

Notes of the meeting of the **HOMELESSNESS PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 6 November 2019 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor D P Murphy

Councillors: P M Brivio
N S Kenton
S C Manion
H M Williams

Also present: Councillor S S Chandler

Officers: Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)
Head of Finance and Housing
Housing Options Manager
Senior Housing Options Officer
Democratic Services Officer

57 APOLOGIES

It was noted that there were no apologies for absence.

58 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members appointed.

59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

60 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

61 HOMELESSNESS PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Senior Housing Options Officer (SHOO) presented the report, explaining that there had been 137 people in all types of temporary accommodation as at September 2019, with an average stay of 130 days. Referring to the charts, Members were asked to note that the majority of families were housed in self-contained accommodation. Rent arrears was an issue because of problems with Universal Credit and housing benefit. However, Officers were working closely with East Kent Housing on recovering these debts. In response to Councillor H M Williams, it was reported that the arrears on income due on the Council's properties had reduced to 2.38% in September.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

62 ROUGH SLEEPING AND FUNDING BIDS UPDATE

The Housing Options Manager (HOM) presented the report which provided details of rough sleeping counts and an update on bids made for funding from central

Government. Officers were due to meet the adviser from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government the following week, and would take on board any suggestions made for further funding opportunities. It was clarified that temperatures did not have to fall below the threshold for three consecutive nights to trigger the Severe Emergency Weather Provision (SWEP). The HOM advised that the night shelter was good value for money and provided a valuable alternative to buying B&B or temporary accommodation.

It was agreed to note the report.

63 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business on the grounds that the items to be considered involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

64 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN

The Head of Finance and Housing introduced the report which updated Members on the Council's delivery of affordable housing. It was reported that the Whitfield Phase 1A project was dependent on Southern Water delivering a drainage solution before the road could be constructed. The interim housing unit projects were now being progressed as separate cases.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

65 PROJECTS UPDATE

The Head of Finance and Housing advised Members that it had not proved viable to progress a social lettings agency. Approximately ten projects were being progressed, with offers accepted and purchases being completed. Councillor S S Chandler commended the Council's purchase process which was robust.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.29 pm.