

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION  
18th April, 2018**

Present:- Councillor Mallinder (in the Chair); Councillors Albiston, Allen, Atkin, B. Cutts, Elliot, McNeely, Reeder, Mrs. L. Shears, Sheppard, Taylor, Vjestica and Walsh and Mrs. L. Shears (Co-opted Member).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Julie Turner and Wyatt.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-  
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Albiston declared a Personal Interest in Minute No. 125 as she carried out support work with Rotherham Rise.

**121. WEBCAST**

A number of Members objected strongly that the meeting was not being held in the Council Chamber and therefore not being webcast. The meeting room was not suitable for those with hearing impairment and there was no microphone.

The Chair explained that the decision had been made in anticipation that several homeless people would be in attendance; not having the meeting webcast would give the opportunity for a full discussion to take place.

**122. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting.

**123. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications to report.

**124. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14TH MARCH, 2018**

Arising from Minute No. 115 (Governance and Performance – Repairs and Investment Contract), it was noted that this had not been followed up.

Arising from Minute No. 116 (Revised Rotherham MBC Code of Practice for Highway Inspection and Assessment), clarification was sought if there was a reporting mechanism in place for when an inspector recommended a dropped kerb but it was not implemented.

The Scrutiny Officer undertook to get an answer to this issue from Colin Knight, Network Manager.

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Arising from Minute No. 117 (Strategic Asset Management Plan and Property Reviews), Councillor Jones cited an example where he had been told that a building in his area was proposed for demolition which was the first consultation he had had.

Arising from Minute No. 118 (Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan), Councillor B. Cutts requested further information regarding the temporary bus interchange and how the location had been agreed.

It was also noted that Rotherham was a child centred borough and not as stated in the Minute.

Councillor McNeely, as a Ward Member, expressed her desire to be part of the Town Centre Marketing Sub-Group. She also felt that it should be "Town Centres" as there was more than one Town Centre in the Borough.

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, be approved as a correct record subject to the clerical correction highlighted above.

(2) That the issue regarding the non-implementation of a Highway Inspector's recommendations be forwarded to the Network Manager for clarification.

(3) That it be ascertained if any further consideration had been given to a member of the Select Commission being involved in the retendering/commissioning process of contracts.

(4) That the issue of consulting Ward Members in relation to proposals for community buildings be referred to the Head of Asset Management for a response.

(5) That the Scrutiny Officer refer Councillor B. Cutts' query regarding the temporary bus interchange to the Director for Planning, Regeneration and Transport.

(6) That the request by Councillor McNeely to be part of the Town Centre Marketing Sub-Group be forwarded to the relevant Director.

### **125. HOMELESSNESS IN ROTHERHAM**

The Chair introduced the presenters who were in attendance to raise awareness of homelessness in Rotherham and the issues that those people in housing need faced. It would also detail what actions were being taken to prevent homelessness in the Borough.

The presenters were:-

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Sandra Tolley, Head of Service, Housing Options  
Sam Barstow, Head of Community Safety, Resilience and Emergency Planning  
Helen Caulfield-Browne, Strategic Commissioner  
Jill Jones, Homelessness Manager  
Shaun Needham, CEO Target  
Gareth Parkin, SYHA  
John McDonnell, Chairman, Shiloh Rotherham

The presentation was as follows:-

Homelessness Prevention Activity in Rotherham

Key Statistics:-

- Universal Credit – no hard and fast predictions
- Main reasons for homelessness
- Temporary accommodation
- Between April 2017-2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018
  - 122 households who were accepted as statutory
  - 714 households were prevented from becoming homeless
  - 484 homeless households on the Housing Register
- Rough sleepers – 2 counted

Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2011-2018

- The themes of the Prevention Strategy
- Loans, rent in advance
- Negotiations with landlords
- Tenancy support
- Pre-tenancy interviews and workshops
- Furnished Tenancies
- Financial Inclusion Team
- Outreach advice – hospital, prisons, Shiloh, rough sleepers

Begging

- Offence under the Vagrancy Act 1824
- Complaints mainly from businesses
- Police operation in November/December 2017 to focus on begging
- Multi-agency day of action 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 (another due in January)
- Staged approach
- 15 warnings, 4 cautions, one summons, 11 referrals made

Anti-Social Behaviour Tools and Powers

- Public Space Protection Orders – proportionate, reasonable appropriate
- Community Protection Notices
- Civil Injunctions
- Section 222 Local Government Injunctions

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### Rough Sleeping

- Official numbers are low
- The act of sleeping rough in itself was not anti-social
- Enforcement is not always the right way
- The behaviours that can sometimes be associated are anti-social and can be dealt with
- The official Rough Sleeper Count – reporting and help available

### Changes to Homelessness Legislation

- The Homelessness Reduction Act – the changes
- Actions take in preparation for new Legislation
- Access all eligible applicants through an advisory service and agree a personalised plan
- Tailored the service to meet the needs of vulnerable people where their problems are “more than just the need for a roof”
- Advice on preventing and relieving homelessness
- October 2018 – new duty on public bodies to notify the local authority if they are aware of someone who is faced with or is homeless

### Homelessness Funding

- Annual cost to run the Homelessness Service = £612,461  
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

#### Burdens Funding

#### The Rough Sleepers

#### Domestic Abuse

2017/18 = £333,636

2018/19 = £314,710

2019/20 = £339,455

### Housing Related Support

- HRS is a preventative programme providing ‘downstream’ cost-effective services and social care

### Housing Related Support Pathways

- Complex Need  
Housing First
- Vulnerable Adults  
Emergency statutory accommodation and support  
Short term supported housing  
Floating support  
Dispersed short term tenancies
- Domestic Abuse  
Refuge  
Floating support
- Young People & Parents  
Emergency statutory accommodation and support  
Short term supported housing  
Floating support  
Dispersed short term vacancies

Housing First

- Unlike traditional staircase approach
- Permanent offer of a home
- No conditions other than maintaining tenancy
- Flexible, person-centred support
- Underpinned by a set of principles
- [www.youtube.com/wth?v=rPbcCA4](http://www.youtube.com/wth?v=rPbcCA4)

Housing First

- Unlike traditional staircase approach
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Housing First – Complex Needs

- Many unable to access or maintain existing provision
- Entrenched, repeat homelessness and health and social care needs
- Acute and expensive public services
- Hard Edges (2015) 58,000 people in the UK with multiple and complex needs
- Strong body of evidence  
Cost effective  
Delivering strong outcomes for people with high support needs

Contact Details

- Reporting a rough sleeper – StreetLink 0300 500 0914
- Homelessness Manager – Jill Jones 01709 255618
- Head of Housing Options – Sandra Tolley 01709 255619
- Head of Community Safety, Resilience and Emergency Planning – Sam Barstow 01709 254387
- Strategic Commissioner – Helen Caulfield-Browne 01709 254208

John McDonnell, Shiloh, gave an overview of the Service

- Drop-in day centre for the homeless and vulnerable needing support
- Christian-based charity that welcomed volunteers and guests regardless of their faith or culture
- Began over 25 years ago by 2 ladies providing soup and sandwiches to the homeless in Rotherham Town Centre
- Provided a free cooked breakfast and lunch every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. for approximately 40-65 guests each day
- Provided shower facilities, facilities to wash and dry clothes and provided clothes
- Moved into new premises at Station Road, Masbrough on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2017 which had a hairdressing salon, dining room and social area,

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outside courtyard, kitchen, medical room, 1:1 room, laundry and showers, classroom and activity rooms and a training room for volunteers/Board Room

- Looking to recruit volunteers for the reception, kitchen, befriender, cleaner, handy person, admin/HR
- In the last week there had been 9 new guests – 3 in temporary accommodation, 2 rough sleepers, 2 recently homeless, 1 sofa surfer and 1 social
- Provided motivational/mentoring
- Housing Service
- Educational Programme

Discussion ensued on the presentations with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Sub-regional housing forum which worked across the Sheffield City Region focussing mainly on housing growth and had held its first meeting. It was hoped to hold a Homelessness Summit in Rotherham
- Crisis UK was launching a Plan to End Homelessness in Britain working across all providers
- There were 486 customers on Universal Credit with an average balance of £656 totalling £318,859. The average for customers not in receipt of Universal Credit was £378. Work was being undertaken to ensure customers understood what Universal Credit was and their responsibility to pay their rent. The Income Team now had 3 Pre-Tenancy Officers who worked closely with Housing Options as well as 8 Tenancy Support Workers who solely supported Council tenants
- There had been 82 Warrants for Eviction issued of which 66 had been carried out. This was relatively low compared to other local authorities
- A Worker had been placed within Children's Services so any family faced with eviction were referred to Early Help
- Often those with rent arrears had a long history of such arrears
- The Authority's 2017/18 target for rent collection had been £84.4M (98.9%) and had actually achieved £83.6M (99.15%). The 2018/19 target had been reduced to take into account Universal Credit
- The Homeless Team worked with private landlords to try and prevent eviction and emphasise that potentially it could offer support with regard to rent arrears

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- In 2017/18 the Authority had prevented 718 people from becoming homeless but had accepted a duty to 122, double the amount in 2015/16
- There were 6,742 people on the Housing Register – 245 in Band 1, 1,684 in Band 2, 1,674 in Band 3
- The Housing Options Team managed a temporary accommodation portfolio. Consideration was being given to a pilot using modular buildings but could potentially be used as crash pads/assessment centre
- Consideration should be given to the use of guest bedrooms in various buildings around the Borough that possibly could be utilised as temporary accommodation
- If evicted from a Council property, the tenant could not rejoin the Housing Register for 5 years. The Homelessness Team would look at applications for any intentionality; the Team had to provide advice and assistance to get customers another home and if intentionality was found that could be through a private landlord
- There was close work with the Income Team to prevent an eviction situation
- Currently once a customer was evicted the Authority did not track them. However, that had changed since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act (3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2018)
- Under the Housing Act a local authority did not have a duty to a customer who was not eligible for Right to Remain in the country and they would be referred to Children's Services/Adult Social Care who would work with them to either try and get them back to their country of origin or look at the Right to Remain. Once someone was eligible for public funds the Team had a duty to them
- Customers with zero income would be referred to the Income Team for advice
- The quality of private rented properties had improved and the turnover reduced since the introduction of the Selective Licensing Scheme
- The Team could signpost a customer to any private rented property but it had to be suitably affordable and energy efficient
- The Income Team had undertaken training on Universal Credit
- Should the quotas in the Housing Register bands be revisited?

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- The slots for pre-tenancy interviews and workshops had been increased. The interviews had been found to be working very well but a review of the workshops was required. It was mandatory to attend and the workshops should take place prior to an offer of property was made. Every tenant had to have an interview whether they were an existing tenant or not; the workshops were for new tenants only
- A review had recently taken place of the Furnished Homes package on offer resulting in a 3 year business plan. Under the scheme, a customer never owned the furniture, however, the new business plan included options for when an individual's circumstances changed. They could return the furniture and it then be sold back to them at a price taking into account depreciation and whether the customer was in employment (because of Housing Benefit rules)
- Discussions were taking place with the Strategic Housing Team and work with private landlords regarding provision of smaller accommodation particularly in light of the Regulations for the under 35's entitlement to Housing Benefit
- Under the Homeless Reduction Act it would be easier to identify "sofa surfers" and gain a better idea of the situation in Rotherham
- External help would be sought with regard to identifying rough sleepers and consideration given to what was required in terms of support
- The staff would question a young person who presented themselves as homeless to obtain a full picture as to why that situation had arisen
- The Housing Team attended a weekly surgery with the Probation Service Team as well as meetings with the Police with regard to customers who might be causing problems. They also visited Prisons and were notified of those who were ready for release. The Team also attended Re-settlement meetings every month
- There had been 15 warnings issued for begging which had resulted in 4 cautions. There was a process, along with the Police, to avoid criminalising someone who was begging e.g. verbal warnings, appropriate referrals into partners, but ultimately action would be taken
- There had been no publicity campaigns relating to the giving of money to beggars. Consideration was being given to a Diverted Giving Campaign which explained to the public the intricacies of begging and that it was far better, if you wanted to give, to do so to a charity rather than individuals on the street

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- The Police and Crime Commissioner’s Domestic Abuse Fund was limited. Discussions were taking place as to whether it could be increased
- Under the Homeless Reduction Act, the Local Authority had a duty to prevent some becoming homeless 56 days before it happened
- In October, 2018 a new duty on public bodies to notify the Local Authority if they aware of someone who was faced with or was homeless e.g. Hospitals, Prisons
- Short term housing related support could be up to a maximum of 2 years
- The Housing First was a one year pilot and would be closely monitored. The model set caseloads of no more than 5 people to allow intensive support to be delivered over 7 days a week. Other Home Support Service models were time limited (usually 12 months) but not everyone’s needs could be met in that time period. Studies showed that it took between 12-24 months for a customer to become a General Needs tenant
- There were 20 places available through Housing First. There was a young person’s pathway
- The housing related support was a provision for the most vulnerable in society; delivery of this different type of support would eventually drive down costs by engaging with this particular cohort
- The Service had been commissioned on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2018, and had already identified 17 people who were constant visitors to the local authority. It was hoped that this approach would break the cycle
- The advantage of working with partners that had their own housing stock was the ability of offering customers other alternatives than the Authority’s stock
- An operational group was being developed consisting of key people including the Police, Mental Health Service. The wrap around support was crucial to give customers the best opportunity
- Shiloh provided assistance for their guests with the completion of forms
- Shiloh now had increased integrated working particularly with Housing Services. However, there was still an issue with Mental Health support

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- The Nurse would signpost guests for such services as Chiropody and Optical but oral hygiene was a problem for this particular cohort
- Shiloh were concerned about what they described as the “second chance” guests who fell below the criteria i.e. had massive debts so would never on their own be able to sort their finances out so would never be able to gain access to Council accommodation. Could a package be put together to address the needs of that guest?
- Shiloh had received Lottery Funding and now employed 2 managers who would carry out assessments of guests and a programme of various models which could be used as per the individual’s requirements

The Chair thanked all the presenters for their informative presentations.

Resolved:- (1) That a progress report be submitted to the Select Commission in 6-9 months’.

(2) That information be ascertained with regard:-

Guest Bedrooms –

- where are these located and
- how many of them are there
- could these be used in an emergency plan situation

Private Rented Sector

- what is the number of properties in this sector in Rotherham ?

### **126. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING - THURSDAY, 7TH JUNE, 2018 AT 1.30 P.M.**

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, commencing at 1.30 p.m.