

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Communities and Neighbourhoods Transitional Committee

### Meeting held 15 March 2022

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Garbutt (Chair), Sioned-Mair Richards (Deputy Chair),  
Abtissam Mohamed, Joe Otten and Andrew Sangar

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ben Curran, Karen McGowan, Sophie Thornton and Paul Wood.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 15 February, 2022, were approved as a correct record.

#### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

5.1 There were no public questions or petitions received from members of the public.

#### **6. FOOD POVERTY**

6.1 The Chair recommended that this item be withdrawn due to the absence of the Partnership Manager, Policy and Improvement who was currently unwell.

6.2 Members made various comments as follows:-

- The Deputy Chair reported of concerns from both S2 Foodbank and S6 Foodbank regarding an increase in clients seeking benefits and/or debt advice. Demand on the related advisory services was expected to increase as energy prices continued to rise.
- Councillor Otten was aware of a client of the Grace Food Bank (Lowedges)

who was living in temporary accommodation in the area and had to fund their child's bus travel to a school in High Green.

- It was noted that, at the Full Council meeting of 2 February, 2022, the Council had resolved to reinstate the Food Poverty Working Group and expand its remit to cover all elements of rising living costs and to formulate an action plan to tackle the crisis.

## **7. ISSUES REFERRED FROM/TO LOCAL AREA COMMITTEES**

- 7.1 Deborah Glen, Policy and Improvement Officer, confirmed that there had been no items received.

## **8. SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

### **8.1 Private Sector Leasing Scheme and Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme**

- 8.1.1 Following the meeting of the Committee on 10 February, 2022, Deborah Glen had received the following written update from the Lead Officer:

- Any issues arising with asylum seekers should be directed to Beth Storm (Communities), who leads the work liaising with the Home Office's nominated Asylum Accommodation Contract provider (Mears) on its provision within the city. Any asylum seeker supported by the Home Office will be entitled to accommodation and support from Mears.

Individuals who are rough sleeping who have no recourse to public funds are currently supported by Housing Solutions under their 'Rough Sleepers Winter Plan' and are currently placed in hotel accommodation. Whilst accommodated, people are given support to find legal advice to help them seek their status or be clear on their future options. To date, there are 11 individuals being supported and on average we have seen a need for approximately 8 individuals requiring this support at any one time. There is no legal requirement to offer accommodation, but it has been strongly encouraged by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities during the course of the pandemic, with some additional funding made available for this. The service has recently applied for further funding for the following 3 years (April 2022 onwards) for a limited amount of support for rough sleepers who fall into this category and expect to hear the outcome of this funding in April/May 2022. The support given by the service has seen improvements on the number of individuals rough sleeping in the city, and numbers are remaining low at present – even seeing a 'zero' count in recent weeks.

The Housing Solutions service works with all rough sleepers to find long term solutions to their housing situation but cannot provide or source longer term housing to these individuals whilst they have no recourse to public funds. However, the temporary placements have been ongoing throughout the pandemic to ensure that they have been protected from the risks of the

pandemic, and the winter weather.

The lead officer in Housing Solutions is Zoe Young. Zoe is off ill currently. David Wilkinson is covering immediate priorities while Zoe is off.

8.1.2 Members made comments as follows:-

It was expected that refugees from Ukraine would be arriving in Sheffield and it was important to ensure that safeguarding and support was put in place for all those that may have suffered harm whilst fleeing conflict. The support needed was expected to be wide-ranging and would require adequate resourcing. It was anticipated that this would form part of the work programme for the relevant subsequent committee.

**9. FINAL REPORT ON WORK PROGRAMME**

9.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer (Deborah Glen) submitted a report containing an activity report which set out the topics and activity of work the Committee considered in this Municipal year, 2021/2022. She noted that the two working groups that had yet to complete their work would report their findings into the new committee structure.

9.2 **Resolved:** that the Committee:-

- (a) note the content of the report;
- (b) give thanks to the Policy and Improvement Officer for her efforts in preparing this final report; and
- (c) give thanks to the Governance Committee for their work and commitment into putting in place the new committee structure.