



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11th JULY 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor C Bain (Chair), Councillors R Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, S Daniels, C Dean and D Maycock

County Councillor County Councillor T Jay

CABINET Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Samuel Smith

The following officers were present: Anica Goodwin (Executive Director Organisation), Tina Mustafa (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), Joanne Sands (Assistant Director Partnerships), Sarah Finnegan (Head of Homelessness & Housing Solutions), James Hazlehurst (Sports Development Officer) and Leanne Costello (Democratic and Executive Support Officer)

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor J Jones and Councillor J Oates.

14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st June 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor S Daniels and seconded by Councillor R Claymore)

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

16 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

None.

17 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None.

18 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL

None.

19 UPDATE ON HEALTH RELATED MATTERS CONSIDERED BY STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor T Jay confirmed that there had not been any meetings since his last update.

He apologised for his absence at the previous meeting as he had only received an invite on the day.

20 ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Assistant Director, Partnerships introduced the report which is being presented to Cabinet on the 20th July 2023 to reaffirm the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant following the Armed Forces act in 2021.

It was highlighted that recommendation number 5 should state 2024 not 2023.

The Portfolio Holder commented that taking on the role of Champion was an honour following his experience first hand in the armed forces.

The Committee acknowledged that a number of members had Armed Forces experience and therefore recognised the importance of this item.

The Committee made then made following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. Clarification over how we meet our Commitment to give Armed Forces personnel extra weighting for housing with the reduction in housing stock? The Assistant Director Neighbours confirmed that households containing one or more former veterans or member of the Armed Forces is currently 7.3%. The Council has seven active applications on the Housing register from former Armed Forces personal who are prioritised in line with the allocations policy and Government guidelines as well as being supported in line with the Covenant. It was confirmed that data does not show that there is an issue with the onward housing solution.
2. Why there were no communications around Armed Forces Day last month? The Assistant Director offered apologies and confirmed that this

was an oversight but that this is now on the calendar for next year and that the flag on Marmion House will be the Armed Forces flag on that day.

3. Further Clarification was sought around the employment recognition scheme. The Assistant Director confirmed that by signing up to the Covenant the Council were awarded bronze award status. It was confirmed that all HR policies are compliant and give due regard to Army Service and ex personnel. Information is available on the Website for resettlement teams. The Assistant Director Confirmed that there is further work to carry out.
4. The Committee expressed their support for the delegation of Councillor Cooper as the Champion. It was highlighted that under Section 2.7.9 of the Constitution that a Member of the Executive could not be appointed a Member Champion and was suggested that instead it could be requested that this be written into his Portfolio.
5. It was requested by the Committee that when the report returns to the Committee that there are examples/evidence of positive action which have been taken to support Veterans within the community. The Assistant Director confirmed that this is the intention upon bringing the report back to Committee, this was reinforced by the Portfolio Holder who confirmed he would ensure that examples of positive action would be included in future reports.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

1. Recommended the re-affirmation by the Council to the re-signing of the Armed Forces Covenant in February 2023 endorsing the Covenant Duty for recommendation to Cabinet on 21st July 2023.
2. Endorsed commitment to the Staffordshire County Council plan.
3. Considered the Tamworth Borough Council Armed Forces Covenant work plan.
4. Endorsed the recommendation to Cabinet to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Entertainment and Leisure (as named Armed Forces Champion) and Assistant Director Partnerships to oversee the associated work plan.
5. Endorsed the recommendation that a report on progress will be considered on an annual basis to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee commencing April 2024.

(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor C Dean)

21 HOMELESSNESS HUB

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods Tina Mustafa and the Head of Homelessness and Housing Solutions, Sarah Finnegan introduced a presentation to the Committee to provide an update on Housing Solutions and the Homeless Hub.

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and The Head of Homelessness and Housing Solutions highlighted the following information –

- Ensuring access to Council services including housing and adequate supply of affordable housing is at the heart of Homelessness.
- The Council have approximately 1000 people per year presenting as homeless which is a fairly static figure. Around 47% of those cases are closed with advice and assistance without the need for triggering a formal homelessness duty.
- The team were appointed to a taskforce due to their best practise around homelessness by the homelessness advisory support team.
- figures in Bed and Breakfast remain low (single figures or 0) and the last Rough Sleeper count was 2 and are recognised for using creative and innovative approaches to homelessness.
- The challenges faced from neighbouring authorities including Birmingham, and the need to continue working with partners and invest in Third Sector as well as the need to continue to monitor external pressure such as impact of the War in Ukraine.
- Homelessness services costs are just over 1 million pounds per year but over half of this is met from a range of Government grants.
- The Data within the presentation shows that strategy is making a difference.
- The data shows that the ‘reason for approaches’ and ‘support needs’ have remained the same but the numbers have reduced significantly showing that strategic interventions including partnership working are having an impact.
- The principles of the Homeless Hub that were agreed at Cabinet on the 16th March.
- Evidence base shows that homeless household have a range of support needs as well as accommodation needs and therefore they are working with partners to provide a hybrid package of support.
- The aim of the service to support those in Tamworth who may have accessed the service.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

- Whilst the Government pledge is to eliminate rough sleeping by 2027 this does not take into account those that chose to live that way without removing their freedom.
- Rough sleeping is not a major problem in Tamworth, historically Sofa Surfing is a greater problem, and therefore hidden homelessness is where efforts should be concentrated. Officers confirmed that Tamworth does not have an entrenched rough sleeper issue, but there is an issue with begging which presents as homelessness and this is being looked at as part of the strategy.
- Clarification with regards to slide on page as to what 'left institution' covers. Officers confirmed that this related to leaving prison on a mental health institution.
- Aspirationally, how we would work with other authorities? Officers confirmed that this is recognised as important but that there is a varied response from other authorities. Local partners within the county are keen to work together and that best practice is currently shared.
- Clarification around how we deal with those who are evicted from supported housing, that are usually vulnerable? Officers confirmed that they work with individuals and partners to ensure this as is a last resort, as if an individual is judged as made intentionally homeless then there is no onward statutory requirement to provide support. That as part of their Personal Housing Plan they do work with partners beyond the area and will work with individuals to find the best outcome.
- Whether other Councils who do not run an in house out of hours service, that Tamworth do, are they still directing individuals to Tamworth? Officers confirmed that Tamworth do still offer and 24/7 in house service but that they are very robust in challenging those that make contact from out of the area and redirecting them. Many other councils do outsource this service this is something that this is in the early stages of being looked at, but no decisions have been made.
- It was commented that a Councillor had accessed the service to support a family and that the service had worked to resolve the situation quickly.
- More information was requested around priority 3, 'to improve access and supply of affordable and supported housing'. It was confirmed that the Homelessness Strategy identifies the need for new and affordable housing and that this manifests itself in a number of ways; looking at solutions with other providers; how we use our existing stock and how we target our acquisitions within current resources.
- It was asked whether the condition of the temporary accommodation properties could be improved? The officers said this would relate to the lettable standard and would be fed back to the Assistant Director, Assets.

The Portfolio Holder was invited to sum up the item. He reinforced the importance of focussing on the prevention method, maintaining expansion on mental health services and commented that homelessness is an evolving situation with changing legislation and refugee situations that needed to be kept on top of.

The Chair commented that there were no recommendations but asked the. The Committee acknowledged that they were happy with the report.

The Chair thanked the Officers for attending and invited them to leave the meeting.

22 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee did not identify any new items.

23 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

The Committee discussed the items that were previously on the workplan and asked the Vice-Chair to update them on these.

It was confirmed that the Migrant Travelling Community item was looked at by the Committee in the previous year but that the work had been completed.

There was another item on the plan related to Attainment and Skills in Tamworth. Councillor Daniels volunteered to liaise with Councillor Kingstone who had raised this item for an update.

24 HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

The Chair asked for the Workplan to be added as a major item at the next meeting.

25 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider excluding the Press and Public from the meeting by passing the following resolution :

“That in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meeting and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, and Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public”

RESOLVED: That members of the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(Moved by Councillor T Clements and Councillor D Maycock)

Councillor Cook gave his apologies and left the meeting at 19:05

26 ANKER VALLEY SPORTS AND COMMUNITY COMPLEX 3G

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Entertainment and Leisure to detail the work to date and the decisions required in order to progress the grant claim in order to deliver the proposed Football Foundation/Football Association project.

RESOLVED: That Committee endorsed the contents of the report and the five recommendations for Cabinet

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:50

Chair