

## **BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

### **RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held: 3rd September 2019**

**Present:** Councillor Duncan Bain (Chair)

Councillors Ash Davies, Jim Hakewill, Mick Scrimshaw and Mike Tebbutt

**Also Present:** Martin Hammond (Executive Director)  
John Conway (Head of Housing)  
Heather Jackson (Senior Electoral Services Officer)  
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

#### **19.RD.8 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jenny Henson and Greg Titcombe.

#### **19.RD.9 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING TO BE APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD AND SIGNED BY THE CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **19.RD.10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **19.RD.11 THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE TO ASK MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT IF THEY WISH TO SPEAK ON ANY PUBLIC ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

None

#### **19.RD.12 POLLING PLACE AND POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW**

A report was submitted that sought comments from members in relation to the ongoing polling place and polling district review ahead of

the meeting of Executive on 18<sup>th</sup> September.

The meeting heard that the consultation period had now closed, with the report having been taken to various committees. Responses and feedback received was included as an appendix to the officer report.

Members pointed out that some polling stations needed improved signage from the main highway for voters to find them more easily.

It was requested that the list of polling places and polling districts be included as part of the Executive papers.

**RESOLVED** that the comment above be noted.

### **19.RD.13      TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

A report was provided as requested by the Committee at its meeting 25<sup>th</sup> June that provided further information on the financial effectiveness of the Council's temporary accommodation (TA) policy.

The meeting noted that the Council used a range of TA options and as pressures increased from the number of homeless households seeking assistance, the number of properties being used increased. It was heard that there were currently 234 households in TA, up from 127 in March 2018 and just 20 in March 2015. Members noted the rapidity of this rise in TA usage.

The Council had adopted a Temporary Accommodation Policy in September 2018 to allow for systematic management of TA applications and to ensure that accommodation was allocated transparently, fairly and took individual household needs into account. It was considered that this policy had been a success, with few households located outside the Borough and only then for specific reasons. KBC had minimised the use of B&B and nightly paid accommodation by making increasing use of its own housing stock and also by acquiring properties on the private market.

It was reported that although Wellington House was no longer available to use, the Council was in dialogue with the owners as to future of building. This committee's concerns about the loss of this facility, as expressed at its last meeting, would be reported to the Executive Committee in October, with a view to securing a replacement facility in some way.

The financial impact of the rise in TA usage was significant, with the outturn for 2018/19 being £1.2m. The budget for 2019/20 would be £800,000 providing for an estimate of 190 households across the financial year. Although pressures were considerable, the introduction of the TA Policy allowed the budget to stretch further than it had previously with the reduction in nightly paid accommodation.

The meeting heard that a Member Information Session on the subject of homelessness had been arranged for 4<sup>th</sup> November.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to:-

- The original homelessness budget for 2018/19
- The average cost per household in TA for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the estimated forecast for the remainder of the year should trends continue
- The financial benefits in using HRA stock for TA above other forms of accommodation
- Average lengths of stay for households in TA
- National TA figures

It was heard that a number of answers to these questions would be supplied outside the meeting or at the Member Information Session in November. Members heard that there was a clear financial benefit in utilising Council housing stock as TA as it generate income as opposed to expenditure on nightly paid accommodation.

Cllr Scrimshaw proposed that a special, single-item meeting of the Committee be convened to further discuss the issue of homelessness, with interested parties including Accommodation Concern as well as private landlords being invited along to provide evidence.

*(voting on the motion – for 2; against 3 – the motion therefore fell)*

**RESOLVED** that members noted the current position in relation to the financial effectiveness of the Council's temporary accommodation policy.

**19.RD.14 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted with the addition of an item in relation to Eco-bricks.

It was requested that a briefing note be sent to all members to provide an update in relation to Electric Vehicle Charging-points in the Borough.

*(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.11 pm)*

*Signed.....*

*Chair*

DJP