

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC GROWTH, COMMUNITIES AND HEALTH) COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny (Economic Growth, Communities and Health) Committee held in the Coltman VC Room at the Town Hall, Burton upon Trent on Thursday 21st March 2019.

Present:

Councillors A Johnson (Chairman), E W R Barker, R A Faulkner, D Florence-Jukes, Mrs V J Gould, S A Hussain, C B Jones, Mrs J A Killoran, S McGarry and S McKiernan.

Officers Present:

The Communities and Open Spaces Manager, the Programmes and Transformation Officer and the Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms A J Legg, B G Peters, Mrs L Shelton and P Walker.

114/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations at the commencement of the meeting.

115/19 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business for consideration at the meeting pursuant to Rule 12.

116/19 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st January 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion	Those voting against	Those abstaining
Councillor E W R Barker		Councillor C B Jones
Councillor R A Faulkner		
Councillor D Florence-Jukes		
Councillor Mrs V J Gould		
Councillor S A Hussain		
Councillor A Johnson		
Councillor Mrs J A Killoran		
Councillor S McGarry		
Councillor S McKiernan		

117/19 **CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE 2018/19 QUARTER THREE**

The report of the Head of Service (Sal Khan) on the update on progress towards achieving the “Promoting Local Economic Growth” and “Protecting and Strengthening

Communities” priorities as set out in East Staffordshire Borough Council’s Corporate Plan was considered. The following appendices had been circulated with the report for the meeting:

- Appendix 1: comprehensive data on the “Promoting Local Economic Growth” and “Protecting and Strengthening Communities” Corporate Indicators;
- Appendix 2: comprehensive data on the benchmarking exercise co-ordinated by East Staffordshire Borough Council.

Councillors noted that out of the 122 targets, 14 contributed to the “Promoting Local Economic Growth” Corporate priority. Of these 14 targets, 11 were green status, 0 were amber status, 1 was red status, 1 was not yet due to be reports and 1 had been deferred and that of the 12 live targets 91.67% were green status, 0 were amber status and 8.33% were red status. Councillors noted that out of the 122 targets 50 contributed to the “Protecting and Strengthening Communities” Corporate Priority and of these 50 targets 48 were green status, 1 was amber status, 0 were red status and 1 was not yet due to be reported and that of the 49 live targets 97.96% were green status, 2.04% were amber status and 0% were red status.

An opportunity for questions followed.

NOTED.

118/19 **SCRUTINY REVIEW – PLASTIC RECYCLING**

Councillors noted that there was currently no further update on the review.

NOTED.

119/19 **EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS**

Councillors received for information a list of public Executive Decision Records.

NOTED.

120/19 **QUESTIONS**

Three questions had been received from Councillor D Florence-Jukes prior to the meeting. A copy of the questions and the responses given by the Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness) are appended to these minutes.

Chairman

Question from Councillor D Florence-Jukes

1. The Deputy Leader for Housing and Homelessness declares her satisfaction that the 2018 rough sleeper count for the whole of East Staffordshire of 11 people is an accurate number. The Deputy Leader also stated that the YMCA Night Shelter can accommodate up to 20 individuals each night. Will the Deputy Leader appraise this committee on how many of the 11 rough sleepers within this Borough are using or have used the Night Shelter and for how many nights.

Response from the Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness)

Please note in answering this question I have felt it necessary to also provide suitable context and background information so that the response is appropriate.

For the purposes of a Rough Sleeper Count it is not necessary to personally identify the rough sleepers by name; to identify that a person is sleeping rough is sufficient. Counters do seek to collect personal details (name, date of birth), but the rough sleeper is not obliged to provide them. If the rough sleeper refuses to give their personal information, the counters will still record the person as having been seen to be sleeping rough, and will note demographic information based on their observation including gender, nationality, and ethnicity where possible. Further details on the requirements around counting an individual as a rough sleeper is available on the Homeless Link website at (www.homeless.org.uk)

The recording sheets from the Count contain the details of seven rough sleepers which would be readily identified if they had utilised the Night Shelter. From this record, it is possible to identify five of the seven as having used the night shelter on a combined total of 196 nights until the morning of 10 March 2019.

It is important to note that Night Shelters will frequently accommodate the vulnerably housed rather than just rough sleepers, including those who are informally lodging or relying on the hospitality of others. This is a trend that is well recognised within the homelessness field, and was anticipated prior to investing in Night Shelter provision this winter.

Question from Councillor D Florence-Jukes

2. This Council made a significant contribution of £20k towards the running of the Night Shelter this winter. Will the Deputy Leader appraise this committee on attendances at the Night Shelter in terms of how many individuals are using the shelter each night, whether they are from within the Borough and how many nights each individual is using shelter.

Response from the Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness)

Please note in answering this question I have felt it necessary to also provide suitable context and background information so that the response is appropriate.

The contribution of £20k made by the Council to facilitate the operation of the Night Shelter this year has now been **fully reimbursed** by the MHCLG through the Cold Weather Fund. The total cost of operating the Night Shelter for four months is approximately £60k with the remainder of the funds having been secured from other sources.

The Night Shelter has been utilised by 120 individuals up to 10 March 2019, with a nightly average occupancy of 15 individuals. Of the 120 individuals presenting at the night shelter, 88 have stayed for less than 10 nights in total. The average occupancy by individual is 12 nights, with four individuals having utilised the Night Shelter for 70 nights or more.

Of the 120 individuals; 66 people were verified as being from the borough, and 54 individuals could not be verified (16 of whom stayed for one night only). The test in homelessness is known as 'Local Connection'. Further details are available on the Government website (www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities). The figures on Local Connection (LC) are confounded due to the large cohort of EU nationals that have been utilising the Night Shelter, many of these individuals have not had a fixed address that would readily satisfy the LC test based on residence. 'Normal residence' for the purposes of LC does not require a fixed address, and therefore it is possible to acquire LC through informal lodging arrangements that can be very difficult to prove. Equally, in order to reconnect someone to another area, the Council would need to be able to demonstrate that the individual had a LC with another borough. Other than two isolated cases the Council has not identified inward migration from neighbouring areas to access the Night Shelter.

Question from Councillor D Florence-Jukes

3. Will the Deputy Leader appraise this Committee on the criteria the YMCA has adopted for those wishing to use the Night Shelter.

Response from the Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness)

Please note in answering this question I have felt it necessary to also provide suitable context and background information so that the response is appropriate.

The Night Shelter is open to anyone over the age of 18 years with a local connection to East Staffordshire. There is a general expectation that guests will conduct themselves in way which does not cause distress or alarm to other guests and staff. It is also not permissible to bring alcohol, drugs or weapons into the premises; or to leave and come back once the guest has signed in. Guests who are asked to leave the Night Shelter are able to return the following night if they are willing to abide by these general rules, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The YMCA will only accept referrals from East Staffordshire Borough Council. Housing Options have informed other councils that they are unable to refer into the Night Shelter in Burton and will need to secure their own alternative provision. The YMCA are welcoming to guests who access directly; they collect standardised information at the point of entry to the Night Shelter to aid guest support, monitor occupancy and outcomes. A member of the Council's Housing Options team attends guest support sessions every Thursday to facilitate 'move-on', and identify options for those attending including reconnection to another area if appropriate.