

BOROUGH SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 22nd January, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr A.R. Newell (Chairman)
Cllr R.L.G. Dibbs (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Liz Corps
Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr B.A. Thomas

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr T.D. Bridgeman and Cllr S.J. Masterson.

15. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th November, 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

16. **ADDRESSING LOCAL ISSUES OF STREET DRINKING, ROUGH SLEEPING AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE BOROUGH**

The Panel welcomed, John Halfacre (Temporary Chief Inspector) and Phil Mayne (Sergeant) from Hampshire Police; Caroline Ryan (Community Safety Manager); Suzannah Hellicar (Housing Options Manager); Simone Gleed and Tony Keall (Society of St. James); Tina Harvey, Kirsty Quinn, Faye Thorpe and Chris Nyamunga (The Home Group); and, Lesley Herniman and Tracey Ashton (The Vine), who had been invited to the meeting to give presentations on activities and measures being taken to make positive changes in the Borough around the issues of street drinking, rough sleeping and associated behaviours.

The Panel was advised of the current position in the Borough, and in particular the situation in Aldershot Town Centre. It was noted that the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) were now in place in each of the two towns. The PSPOs allowed the Council and the Police to enforce acts of anti social behaviour within the exclusion zones. Civil injunctions had been placed on some offenders, which had been undertaken by the individuals, however, should these restrictions be breached the offender would be taken to court and dealt with appropriately. In addition, a number of ancillary measures were being considered to combat and deter nuisance; these included demountable cameras to help deter criminal activity and the Positive Change Campaign – to encourage the public to give donations to appropriate charities. The Safer North Hampshire Partnership also worked across Hampshire to share problems and identify best practice.

Chief Inspector Halfacre advised on the work being carried out by the Police. It was reported that Operation Cadbury had been instigated to assist with the situation in the town centres, the idea of which was not to punish people, but to refer them through the appropriate services. However, if behaviours fell below appropriate levels individuals would be prosecuted according to the law. The Panel was advised of Section 35 dispersals, new legislation which had replaced Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO). New Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) placed both positive and negative demands on individuals, if these were breached three times the individual would be required to go back to court for further sentencing. It was reported that three of the prolific offenders were currently in prison and one had recently been released.

The Panel was advised on what the Housing Options Team were doing to help address the issues. Ms. Hellicar reported that a partnership approach was being taken to help solve the problem through early engagement with individuals at risk of homelessness. A "Hub" Event was held on a weekly basis to bring the homeless together with agencies who could offer a one stop process for accessing services and housing support. It was felt important to assist individuals at an early stage to try and prevent the situation escalating. It was noted that the implementation of Universal Credit could have an impact on the levels of homelessness and the situation would be monitored closely. The Panel was also advised of the Homelessness Reduction Bill which had been implemented to allow all individuals at risk the same level of advice and prevention. In response to a question, it was advised that the option of "housing first", where individuals were placed in housing first before any support work took place, would be investigated as this had proved successful in other areas.

The Society of St. James representatives explained its work, in particular around the North Lane Lodge site, a wet hostel that had been created in collaboration with the Council. North Lane Lodge was a refurbished Air Cadets hut on ex-Military of Defence land. The refurbishment had created a hostel for homeless people, willing to engage, and consisted of nine small rooms, a communal area, break out rooms and laundry space. The expected lifespan of the facility was three years. The Lodge had been created to tackle issues around rough sleeping and street drinking and to provide access to accommodation to those that faced barriers accessing supported housing. The male only facility was staffed seven days a week and had 24 hour call cover. As part of the project, the Lodge offered access to life skill courses, such as cooking, painting, woodworking and fitness, and support services like counselling, and support sessions on substance abuse, mental health issues, budgeting and benefits. It was reported that since February, 2017 the Lodge had housed 15 residents, 11 of which had been sleeping rough, 13 who had mental health issues and 14 who were active drug/alcohol users. Of the 15 residents it was noted that one individual had been given a custodial sentence, two had abandoned the project and a further two had been given a "notice to quit". However, three residents were currently in the process of moving on to more independent living and three more had been identified as "ready to move on". To assist with the "moving on" process it was noted that the Society of St. James acquired properties, such as their site on Victoria Road, Aldershot due to open in February, 2018. These properties were shared houses with access to support and intervention.

The Home Group reported on the outreach work they carried out within the Borough. It was noted that two outreach workers worked within the town centres, providing familiar faces to the ones who were street attached/homeless. The process of supporting these individuals included, identification through 'Streetlink' an online tool to report rough sleepers and outreach work and an assessment of the situation, considering safeguarding for all and taking a person centred approach to each case as every individuals' needs were different. Outreach work would continue until the individual was willing to engage. The Panel noted the 'no second night out' approach which had been put in place to avoid people sleeping rough for more than one night at a time. This initiative was aimed at those sleeping rough for the first time when emergency accommodation could be provided via local authorities or local night shelters. Another initiative taken by the Home Group was to engage with individuals at risk of homelessness before their release from custodial sentences; this helped prevent crisis situations and in some cases being sent back to prison. It was advised that all the people homeless/street attached in Rushmoor had access to benefits, but still chose to sit on the streets and beg; in some cases, individuals could earn up to £100 a day.

The Panel noted the new holistic approach that The Vine was taking to help combat homelessness. Initiatives included advice and support with benefits, budgeting and housing issues, counselling, drugs and alcohol support and a range of stimulating leisure activities including art. It was noted that there were two outreach 'Vine' centres in the Prospect Estate, Farnborough and at Aldershot Park, Aldershot both funded by Vivid Housing, which ran alongside the main site in Station Road, Aldershot. It was reported that individuals felt comfortable within the environment provided by The Vine and within that setting they were able to access support and advice.

The Panel discussed the presentations and **ENDORSED** the approach being taken through joint working with multiple agencies across the Borough.

17. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted the current work programme.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

CLLR A.R. NEWELL (CHAIRMAN)
