



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 29th NOVEMBER 2022**

PRESENT: Councillor D Maycock (Chair), Councillors R Claymore, C Cooke, M J Greatorex, J Jones, R Rogers and J Wadrup

CABINET Councillor Alex Farrell

GUEST Terry O'Brien, Heart of Tamworth Community Project

The following officers were present: Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Joanne Sands (Assistant Director Partnerships), Zoe Wolicki (Assistant Director People), Sarah Finnegan (Head of Homelessness & Housing Solutions) and Jo Hutchison (Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer)

**33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Kingstone and Councillor S Smith.

**34 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

*(Moved by Councillor R Claymore and seconded by Councillor R Rogers)*

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

*(Moved by Councillor D Maycock and seconded by Councillor J Wadrup)*

**35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **36 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair thanked Councillor R Claymore for her work on the Committee.

### **37 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC UPDATE 2022**

The Chair introduced the Portfolio Holder for Homelessness Prevention & Social Housing, Councillor Alex Farrell, the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods, Tina Mustafa, the Head of Homelessness and Housing Solutions, Sarah Finnegan and Terry O'Brien, a representative of the Heart of Tamworth Community Project who were at the Committee to provide the Homelessness Strategic Update.

Councillor J Jones joined the meeting at 6.08pm.

The presentation covered the following areas:

1. The national context, including the relevant governmental departments.
2. Definitions of homelessness, including rough sleeping
3. Data regarding homelessness, including the rough sleeper count on 3 November 2022, as well as data on the reasons identified in Tamworth for approaches to the Council. The top five reasons for approaches to the Council were as a result of being asked to leave by friends and family, the end of private rented tenancy, relationship break-ups, domestic abuse and the end of social housing tenancies.
4. Achievements of the homelessness strategy, including the successful delivery of the rough sleeping initiative (July 2021 to June 2022) where 23 clients were assisted. Since the start of the pandemic 143 people were moved into settled and supported accommodation.
5. Winter relief project, in collaboration with the Heart of Tamworth Community Project, which would be supporting the homeless this winter by providing a floating support offering befriending services, weekly surgeries, sign posting, supporting day to day activities, providing places of warmth and linking with other service providers such as Everyone Health, local branch of MIND and the Sacred Heart.
6. Homelessness Hub initiative which would be proposed to Cabinet in February 2023. This would involve the development of housing first to enable tenancies to be sustained, with the outcome being settled accommodation. This was expected to involve partners and stakeholders to provide a tailored service to prevent homelessness.

The Committee sought and received the following clarifications:

1. The reasons for clients refusing help, where it was reported that at times this could be because whilst they present as rough sleeping, this may not be the case or because they want to remain where they are although where this was the case the Council would engage with partner organisations to seek to provide support.
2. Whether the full £100,000 Government funding provided to the Council for the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) in July 2021 was spent as expected, where it was confirmed that this had been the case. It was spent on neighbourhood coaching, mental health worker and a specialist nurse to provide out of hours outreach and included a personal budget to provide

- specific support to rough sleepers. For their work on this RSI the Council was identified as best practice by Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST). An impact assessment was required by the Government and the Council had produced metrics and case studies to complete that.
3. Whether the Council was ready for the coming winter and the expected financial difficulties and the possibility of homelessness figures rising, and how the Council was prepared for this. It was reported that the Council's homelessness work was data driven and this enabled the Council to tailor their strategies accordingly and provide the right resources to tackle the issues which could arise. It was further reported that the Council was expecting an increase in presentations, in line with national figures, and was analysing why people were presenting as homeless, and resources would be kept under review. It was further reported that there was a housing support worker provided by the mental health team as it was recognised that mental health was a factor, and this was in place to help prevent issues from a vulnerability perspective.
  4. The Committee noted the Council's website resources and factsheets which were available and praised their accessibility.
  5. On how the local connection rules applied related to hospital stays, where the Head of Homelessness Prevention reported provided assurance that the team worked with local hospitals at the point of discharge to support such clients on a case by case basis whether clients were council tenants or in private rented accommodation.
  6. On how the rules regarding reasonable living conditions were applied, where the test for homelessness would be where it was if it was unreasonable for that person to remain in that property, and in such cases the Council would look to work with landlords to make the housing reasonable and officers would look at the situation on a case by case basis
  7. Whether the Council had a strategy in place to address the tragic case in Rochdale of Awaab Ishak, where the two year old died as a result of a severe respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his home. It was reported that the Council's Chief Executive had received a letter from the Minister (Michael Gove) and the Council would be responding to that prior to Christmas explaining the Council's strategy and in addition a review was also underway as to how the Council approached any issues in the private rented sector.
  8. How the standards applied to private sector landlords, where it was reported that standards were being developed by Government which would be likely to apply to the private sector (similar to decent homes standards) and that whilst initially it would normally be for the tenant to contact their landlord about maintenance or other issues, the private sector team could intervene and work with the landlord and tenant and the private sector team could take enforcement action against private landlords including issuing advisory notices and condemning properties.
  9. Whether the evaluation figures to show the successes in preventing homelessness could be shared with the Committee where it was confirmed that these were recorded and could be shared.
  10. Whether the funding was in place for the proposals to create a homelessness hub, which it was noted was planned to be broader than current provision. The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods reported that a

two year funding package from Government for homelessness prevention was in place. It was agreed that the broader proposals would be brought to this Committee in January for further consideration prior to a Cabinet decision in February 2023. It was agreed that the success figures would also be provided at that meeting.

The Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder, Officers and the guest from the Heart of Tamworth Community Project (Mr Terry O'Brien) for their work and attendance at this meeting.

The Portfolio Holder, Head of Homelessness Prevention and Mr Terry O'Brien left the meeting.

### **38 RECOVERY & RESET UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Recovery & Reset Programme Director, Tina Mustafa, the Assistant Director, People, Zoe Wolicki and the Assistant Director Partnerships, Jo Sands to the meeting to provide an update on the three following workstreams:

1. SMART Working
2. Customer Services Offer
3. Third Sector & Vulnerability

On the SMART Working workstream the Assistant Director, People reported that this was successfully implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, which was the culmination of an extensive project which involved:

1. A full review of terms and conditions
2. Agreed the definition of a home, site or hybrid worker and agreed the designation of the staff to those three types of worker:
  - Site based – 37.5% (157 staff)
  - Home based – 41% (172 staff)
  - Hybrid – 21.5% (90 staff)
3. A summary of agreements reached with the recognised Trade Unions, and then shared with all employees and consultation commenced. This included 1-2-1 consultation with all staff to implement the new set of terms and conditions and staff designation.
4. Devising a rota for 2 days per month team attendance.
5. Issuing all employees with a new statement of particulars (contract of employment) detailing their designation in advance of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and detailing changes to their individual terms and conditions of employment.
6. Providing an appeals process for employees to appeal their designation.

Following from this, all HR Policies were being reviewed to reflect the new terms and conditions, check for legal compliance and best practice and to ensure the three designations of home, hybrid or site workers were referenced.

It was reported that a six month review was underway which included an 'All Staff' Survey which had been issued on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to obtain feedback from staff on their experience of SMART working. All feedback from this would be reviewed and help to inform building need / space requirements.

The Committee sought clarifications in the following areas:

1. The wellbeing and loneliness aspect of working from home, where it was reported that there was an option for home workers to work from site up to 2 days a week, and the Assistant Director assured the Committee that significant work had gone into considering staff wellbeing and support and the 2 days per month team days aimed to support staff wellbeing.
2. Whether the heating costs being incurred by home workers was a factor being highlighted by staff. The Assistant Director reported that it was too early to know whether this was the case and that home workers were eligible for a home working allowance which reflected the HMRC allowance (when working from home due to COVID). It was agreed that the home working allowance, which was part of the SMART working policy would be circulated to members.

On the Customer Services Offer workstream the Assistant Director, People reported that a face to face service had continued through the Tamworth Information Centre at the Assembly Rooms which enabled the Council to provide direct advice, signposting to Council services and voluntary sector services and to book face to face appointments where necessary. It was reported that the signage at Marmion House had been improved. It was reported that demand from residents was very low.

The Council was able to identify demand hotspots for example when letters regarding council tax had been issued which in turn enabled the Council to ensure staffing levels were right.

The Council continued to assist customers through a range of channels, which in the last year included:

68,000 phone calls  
19,000 emails  
13,000 web chats

The Council's digital offer continued to be developed including the customer portals: My Tamworth and My Housing, and as sign ups to these portals increased, there had been reduction in the number of webchats. It was highlighted that My Tamworth enabled customers to view council tax balance, inform the council about moves in/ out of a property, report street scene issues (clean/ green), and to make a complaint.

The Assistant Director, People, reported that they continued to monitor demand for the services and the impact on customers.

The Committee sought clarification on the plans for a customer facing presence if the Levelling Up Fund application was unsuccessful where it was reported that there would be a requirement to reconsider the previous plans which had been paused awaiting the Levelling Up Fund decision.

On the Vulnerability & Third Sector workstream the Assistant Director, Partnerships reported that this would look at how residents accessed council and partner services. A baseline report was produced and the police definition of vulnerability was adopted; where a person as a result of their situation or circumstances was unable to take care or protect themselves or others from harm or exploitation.

It was reported that there were five streams which were:

1. Financial exclusion
2. Social exclusion
3. Digital exclusion
4. Mental health
5. Housing / homelessness

It was reported that the Council recognise the importance of partner organisations such as Heart of Tamworth and Community Together CIC and other organisations and services, such as Tamworth Advice Centre, Heat Service, and working with mental health teams, such as the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust, which support these strands and which the Council provided funding to.

Once there was further clarity on our front facing offer, a Vulnerability Strategy would be developed to set out areas whether the Council would lead and where the Council would work with partners to deliver. It was expected that there would be funding used from the Shared Prosperity Fund to support the development of this strategy.

The Committee sought clarification on:

1. How commissioned services were reporting back on their work to support the vulnerability strands of work. The Assistant Director reported that these figures would be included as part of the Housing Strategy update which was expected at the Committee in the new year.
2. The CIC Community Together Warmer Places poster and whether this covered all the current provision which it was reported that it did, and included the Tamworth Advice Centre, Beat the Cold, Places of Welcome and covered business as usual places. The Warm Spaces information would be provided shortly and provide additional information.
3. Whether the funding over the next two year period for these services was secure, where it was reported that there was existing funding for the current interventions and that they were secure, however as the Vulnerability strategy was developed, there could be a requirement to look for further funding.
4. How the Council worked with partner organisations when vulnerable residents were identified, where the Assistant Director, Partnerships reported that sign-posting between council officers and partner

organisations worked extremely well to assist and support vulnerable residents.

The Committee thanked the Officers for their update and for the work undertaken. The Officers then left the meeting.

### **39 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair reported that the Committee's recommendation (as below) from 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 meeting, in respect of the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk report, was taken to Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** that the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that it consider whether all public facing staff should complete suicide prevention / awareness training.

At 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 Cabinet meeting, Cabinet agreed:

1. that the recommendation as worded above is referred to the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to expediate suicide and awareness training to all public facing staff as appropriate
2. that all Councillors should receive Mental Health First Aid Training
3. that a session is organised for all Councillors to receive a presentation from the Samaritans to update Councillors on the ongoing work; and
4. to release specific contingency where necessary to allow this training to go ahead.

### **40 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL**

No new items.

### **41 UPDATE ON HEALTH RELATED MATTERS CONSIDERED BY STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Chair reported that he would request a written update from County Councillor T Jay which would be circulated to members.

### **42 FORWARD PLAN**

No further items were identified.

### **43 HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered and updated the Work Plan as follows:

## Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan		
Work Area Themes for the Year		
<b>1. Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>		
Topics	Target Meeting	Additional information
Inpatient mental health pathways and community mental health services pathways		
Substance misuse / addiction		Contact new local service provider
Loneliness / isolation		
<b>2. Homelessness &amp; Housing</b>		
Topics	Target Meeting	Additional information
Housing Strategy – performance reporting	Regular reporting – meeting dates to be confirmed – starting January 2023	Invite Portfolio Holder & Executive Director, Communities, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods / Partnerships
Homelessness Hub	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Homelessness Winter Relief Update	March 2023	To receive feedback on the outcomes in March 2023.
Disabled Facilities Grants – process	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	To understand these Grants and the processes followed from a wellbeing perspective.



<b>Other suggested topics for Committee consideration</b>		
Green and open spaces	28 March 2023 meeting	Assistant Director, Operations & Leisure invited
Attainment and Skills in Tamworth (including young people's experiences)	To be confirmed	Working Group (WG) to be formed – WG Chair - Councillor R Kingstone & D Maycock & others
Safeguarding updates (2 per year)	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2022 & 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	Invitation to Portfolio Holder and Officers
CPR & Defibrillator awareness and community engagement	Targeting Autumn 2022	Liaise with local charity (Have a Heart) Progress within schools in implementing guidance this area
<b>Specific topics to feed in to Staffordshire County Council (separate from main Themes)</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Date of planned Staffs consideration</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
Wider determinants of health in Tamworth, including diet / food vulnerability / healthy eating / social prescribing  Also understanding the role of schools at sixth form, secondary & primary level.		Extend an invitation to voluntary sector to understand current initiatives eg Community Together CIC
Strategic Transformation Programme (STP)		To tie in with County consideration when dates for County consideration known
<b>Possible Working Group topics</b>		
Armed Forces Covenant		Working group to be formed. Cabinet member identified (Cllr T Clements)
Attainment & Skills in Tamworth		WG Chair - Councillor R Kingstone & D Maycock & others
Public Toilets (following full Council referral)		Working group members: Councillors Claymore, Maycock and Wadrup

<b>Upcoming Health &amp; Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Meetings</b>
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Meeting dates:
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24 January 2023
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28 March 2023
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<b>Upcoming Relevant County Council Meetings</b>
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<b>Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Staffordshire County Council</b>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 30 January 2023</li><li>• 20 March 2023</li></ul> |
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In terms of the working groups underway it was reported that:

1. Public toilets - the aim was to bring any recommendations to the Committee from the public toilets working group by the March meeting, with possibly an interim update in January 2023.
2. Migrant travelling community – there was planned to be a cross scrutiny committee working group formed with members of the Infrastructure Safety & Growth Scrutiny Committee.

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Chair