

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
Held in the Council Chamber, Follaton House, Totnes, on
THURSDAY, 5 October 2023**

Panel Members in attendance:			
* Denotes attendance		Ø Denotes apology for absence	
*	Cllr B Cooper (Vice-Chairman)	Ø	Cllr S Jackson
*	Cllr S Dennis	Ø	Cllr L Lawford
*	Cllr A Dewynter	Ø	Cllr P Munoz
*	Cllr N Dommett	*	Cllr S Penfold
*	Cllr T Edie	*	Cllr A Presswell
*	Cllr J Hawkins (Chairman)	Ø	Cllr M Steele
*	Cllr G Yardy (substituting for Cllr Lawford)		

Other Members also in attendance either in person or via Teams:
Cllr Brazil and Cllr Steele (on MS Teams)

Item No	Minute Ref No below refers	Officers in attendance and participating
All		Director of Strategy and Governance, Principle Housing Officer and Senior Democratic Services Officer

O&S.07/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

O&S.08/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but there were none made.

O&S.09/23 PUBLIC FORUM

In accordance with the Public Forum Procedure Rules, the Chairman informed that no questions had been received for consideration.

O&S.10/23 HOMELESSNESS AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Lead Executive Member for Housing, Environmental Health and Licensing reported on the shortfall in affordable housing and the increase in rent for rental properties. It was further reported that preventing homelessness was a statutory duty and need for temporary accommodation was rising and this was in line with national trends. SHDC owns 8 properties and looking to increase this to 11 properties.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The 8 properties owned by SHDC comprise of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom properties in across the district.
- They looked at the cohort and areas with the highest housing need when looking for suitable properties. Historically in Dartmouth properties were used the least.
- When people present as homeless and have health issues, they would inform the local GP to provide additional support. With regard to the individual in Dartmouth would have to investigate.
- The KPI on % of cases where homelessness was prevented. This could be through support to remain in their property or find alternate accommodation to move into before they have to leave their current home. For example; paying off arrears, mediating with landlord or family members, supporting access to alternate housing with rent in advance or deposit. The national average for cases where homelessness is prevented is around 40%. SH achieves around 55-65% and those people we do not prevent from becoming homeless are supported on an ongoing basis. We aim to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- Historically, it was very unusual for people to stay in temporary accommodation for more than 6-9months. However, the length of time has increased over the past 12 months due to the housing crisis.
- If a family made homeless, they would work with the family to achieve the best outcomes and undertake an assessment of their needs and the offer of accommodation has to be reasonable.
- There had been in an increase in the number of nights people in temporary accommodation and this pressure was increasing but was dealt with efficiently and promptly.
- The housing team also have a social lettings enterprise who manage properties through SHDC and offer lower rents. The aim of the scheme is to increase the number of affordable private rented accommodation
- They report on Government returns and the real focus was to stop people from becoming homeless and this was increasingly difficult to stop and the KPI was a good indicator for success rates.

It was then:

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the update on Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation.

O&S.11/23 TASK AND FINISH

The Chair reported that that the following task and finish groups would be convened, and membership sought via the Leaders of each of the political groups:

- SW Water - To establish SHDC's statutory powers and how they could be implemented and SW Water's capacity to service drains and homes adequately on new housing developments.

- Fusion – to identify any issues to be addressed prior to the February meeting.
- Planning Enforcement – request from the Executive.

O&S.12/23 **ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

The Committee agreed the following item to be added to the work programme:

- Executive Forward Plan as a standing agenda item.

The Committee also requested:

- An informal meeting to be set up on KPIs before next meeting in December.
- A list of outside bodies list funded by SHDC.

(Meeting started at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.15 pm)

Chairman