

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Councillor M Specht (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, N Clarke, T Eynon, G Houlst, P Purver, V Richichi, A C Saffell and S Sheahan

In Attendance: Councillors J G Coxon, R Johnson and J Legrys

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R D Bayliss

Officers: Mr G Jones, Mr C Lambert, Mr M Murphy, Mr D Scruton, Mr L Sebastian and Mrs R Wallace

52. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2018 - 2022

The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager presented the report to Members.

The Chairman asked how many cases of Homelessness there was currently in the district. The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager reported that the service dealt with approximately 200 cases per year and the levels were relatively low compared to neighbouring authorities. As he did not have the information at hand, it was agreed to provide the current number of cases outside of the meeting.

Councillor R Ashman felt that homelessness was being dealt with well in the area and he was aware of the support being provided by the Salvation Army. He thanked officers for a good comprehensive report that covered all types of homelessness.

In response to a question from Councillor V Richichi regarding rough sleepers, the Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager explained that there was an annual check undertaken in association with other authorities and support services to assess the number of rough sleepers in the district. He confirmed that there was one case identified last year and that person had since been found a home. He explained that the service was very proactive in identifying vulnerable people in the district but circumstances did change on a daily basis, therefore he was constantly trying to develop new ways to work with those at risk of homelessness and that was the aim of the strategy.

Councillor V Richichi asked if parish councils were aware of the support available. The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager stated that all organisations, including Parish Councils that worked with vulnerable people were aware of what support was available and the team worked proactively with them.

In relation to the authority gaining the bronze homelessness standard in 2017, the Chairman asked for the figures for the different categories for a clearer understanding. The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager agreed to provide the information outside of the meeting.

Councillor S Sheahan commented on the recent increase in rough sleeping nationally in the cities due to people traveling in from smaller towns. He asked if information was shared between authorities to try to stop people going into the cities. The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager confirmed that there were links between authorities and rough sleepers were referred back to their home towns wherever possible. He added that the team did everything they could to stop people moving towards the cities but if they did leave the area, they were ready to accept them back when required. Councillor S

Sheahan felt it would be useful to have a log for these cases so that rough sleepers' movements could be monitored. The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager reported that the authority had signed up to an agreement to contribute to a national database to track people's movements and therefore a better provision of support.

Councillor T Eynon was aware that local landlords were unwilling to accept tenants in receipt of benefits and one of the reasons for this was the difficulty in obtaining insurance policies. She asked if the council was willing to look into insurance indemnity options to support landlords when accepting tenants in receipt of benefits. The Head of Housing and Property reported that there was a rent deposit scheme available for private landlords and officers would continue to promote it. He agreed to look into insurance options for private landlords.

In response to a request from Councillor G Hoult, the Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager gave an overview of the legislation surrounding the prevention of homelessness and outlined the council's timeline for dealing with people who were homeless.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor G Hoult and

RESOLVED THAT:

Comments made by the Committee be presented to Cabinet when considering the report at its meeting on 5 March 2019.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm