

PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 18 January 2024 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.45

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Nigel Simpson – in the Chair

Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Imade Edosomwan
Councillor Trish Elphinstone
Councillor Andy Graham
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Nick Leverton
Councillor Alison Rooke
Councillor Michael Waine

**Other Members
in Attendance:**

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council

Officers:

Karen Fuller, Corporate Director for Adult Social Care
Andrew Chequers, Deputy Director: Housing and Social
Care Commissioning
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Wellbeing and Housing
Cherwell District Council
Peter Moore, Programme Manager Oxfordshire Out of
Hospital Care Team
Lorraine Henry, Service Manager Safeguarding, DoLS &
Mental Health OCC
Steven Turner, OSAB Strategic Partnerships Manager
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
Samia Shibili, Commissioning Manager Homelessness
OCC.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

39/23 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2023-24 COUNCIL YEAR (Agenda No. 1)

Cllr Simpson noted that Cllr Povolotsky was no longer a member of the Committee and thanked her work for her work as Vice-Chair.

Cllr Elphinstone proposed that Cllr Edosomwan be elected Vice-Chair and he was seconded by Cllr Leverton. There being no other nominations, Cllr Edosomwan was elected for the remainder of the 2023-24 Council Year.

40/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 2)

Cllr Bearder, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, had sent his apologies owing to a personal commitment.

41/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 3)

There were none.

42/23 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 4)

The committee **AGREED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2023, subject to the following amendments:

- Page 2 Cllr Tim Bearder, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, “attended to present” to be changed to “briefly introduced”
- Page 3 “It was emphasised that safeguarding was everyone’s concern,” “concern” to be substituted for “responsibility”

Matters arising

- The Committee reiterated its request for the scrutiny map and the Learning from Deaths of those with a Learning Disability Report referenced in the report presented in November.
- The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care reiterated her offer to organise a visit to the Luther Street Medical Centre or to shadow any of her teams. Members were encouraged to contact the Scrutiny Officer to request this.
- The Committee noted that the update on Family Safeguarding Plus would be more appropriately be provided to the new Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee but would welcome it being so.
- Cllr Waine reminded members that he and Cllr Elphinstone had surveyed a great deal of education data which the new Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee would do well to consider.

43/23 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 5)

The Scrutiny Officer advised that, whilst there had been applications to address the Committee, those who had applied had been advised to address the newly-established Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee which was due to meet immediately afterwards instead.

44/23 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING IN OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee requested an update on work surrounding Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Oxfordshire. In the absence of Cllr Tim Bearder, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, introduced the report. She was accompanied by Karen Fuller, Corporate Director for Adult Social Care; Andrew Chequers, Deputy Director: Housing and Social Care Commissioning; Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Wellbeing and Housing Cherwell District Council; Peter Moore, Programme Manager Oxfordshire Out of Hospital Care Team; Lorraine Henry, Service Manager Safeguarding, DoLS & Mental Health OCC; Steven Turner, OSAB Strategic Partnerships Manager Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board; and Samia Shibili, Commissioning Manager Homelessness OCC.

The Leader highlighted that, whilst the Council had no statutory duty to look after homeless people, the Council had a long history of working with its partners to provide these services. The report outlined the steps that the commission had taken to manage the many challenges facing it. Cllr Leffman thanked the Council's partners for their attendance at the meeting and for their collaborative working to improve the situation for homeless people in Oxfordshire.

The Corporate Director and the Deputy Director provided an overview of the steps undertaken to tackle homelessness, illustrated by a PowerPoint Presentation. The Prevention of Homelessness Directors Group (PHDG), comprised of various partners, including OCC, District and City Councils and the NHS, had produced a comprehensive action plan, The Oxfordshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan (2023 – 2026), which had seven key strands:

- Accountability
- Accommodation & commissioning
- Proactively prevent homelessness.
- Timely move-on
- The right home in the right place
- Delivery of Service - Rapid response to rough sleeping
- Focus on the person not the problem

The Corporate Director emphasised the complexity of the issue of homelessness, as an individual's homelessness could have multiple causes and, in addition, the majority of homeless people were adults with capacity to make decisions that could be considered unwise. The system-wide response in Oxfordshire had sought to tackle this complexity.

In response to the presentation, the Committee discussed multiple issues which included:

- The effectiveness of the system-wide approach and how the system allowed flexibility for individual cases. The system had worked hard for honesty, transparency and trust between its member organisations. The Multi Agency Risk Management Process (MARMP) allowed reflection on the functioning of the system and provided learning opportunities. The system had flexibility built in as, given that service users could decline the services offered, it was

important to meet people's individual needs and not insist on pushing them through rigid procedures. Problems were approached in a way to suit the needs of the service users and not to suit the bureaucratic needs of professionals. The collaborative process between the partners allowed a forum to offer support to individuals who did not fall neatly under one service area or another, and relevant data about an individual was shared between services so that professionals had a clear understanding of their needs. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) identified cases to ensure that the lessons shared across organisations were being acted upon and were resulting in the expected improvements.

- The empowerment of service users to identify and encourage their talents. Several of the charities involved in the Oxfordshire system offered workshops and programmes to empower homeless people, and sought to develop their employable skills and give them the opportunity to give back to their communities.
- Early intervention for people leaving prisons. Aspire, the charity which was one of the partners in the Oxfordshire Homeless Alliance, offered supported housing for prison leavers, as well as offering a support plan to ensure success for ex-offenders.
- Groups that did not qualify for support under the system. All rough sleepers across Oxfordshire would meet the requirements for the pathway and were entitled to receive immediate support. Whilst some people might have chosen not to engage with services, the multiple agencies that offered them support would have exhausted all options before they disengaged. A legislative framework, including the Care Act and Human Rights Act, established what obligations the Alliance had towards homeless people.
- Cooperation with a similar alliance in Plymouth. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care visited Plymouth and had a good discussion which improved the work done following the Safeguarding Adults Review. The Commissioning Manager, Homelessness OCC, also intended to visit Plymouth to have a dialogue about their scheme.
- The 27 step-down beds available across the county. These beds were specifically for respite for people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness and leaving hospital. There were 12 of these beds in Banbury and 15 in Oxford and were for temporary use.
- The participation of people who had previously experienced homelessness. People with experiences of homelessness attended the Homelessness Alliance as well as other groups and their input was invaluable to ensure the Alliance fulfilled its goals.
- The impact of competition for housing. The situation had become more complex due to changes in models to migrant and asylum-seeking dispersal. The Alliance frequently discussed how capacity would be found in the system to satisfy the competing demands. All the district housing teams were working

on a case by case basis. The benefit of the system-wide approach was that channels of communication were open to ensure available capacity was filled.

- Working with private landlords to provide housing to people who breach housing conditions. The Alliance could have robust conversations with service users who breached housing conditions and were at risk of eviction but ultimately people could make their own choices and it was not always possible for them to remain in private accommodation. However, each district council had a tenancy support officer who worked with landlords when people were not meeting conditions and ensured that they exhausted all opportunities for support.
- The report was commended for its clarity and accessibility.
- The roles of Independent Scrutineer and Quality Assurance Officer had been introduced to ensure learning was shared across the organisation.
- The Corporate Director agreed to provide a written answer to a question regarding the impact of section 21 evictions on homelessness numbers.
- The Alliance had a sizeable budget and was focused on how to maximise the funds available. The council partners were not in a position to provide additional funds for this area so the priority was for the commitments made to be made to work as best as possible.
- Access by members of the alliance to data and information. There was lots of communication between members and cases are handed along the system with the relevant information within GDPR restrictions.

Action: The Corporate Director would provide information to the Committee on the numbers of section 21 evictions that had resulted in homelessness.

The Chair remarked on the evident trust between the alliance members and commended the importance of their working together. The Committee resolved to **NOTE** the report.

45/23 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(Agenda No. 7)

The Chair confirmed it would be helpful to have a separate meeting to consider the work programme for the Committee going forward.

46/23 ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda No. 8)

The Scrutiny Officer advised that he was working to update the action and recommendation tracker as some of the actions and recommendations now pertained to the Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

47/23 RESPONSES FROM CABINET

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee resolved to **NOTE** the response from Cabinet.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing