



Borough of Tamworth

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**HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

16 January 2023

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee will be held in **Town Hall, Market Street, Tamworth on Tuesday, 24th January, 2023 at 6.00 pm**. Members of the Committee are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AJS', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

NON CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**
- 3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 14)**
- 4 Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Members' interests (personal and/or personal and prejudicial) in any matters which are to be considered at this meeting.

When Members are declaring a personal interest or personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they have dispensation, they should specify the nature of such interest. Members should leave the room if they have a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they do not have a dispensation.

5 Update from the Chair

6 Responses to Reports of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(Update on responses to the Reports of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee)

7 Consideration of matters referred to the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee from Cabinet or Council

(Discussion item)

8 Update on health related matters considered by Staffordshire County Council

(To receive the Digest from Staffordshire County Council's Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an update from County Councillor T Jay)

9 Delivery of Disabled Adaptations in Tamworth (Pages 15 - 20)

(Report of the Assistant Director, Assets)

10 Update on homelessness data successes and homeless hub (Pages 21 - 28)

(Report of the Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods)

11 Forward Plan

Please see the link to the Forward Plan:

[Browse plans - Cabinet, 2023 :: Tamworth Borough Council](#)

12 Working Group Updates

13 Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Plan (Pages 29 - 32)

To the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Plan

Access arrangements

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FAQs

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To Councillors: D Maycock, R Claymore, C Cooke, M J Greatorex, J Jones, R Kingstone, R Rogers, S Smith, J Wadrup and County Councillor T Jay

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**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 1st 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 1st 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 24th 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 18th 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 10th 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		
1. Mental Health & Wellbeing		
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		
2. Homelessness & Housing		
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 th 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 th January 2023	To understand these Grants and the processes followed from a wellbeing perspective.

Other suggested topics for Committee consideration		
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 th October 2022 & 28 th 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
Specific topics to feed in to Staffordshire County Council (separate from main Themes)		
Topic	Date of planned Staffs consideration	Additional information
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
Possible Working Group topics		
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

Upcoming Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Meetings
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Meeting dates:

24 January 2023

28 March 2023

Upcoming Relevant County Council Meetings
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Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Staffordshire County Council

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 January 2023• 20 March 2023 |
|---|

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.

Chair

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

Report of the Assistant Director, Assets

Delivery of Disabled Adaptations in Tamworth

Exempt Information

Not Exempt

Purpose

This report sets out the proposals and recommendations for the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants [DFG] and Disabled Facilities Adaptations [DFA] from 1st April 2023 when the current arrangements with Millbrook under the SILIS partnership arrangement comes to an end.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The contents of this report are noted.

Executive Summary

The Council has a statutory obligation to deliver disabled adaptations for residents living in Tamworth. Funding is provided each year by Central Government for the delivery of adaptations, this is paid to Staffordshire County Council through the Better Care Fund and is then directly transferred through the various District Councils in order for them to meet their statutory obligations. There is a different route for Council Housing tenants who are not eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant [DFG], instead adaptations to Council houses are delivered through the Housing Revenue Account capital budgets under the Disabled Facilities Adaptations [DFA] programme.

DFG works are currently being delivered through a contract with Millbrook Healthcare which was set up by Staffordshire County Council and is used by six of the eight districts in Staffordshire. This contract comes to an end on 31st March 2023 and a new arrangement is needed for delivery of adaptations from 1st April 2023; this is delivered under the SILIS Partnership banner.

Four of the six districts currently participating in the SILIS Partnership made the decision to take services back in-house through a series of geographically based partnerships. On 17th February 2022 Cabinet approved in principle the pursual of a shared service arrangement with Lichfield District Council with the view that Lichfield District Council would take the lead in the partnership. Work had commenced on the establishment of the shared service with staffing structures, process maps and ICT requirements having been established. Unfortunately, Lichfield District Council appear to have made the decision to deliver a number of services through an arms-length company arrangement and their view was that they would deliver the Disabled Adaptations service through such an arrangement. Legal advice was obtained and whilst the view was that there was nothing preventing the two Councils forming a new arms-length company it was difficult to establish the benefits when weighed against the risks and additional administration involved.

A number of other factors were considered when looking at making use of an arms-length company; of particular concern was the potential for such an arrangement to create a 'two tier' workforce which goes against the current ethos of Tamworth Borough Council. It was also noted that as Tamworth has a smaller DFG budget than Lichfield there was a risk that much of the years' trading for the company would be dedicated to Lichfield whilst costs were still being met by Tamworth.

Following the decision taken by Lichfield to make use of an arms-length company arrangement for the delivery of adaptations it is proposed that the proposal for a shared service arrangement is now discounted and that delivery of the adaptations service be brought entirely in-house and under the control of Tamworth Borough Council.

Since deciding to deliver services in-house as a single authority work has been progressing on the setup of the service. Process mapping has taken place, application paperwork is in late stages of approval, frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems for contractors are progressing and near completion and a framework for Occupational Therapist services is at the late stages of procurement, with Stafford Borough Council leading.

Regular meetings are taking place with the incumbent contractor to ensure that we fully understand the current waiting list and the level of demand that we are likely to receive on 1st April.

Options Considered

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
Traditional Shared Service under Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total cost was assumed to be less than if each authority delivers alone. • Resourcing resilience built-in. • No complex Governance arrangements. • No complex management arrangements. • Greater quantum when looking at purchasing and recruitment. • Not in competition with near neighbour for resources. • Proven track record of delivering shared service arrangements. • Deals with all DFG and DFA works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of direct control over service delivery. • Less control over operating costs. • Governance more complex than retaining in-house. • Financial management complicated by various grant budgets. • More complex management structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreements result in termination of arrangement meaning additional costs for both parties and extended delivery times for customers. • Inability to recruit would leave both authorities exposed to claims. • Changes to funding makes arrangement for one or other party no longer viable. • Inequity in management, operation, or funding of service delivery. • Host is at greater risk due to the responsibilities of employing the staff and delivering the technical functions to the private sector applicants.
Shared Service delivered through jointly owned company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total cost was assumed to be less than if each authority delivers alone. • Resourcing resilience built in. • Greater quantum when looking at purchasing and recruitment. • Not in competition with near neighbour for resources. • Potential for greater flexibility in service delivery. • More flexible when recruiting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of direct control over service delivery. • Less control over operating costs. • Governance more complex than retaining in-house. • Financial management complicated by various grant budgets. • More complex management structure. • Additional complexities of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disagreements result in termination of arrangement meaning additional costs for both parties and extended delivery times for customers. • Inability to recruit would leave both authorities exposed to claims. • Changes to funding makes arrangement for one or other party no longer viable. • Inequity in management, operation or funding of service delivery. • Additional liability for named company directors. • Applicants could choose to go direct to their respective Local Authority which would

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred model for LDC service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • running as a separate registered business. • Costs associated with separate business accounts. • Greater input required at senior level in operating the company as opposed to delivery of services. • Applicants could still opt to make an application direct to their own Local Authority. • Potential for two-tier workforce. • Additional complexities if arrangement needs to be brought to a close. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • then have to resource the application process. • Company would need to ensure no breaches of PCR or any legislation relating to procurement or business activity.
<p>In-house service delivery by Tamworth only</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains direct control over all aspects of service delivery. • Limited Governance required. • Simple organisational structure. • Flexibility to use resources in other areas of the business in line with demands. • Easier to downscale to reflect demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumed to be more expensive to deliver services. • Less resilience. • Competing for resources with near neighbour. • More difficult to upscale to reflect demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to recruit staff to deliver the service. • IT systems not likely to be available at start of contract as supplier is geared to delivery of a single system for shared service.

Resource Implications

There is insufficient capacity within the existing structure to deliver disabled adaptations and as such a new team will need to be established to deliver the in-house service. This will be directly funded through the DFG and DFA capital budget allocations.

TUPE is likely to apply to staff currently working on the contract for Millbrook and arrangements will need to be made to fully understand their contractual terms and conditions and to merge them into the Council's terms and conditions. We have recently received more detailed TUPE information from Millbrook and will be working with them to ensure the smooth transfer of staff. It is anticipated that recruitment into the new roles will commence in February 2023 so that there will be resource in place for the commencement of the contract.

The services of an Occupational Therapist will be required to undertake assessments of applicants for disabled adaptations. Stafford Borough Council is procuring a Framework for these services and Tamworth Borough Council has been named as a participant on that Framework, it is therefore proposed that this Framework be used for the delivery of Occupational Therapy Services. The cost of the Occupational Therapist report forms part of the grant payment.

Tamworth Borough Council along with the other districts in Staffordshire are also signed up to the Independence Brokerage Services CIC; this is a Dynamic Purchasing System for the supply of equipment, services and construction related to the delivery of disabled adaptations and it is proposed that this arrangement will be used for the purchasing of equipment and works for Disabled Facilities Grants; works to Council owned properties will continue to be delivered through existing contracts with Equans and Wates.

An IT system will be needed to manage and track cases; initially it was hoped that we would be able to make use of the Foundations Case Manager IT system, however they are not in a position to deliver within our timescales so we are looking to make use of modules within systems we already have. There will need to be some work done with Millbrook and Foundations to transfer data from existing systems. There will be ongoing licensing costs on an annual basis.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

Disabled Facilities Grants are a mandatory service that the Council has to provide; failure to have arrangements in place could result in the Council being forced by the Courts to provide the service.

A key risk for the Council will be the recruitment and retention of staff to deliver the service. Cost inflation will also mean that more grant applications reach the cap which will result in increased unmet demand for adaptations.

The ever present issue of general underfunding of the service remains although it is understood that there are plans to review the funding calculations used to derive the grants.

Equalities Implications

Disabled Facilities Grants and Disabled Facilities Adaptations are a targeted service only accessible by residents of Tamworth with an eligible disability. Disabled Facilities Grants for children under the age of 18 are not means tested, Disabled Facilities Grants for adults over the age of 18 are means tested; this is set out in the relevant legislation.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

None identified as a result of this decision.

Background Information

This matter has previously been reported to an approved by Cabinet.

Report Author

Paul Weston – Assistant Director Assets

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Homelessness Prevention and Social Housing**Update: Homelessness data and Hub principles.****Exempt Information**

None

1. Purpose

As requested by the Chair of Health & Well-being Scrutiny Committee on [29/11/22](#) – the purpose of the report is to provide additional information on homelessness; specifically,

- A breakdown of the homeless data/prevention figures and reasons for homelessness
- An outline of the key principles proposed for the development of **a homelessness hub** on the Cabinet forward plan for 23/2/23.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Health & wellbeing Scrutiny Committee review the information as requested on homelessness data; including the development of the homelessness hub. Committee recommendations will be used to support the development of the Cabinet proposals in February 2023.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) came into force on 3 April 2018 giving local authorities new homelessness duties. Homelessness is complex and is often considered to be those seen rough sleeping. However, most of the data collected relates to the statutorily homelessness “ i.e. those households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation, and to whom a homelessness duty has been accepted by the local authority”....(DLUHC 2022)¹.

3.2 Such households that approach the local authority are rarely roofless in the literal sense but are more likely to be threatened with losing their home or cannot continue to stay where they are currently are. Local authorities now have a duty to assess whether a household needs help to prevent or relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants. Those that are threatened with homelessness within 56 days are entitled to a full assessment and whether the local authority can retain their current accommodation, provide accommodation, or find an alternative. The full housing “main duty” still applies to those who are “not intentionally homeless” and In priority need”, where a main duty is owed, the authority must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant and his or her household. However, the focus is more on prevention and relief work and assisting households at an earlier stage. To note, “where a person is potentially homeless councils can legitimately suggest solutions other than making a formal homelessness application..” As long as these are appropriate and acceptable to

¹ [Homelessness data: notes and definitions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

the individual and the council does not avoid its statutory obligations. (Local Government Ombudsmen 2011)

3.3 Every quarter, Housing Solutions are required by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to submit data into the government portal known as H-CLIC (Homelessness Case Level Collection). The data also includes case-level data on applicants support needs, ages, genders of their households along with employment and benefit status.

Figures are also collected on the number of households in temporary accommodation on the last day of each quarter as arranged by the local authority, whether that be emergency bed and breakfast accommodation or self-contained units.

As presented at Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny in November 2022², the presentation detailed the number of approaches to Housing Solutions from 2018 to present. (NB: Data is taken from 1st April 2018 upon commencement of HRA to 31st October so 2018 and 2022 are part years)

3.4 Within Tamworth, the top five reasons applicants approach as homeless or threatened with homelessness are: 1) Asked to leave by friends or family, 2) End of private rented tenancy (PRS), 3) Relationship breakdown, 4) Domestic Abuse and 5) End of social housing tenancy.

3.5 Nationally³ the top five reasons remain 1) End of private rented tenancy (PRS) 2) Family or friends no longer willing to accommodate 3) Domestic Abuse, 4) Non-violent relationship breakdown 4) Evicted from supported housing. These are consistent and comparable to Tamworth. Applicants that applied advised during assessment that they had an additional support need, and some had more than one support need. The top five support needs are history of mental health problems, physical ill-health and disability, at risk of/has experienced domestic abuse, young person aged 18-25 requires support and lastly offending history.

4.0 Homelessness Prevention and Relief

4.1. Under the HRA local authorities must have a strategy for preventing homelessness. Tamworth's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy was launched in 2020 to cover the next five years. The strategy must apply to anyone who approaches and not just those who may be classed as "in priority need".

4.2. Under legislation authorities are encouraged to assist those with threatened with homelessness and to relieve homelessness even if there is no duty to secure the applicant accommodation.

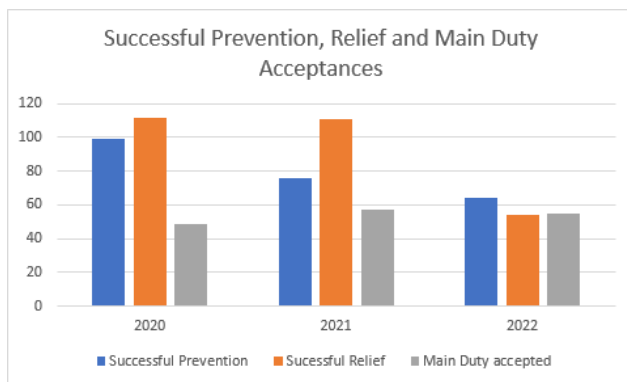
"Homelessness prevention' means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.

'Homelessness relief' is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so. (DLUHC 2022⁴).

² Appendix 1

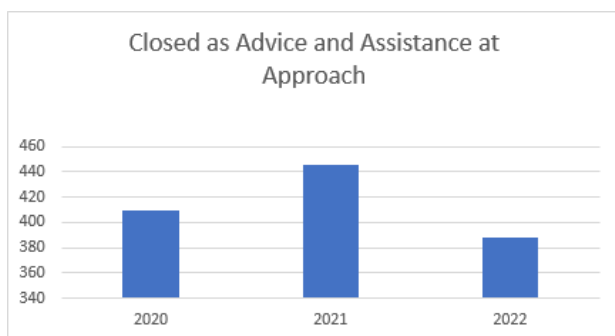
³ ³ [Live tables on homelessness - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/live-tables-on-homelessness)

⁴ [Homelessness data: notes and definitions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-data-notes-and-definitions)



	Total of Successful Prevention, Reliefs and Main Duty Acceptances
2020	260
2021	244
2022	173 as of 31 st Dec

On top of these the service also has approaches that are closed as advice and assistance which can be found below.



	Closed As Advice and Assistance
2020	409
2021	445
2022	388

NB: Based on financial years so 2022 is only 3 quarters.

NB: None of the graphs or figures Should be used to Equate a % from overall approaches due to the complexity of the homelessness journey- as Clients and decisions will cross quarters, the approach would be reported in quarter they first approach, whereas decision are the numbers decided in that quarter which may include approaches from previous quarter and the outcome of recent approaches not yet known as still open

Approaches into the service will always remain higher than the outcomes of those assisted under legislative duties as a high number of cases are closed as advice and assistance before officer's trigger formal duties due to them using early intervention tools, along with some applicants who may not be "Homeless" or "Eligible" as defined by the legislation and quite often Housing solutions officers give full advice and assistance to clients who may not need duties to be triggered therefore not reaching the data provided.

It also shows there is a decrease in request for service which is consistent with national trends as approaches are not back to pre-pandemic levels yet.

4.3 Our performance remains positive and in line with national trends. Using data and analysis from our Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy⁵ there are five key points:

- Tamworth continues to use lower numbers of temporary accommodation (especially bed and breakfast provision) compared to England as a whole – this reflects the emphasis in the strategy of early intervention, using stock owned properties for self-contained accommodation, supported housing options and other prevention strategies.
- Low numbers of repeat homelessness cases that shows the successful impact of our relief activities
- In July 2022 a member from the HAST team from DLUCH completed a visit to Tamworth to discuss a range of issues and the Council's approach to the Homeless Reduction Act. "They observed several strengths during the visit and a commitment to prevent and reduce

⁵ [Housing policies | Tamworth Borough Council](#)

homelessness and improve service delivery was very evident at senior level, including political support for the homeless prevention service, which is backed up by a strong prevention toolkit and some impressive examples of partnership working”.

- Relatively few rough sleepers with little evidence in the data are repeat cases, demonstrating our collaborative work with partners (which was highlighted as a major feature of the strategy). The most recent rough sleeping count (November 2022) recorded two.
- Homelessness acceptance rates up to 2021/2022 are in line with national rates – this shows that we are managing the homelessness crisis adequately.

5.0 Homeless Hub 2023 – 2025

5.1. The concept of the homeless hub has been born out of achieving the Council’s homelessness and rough sleeping objectives as shown in the table below.

The hub is simply to extend our current offer of outreach in the community and to further reinforce our current partnership arrangements such as our winter relief project which runs between 1st December until 31st March with one of our anchor charities. It will be an opportunity for co-location for our hybrid officers and partners in providing surgery type facilities, to maximise and focus on the Council’s prevention and relief percentage figures. It is viewed as an extension to the winter relief work that is already conducted as we seek to vary our front door service offer.

5.2 Key Housing and Homelessness strategic priorities⁶ that support a homeless hub, which if approved by Cabinet in February, will lead to a commissioned partner led service.

Strategic priority	Method	Action	Support
<i><u>Priority One - Prevention and early intervention through working with partners and stakeholders</u></i>	Drop-in service	Advice and support for households and people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping Expand the current service at the Tamworth Advice Centre (TAC) to include mental health support / signposting and extend job and training advice and homelessness prevention support	Will be supported by the homeless hub
<i><u>Priority Two - Develop rapid pathways for rough sleepers</u></i>	Advice and support services	Help and assistance to rough sleepers and vulnerable households to access accommodation and support is fundamental.	Supported by a hub

⁶ [Housing policies | Tamworth Borough Council](#)

		<p>We, therefore, have three specific actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the third sector / voluntary sector (eg Heart of Tamworth and TCIC) • As part of the community safety partnership, make links with the street warden scheme and local policing teams. • Explore the concept of a 'homeless hub' based on our homelessness team and its services 	
<p><u>Priority three: Improve the supply of and access to affordable and supported housing</u></p>	<p>Supported housing / floating support/ housing first principles adopted</p>	<p>Our evidence base shows that homeless households have a diverse range of support needs as well as accommodation.</p> <p>We, therefore, will investigate with our partners the potential of putting together a hybrid package of support to help households better access move on accommodation</p>	<p>Supported by the hub and will link to tenancy ready schemes and winter relief projects already operational</p>
<p><u>Priority four: Offer a high quality and innovative service to homeless households and those threatened with homelessness</u></p>	<p>Customer access to services</p>	<p>The overall theme of this action is to support vulnerable users to access services so as to (i) prevent homelessness and (ii) relieve homelessness.</p> <p>The specific actions include:</p>	<p>Links to reset and recovery programme and part of broader customer services approach</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting vulnerable households on digital inclusion so as to directly access / use, for example, e-forms and customer portals. • Work with third sector organisations to support their vulnerable customers to access services online and in person 	
<u>Priority five:</u> <u>Improve health and well-being aspirations</u>	Addressing mental health issues	With mental health being a high support need that most clients approach with, we will enhance our joint working with partners (MPFT), MIND on addressing this issue	This could be widened through the hub

5.3 The overall aim of the priorities collectively is to tackle homelessness amongst households and individuals through direct services and/ or developing new ways of working with partners to generate housing and accommodation and access to service. The homeless hub will be a variation to the front door offer. Its key principles will be:-

- Early intervention and prevention of homelessness
- Access to advice services and sign posting, referrals to appropriate agencies.
- Support services that promote new ways to prevent homelessness and access accommodation.
- Provide weekly outreach/satellite surgeries.
- Family drop-in surgeries and advocacy support to all
- A service to show how working with partners in local government and voluntary and community organisations enables comprehensive provisions of services for those most in need.
- To ensure those accessing are already aware of the Council's prevention toolkits, such as housing solutions fund, rent in advance, deposit schemes, landlord reconciliation, home visits, the council's allocations policy (Band 2 for rough sleepers and band 1 for 6 months mediation for parental evictions).
- To increase the Council's prevention figures via commissioned activity which will coincide with Council's longer-term R&R plans for its permanent customer services arrangements.
- Duration will be for two years to start April 2023 until the end of the Strategy March 2025. (Funding has been identified for these two years and renewal will be based on delivery and continuing availability of resources).
- The Council will revise a service specification to be commissioned following recommendations and Cabinet sign off.

6.0 Resource Implications

- 6.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. Details of the funding for the commissioned homeless hub service will be built into the Cabinet report in February 2023 with regard to the proposed hub. The budget allocation within the homeless prevention grant is estimated to be around £60kper annum.

7.0 Legal/Risk Implications Background

- 7.1. Homelessness decisions are strictly controlled through legislation and therefore subject to judicial review if service users believe the Council has not adhered to guidance and this could be escalated through County Court

8.0 Equalities Implications

- 8.1. All activities to give due consideration to the Councils Equality and Diversity Policy-Making Equality Real in Tamworth (MERIT)

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 means that the council now has additional duties to prevent homelessness and we must help to secure accommodation for all eligible households, regardless of whether they are in a 'priority need' category. This has increased the help given to single people and those without dependent children, especially single men, who were previously not in a 'priority need' category. They are still not necessarily in a priority need category, it is just that priority need is not a consideration when we are trying to prevent or relieve homelessness, except in determining eligibility for temporary accommodation.

However, it is noted that the immigration status of some households may restrict the assistance that they can be offered under the homelessness legislation.

9.0 Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

- 9.1. Housing Solutions is a statutory function with the Council and is bound by the legislation of Housing Act 1996 Part VI and Part VII

10.0 Background Information

10.1. ***National Headlines from the Annual Statistical Release for April 2021 – March 2022:***

278,110 households were assessed as owed a prevention or relief duty in 2021-22, up 2.8% from the previous year but 4.0% below the pre-COVID level in 2019-20.

133,460 households were owed a prevention duty, which is an 11.3% increase from 2020-21 but 10.6% below the pre-COVID 19 level in 2019-20. The increase from 2020-21 includes:

- a more than double increase (up 121.1%) in threatened homelessness due to the service of a Section 21 notice to 19,790 households, which largely reflects the removal of restrictions on private rented sector evictions from May 2021.
- a 23.6% increase in households with children owed a prevention duty to 56,340 households
- Local authorities made 62,060 main homelessness duty decisions in 2021-22, and accepted a main duty to 42120 households, a 6.4% increase on the previous year. This reflects an increase in the number of households with children owed prevention and relief duties in this period.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

Appendices

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Plan

Work Plan		
Work Area Themes for the Year		
1. Mental Health & Wellbeing		
Topics	Target Meeting	Additional information
Inpatient mental health pathways and community mental health services pathways		
Substance misuse / addiction	22 February 2023	Extend invitation to Assistant Director, Partnerships
Loneliness / isolation	22 February 2023	
2. Homelessness & Housing		
Topics	Target Meeting	Additional information
Housing Strategy – performance reporting	Regular reporting – meeting dates to be confirmed – starting 22 February 2023	Invite Portfolio Holder & Executive Director, Communities, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods / Partnerships
Homelessness Hub	24 th January 2023	Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Homelessness Winter Relief Update	28 th March 2023	To receive feedback on the outcomes in March 2023.
Disabled Facilities Grants – process	24 th January 2023	To understand these Grants and the processes followed from a wellbeing perspective.

Other suggested topics for Committee consideration

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 th October 2022 & 28 th 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

Specific topics to feed in to Staffordshire County Council (separate from main Themes)

Topic	Date of planned Staffs consideration	Additional information
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

Possible Working Group topics

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)	Target 24 th January	Working group members:

	2023 meeting	Councillors Claymore, Maycock and Wadrup
Migrant travelling community		Members to be identified together with members of the IS&G Scrutiny Committee

Upcoming Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Meetings

Meeting dates:

24 January 2023

22 February 2023

28 March 2023

Upcoming Relevant County Council Meetings

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Staffordshire County Council

- 30 January 2023
- 13 February 2023
- 20 March 2023

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