

COUNCIL MEETING – 28 JANUARY 2020

REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

13 January 2020

Present: Councillors Graves (Chair), Bone, Maguire, Patel, and V Waters.

Also present: Miss K Denton (Assistant Director), Mrs V Jessop (Assistant Director), Mrs G Chapman (Principal Community Support Manager), and Mr S Whiteley (Electoral Services Team Leader).

(Councillors Carr, Ekins, Emerson and Griffiths attended as observers. Ms G Ager (Tresham College) attended for item 4; Sergeant Stephens (Northamptonshire Police) attended for item 5).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aslam and Lloyd.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that there were no declarations of interest.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019 be confirmed and signed.

4. PRESENTATION FROM TRESHAM COLLEGE

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to introduce the presentation from Tresham College. The chairman invited Ms G Ager to deliver the presentation.

Ms Ager thanked members for the invitation and provided some background to the Bedford College Group (BCG), which Tresham College joined on 1 October 2017. She outlined the priorities for North Northamptonshire, including the new campus in Wellingborough that she assured would be open in September 2020.

BCG was also looking to expand the offering of higher education facilities to learners in North Northamptonshire, with no current dedicated university in the North Northamptonshire area.

Ms Ager went on to discuss some of the challenges facing the new campus, primarily around communication to ensure that the public were aware that the new campus was opening and the curriculum being offered; acknowledging that details were due to be included in the next council newsletter The Link.

Members discussed options and events that BCG could attend to promote Tresham College, alongside the current arrangements with Northamptonshire

County Council to deliver learning to residents with special educational needs, and how to encourage both young adults and adult learners.

Ms Ager closed by explaining the work undertaken by BCG with employers and identifying learning opportunities for new employees and trainees.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

5. PRESENTATION BY NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE

A member of the public made a request to speak on this agenda item and did so prior to the report being received by the committee.

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to introduce a presentation from Northamptonshire Police relating to the work carried out in support of the local community safety priorities. The chairman invited Sergeant Stephens to deliver the presentation.

Sgt Stephens outlined some recent local and neighbourhood policing operations and the impact of other incidents on the day-to-day policing of areas in the borough and wider North Northamptonshire.

The operations outlined by Sgt Stephens each had a specific focus, including organised drug, gang and knife crime in specific areas, and forced-entry burglaries in the run up to the festive period.

Sgt Stephens went on to explain the crime prevention work being undertaken in the borough, such as working with primary schools to prevent children becoming involved in crime and holding events in supermarkets to outline simple crime prevention techniques to residents in the local area.

Members discussed the impact of operational policing on day to day policing, particularly in more rural areas, alongside work being undertaken to deal with antisocial behaviour across the entire borough.

Members thanked Sgt Stephens and Northamptonshire Police for their community safety work throughout the borough.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

6. PRESENTATION BY THE HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE - PERFORMANCE

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to introduce the presentation by the council's housing options service. The chairman invited Mrs V Jessop, Assistant Director, to deliver the presentation.

Mrs Jessop outlined the current structure of the Housing Options service, allowing for dynamic assessments of applications and highlighting how beneficial it had been to have additional funding provided to source officers

with previous experience of working in larger urban authorities as part of the team.

She went on to explain the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act, implemented on 3 April 2018, some of the stages of the process for dealing with homelessness applications and the work undertaken by officers to ensure that cases were dealt with as efficiently as possible.

Mrs Jessop closed the presentation by outlining the number of people (both single and families) in temporary accommodation from the commencement of the Homeless Reduction Act and the work that had been undertaken to reduce the numbers of people in temporary accommodation, which had significant positive financial impact on the service and council.

Members discussed the presentation, with particular praise to the housing team for achieving the lowest levels of occupancy in temporary accommodation for three years.

Members asked if there was work undertaken with those being moved out of temporary accommodation to ensure they were given supported and ready for tenancies, and if there was anything else that could be done to help to support individuals further.

Mrs Jessop confirmed that both the council and housing associations undertook work with the individuals on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they were adequately supported throughout the housing process. She also explained that the delivery of social housing was key, and that the council had some promising developments in Stanton Cross and Glenvale Park.

She closed by saying that whilst she was confident that the ongoing developments would continue to ensure a quality service would be delivered to residents, the establishment of a housing revenue account would allow for the council to establish its' own development of social housing and help meet the demand.

Members thanked Mrs Jessop for the presentation and requested that she return the thanks of the committee to the housing options team.

It was proposed by Councillor Bone and seconded by Councillor Maguire that the committee recommend to resources committee that a housing revenue account be established for the council.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the presentation be noted;
- (ii) resources committee be asked to consider the option of establishing a housing revenue account for the council.

7. PERFORMANCE: COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – 1 APRIL 2019 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The annexed circulated report of the assistant director was received to inform the committee of the council's performance, including Wellingborough Norse, during the first half of 2019-20 in handling customer feedback, including complaints which have been referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The assistant director advised that there were no significant areas of concern, and that of the four complaints submitted to the LGSCO, only one was investigated and no fault was found with BCW.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 8:35pm.