- Rough sleepers could be difficult to engage with as they often had multiple complex needs such as drug or alcohol misuse, criminality and mental health issues amongst others.
- The Thanet Winter shelter project had been a great success; it opened on 1 December and ran through to the 28 February. Eighty-six referrals were made, 42 people took up the option to stay. The Housing Service would be supporting this for Winter 2017/18.
- The homeless aspire project was a successful engagement initiative aimed at households rough sleeping and had complemented the Winter Shelter well. The objective was to provide progression pathways to rough sleepers including; Education and Training, Gateway and Housing and Health and Wellbeing amongst others.
- The Council had been involved with a number of successful bids for funding including; a £400K grant for a Rapid Response Service in partnership with Dover and Shepway Councils and a £1.5m grant to KCC to a fund Social Impact Bond, covering Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Canterbury.

- The Homelessness Reduction Bill would change the meaning of homelessness and introduce a new duty to provide advisory services. Personal Prevention Plans would be introduced for each individual.
- The future was exciting, but challenging, however the Council was prepared for it as they had a dedicated positive housing options team.

In response to the presentation Members made the following points:

- How did the Housing Options team prioritise people?
- What was the definition of homelessness?
- Could the working party have more information on the Social Impact bond?
- Could KCC move some of the £1.5m grant for the Social Impact Bond if the monies were not spent?
- Would the Rapid Response Service help people Councillors met on the street?
- Many of the homeless people who Councillors met only needed a small amount of help in order to help themselves out of homelessness. Also many homeless people had dogs and did not receive or were not eligible for help.
- How did the Council deal with young homeless people, could the Council use warden assisted HMO's for young people?
- Did Thanet have issues with rough sleepers that frequented Thanet during the summer months?
- It seemed that TDC are offering a gold plated service, what procedures were in place to prevent other authorities outside of East Kent directing their homeless cases to Thanet to access better services?
- Was there any information available on hostels available in the Thanet area?

Mrs May and Bob Porter, Head of Housing made the following points in response to those raised by Members of the Panel:

- The Housing Options team prioritised individuals based on their vulnerability, in accordance with the Homelessness Act.
- People who were defined as homeless also included people that were at risk of losing their home within the next 28 days.
- The social impact bond was £1.5m of funding given to KCC to spend in Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Canterbury. The bid allows assistance to approx. 155 entrenched rough sleepers across these areas. The bond worked on a payment by results basis. The provider of the assistance to the 155 people would only receive payment after the scheme had finished and if some or all of the 155 people were no longer homeless. The aim was based on using the housing first model which provided housing first and support around the person after at their own pace.
- KCC could not use the funding for the Social Impact Bond on services outside of the four areas.
- The Rapid Response Service was designed to prevent people from becoming homeless, so wouldn't be able to help people on the streets who had multiple issues, however those people who found themselves on the street could access the aspire project which was better suited to meeting their needs.
- There would always be complex cases however it was hoped that the Rapid Response Service would be better able to point those in need in the right direction, to prevent homeless people from becoming rough sleepers.
- Unfortunately the Council could not help everybody, as it did not have the resources to do so and had to prioritise those resources that it did have. There were some issues with rough sleepers accessing services if they had dogs or drug or alcohol issues, however the housing first model did address this.
- Sixteen and seventeen year olds underwent a joint assessment by Housing and Social Services if they made a homeless application, but all under sixteens were the responsibility of social services. There was also a project in Ramsgate run by

Porchlight that offered young people the chance to live in a warden assisted house aimed at young single people,

- Penny Button, Head of Safer Neighbourhoods confirmed to the working party that TDC did serve notices on some rough sleepers to move on.
- The TDC housing team had good relationships with its peers across Kent and it was unlikely there would be “homelessness tourism”, however if during the assessment of an individual it emerged that that person had a support network in a certain area then it could be possible that the best course of action for that person would be to move to that area.
- Old Schools Lodge in Margate was a hostel, but was referral only. Porchlight and other homeless shelters were only available in the Canterbury area. Ms May and Mr Porter confirmed that they would produce a card or leaflet for Councillors containing contact details of providers of homelessness support. Ms Button confirmed that Community Safety might be able to assist with funding for the card/leaflet.

The Chairman of the Panel thanked Officers for the fantastic work they were undertaking in the district on homelessness and rough sleeping issues. The Chairman of the Panel also congratulated the Working Party on the excellent work that it had undertaken during the year, looking at a number of important topics.

It was proposed by Cllr Campbell and seconded by Cllr Dixon and Members agreed that:

- 1) The Panel suggests that this presentation be repeated at a future Members briefing.
- 2) That an electronic copy of presentation be circulated to all Councillors.
- 3) That an update regarding the progress of the measures and projects outlined within the presentation be brought back to a future scrutiny meeting in the autumn.

Meeting concluded: 8.25 pm