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Rutland County Council

Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP.
Telephone 01572 722577 Facsimile 01572 758307 DX28340 Oakham

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A meeting of the **PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL** will be held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on **Thursday, 24th November, 2016** commencing at 7.00 pm when it is hoped you will be able to attend.

Yours faithfully

Helen Briggs
Chief Executive

Recording of Council Meetings: Any member of the public may film, audio-record, take photographs and use social media to report the proceedings of any meeting that is open to the public. A protocol on this facility is available at www.rutland.gov.uk/haveyoursay

A G E N D A

APOLOGIES

1) RECORD OF MEETING

To confirm the record of the meeting of the Places Scrutiny Panel on 15 September 2016 (previously circulated)

2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Regulations, Members are invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have and the nature of those interests in respect of items on this Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them.

3) PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

To receive any petitions, deputations and questions received from Members of the Public in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 217.

The total time allowed for this item shall be 30 minutes. Petitions, declarations and questions shall be dealt with in the order in which they are received. Question may also be submitted at short notice by giving a written copy to the

Committee Administrator 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

The total time allowed for questions at short notice is 15 minutes out of the total time of 30 minutes. Any petitions, deputations and questions that have been submitted with prior formal notice will take precedence over questions submitted at short notice. Any questions that are not considered within the time limit shall receive a written response after the meeting and be the subject of a report to the next meeting.

4) QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

To consider any questions with notice from Members received in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule No. 219 and No. 219A.

5) NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

To consider any Notices of Motion from Members submitted in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule No. 220.

6) CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE PANEL FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

To consider any matter referred to the Panel for a decision in relation to call in of a decision which relates to this Scrutiny Panel's remit and items on this Agenda.

SCRUTINY

Scrutiny provides the appropriate mechanism and forum for members to ask any questions which relate to this Scrutiny Panel's remit and items on this Agenda.

7) QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

To receive Report No. 191/2016 from the Director for Resources
(Report circulated under separate cover)

8) QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

To receive Report No. 194/2016 from the Chief Executive.
(Report previously circulated under separate cover)

9) SCRUTINY PROJECT: POVERTY IN RUTLAND

To receive Report No. 214/2016 from the Director for Places.

- Homelessness
- Domestic Abuse

(Pages 5 - 18)

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS AND TOPICS

10) SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2016/17 & REVIEW OF FORWARD PLAN

To consider Scrutiny issues to review.

Copies of the Forward Plan will be available at the meeting.

11) ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

To receive any other items of urgent business which have been previously notified to the person presiding.

12) DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

18th or 19th January 2017 - Budget

Thursday 9th February 2017

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DISTRIBUTION

MEMBERS OF THE PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL:

Mr J Lammie (Chairman)	
Mr E Baines	Mr N Begy
Mr O Bird	Mr W Cross
Mr J Dale	Mr A Mann
Mr M Oxley	Mr A Stewart
Mr K Thomas	

OTHER MEMBERS FOR INFORMATION

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PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL

24 November 2016

POVERTY SCRUTINY PROJECT

Report of the Director for Places (Development & Economy)

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	<p>Cllr Tony Mathias, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Places (Highways, Environment, Transport and Community Safety) and Market Towns</p> <p>Cllr Oliver Helmsley, Portfolio Holder for Resources (excluding Finance), Culture, Sport & Recreation, Tourism and Housing</p>	
Contact Officer(s):	Paul Phillipson, Director for Places (Development & Economy)	Tel: 01572 722577 pphillipson@rutland.gov.uk
	James Faircliffe, Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer	Tel: 01572 758238 jfaircliffe@rutland.gov.uk
	Hugh Crouch, Community Safety Manager	Tel: 01572 758164 hcrouch@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Panel:
1. considers the topics and related issues/questions covered in this report;
 2. identifies any further information or work it may wish to undertake;
 3. authorises the Chair to produce a written report of findings to feed back into the overall project.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Commission has agreed to undertake a review of Poverty in Rutland.

The project objectives are:

- To develop an agreed definition(s) of Poverty in Rutland;
- To develop a Council policy in the form of a White Paper to be approved by Full Council that will outline for Rutland how the Council will act to positively impact on poverty within the County.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Further to the initial workshop attended by Members on 13 September 2016, a list of areas was highlighted for further investigation by individual Scrutiny Panels. The following areas were identified for the Places Scrutiny Panel to take forward:

- Housing / homelessness
- Domestic abuse
- Transport (which will be covered at a later meeting of the Scrutiny Panel).

Family breakdown was also raised, which is sometimes connected with the first two issues. This report provides some information in relation to those areas.

2.2 Scrutiny Commission have agreed the following timetable for this review:

Stage	Panel	Date
All member workshop		13 th September 2016
Panel work to develop Green Paper	Adults	22 nd September and 1 st December 2016
	Children's	17 th November 2016 and 23 rd February 2017
	Places	24 th November 2016 and 9 th February 2017
	Resources	10 th November 2016 and 16 th February 2017
Green paper to Cabinet	N/R	21 st March 2017
Panel work on White Paper	Adults	6 th April 2017
	Children's	4 th May 2017
	Places	20 th April 2017
	Resources	27 th April 2017
White Paper to Cabinet	N/R	16 th May 2017
White Paper to Council	N/R	June Council

2.3 Further to a meeting with the Chair of the Places Scrutiny Panel, it was agreed that this Panel would focus on a number of key areas:

- Homelessness prevention;
- Domestic abuse.

- 2.4 To facilitate a discussion of each area, two short papers have been produced which are included as appendices to this report. The papers are not exhaustive but provide information to facilitate a discussion in each area. To assist the discussion, officers have highlighted some questions the Panel may wish to consider.
- 2.5 Further to the outcome of this meeting the Chair of the Panel will report back to the working group to consider next steps but this will be confirmed at the meeting.

3 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report gives further information requested by the initial Poverty project workshop.

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 There are no additional papers.

5 APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix A – Homelessness
- 5.2 Appendix B – Domestic Abuse.

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

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Appendix A - Homelessness

1. Background

Every year, perhaps 2,000 households in Rutland move, with some of these moves being due to choice (including, for our purposes, work) and others suddenly forced by circumstances. The latter might include family relationship breakdown (sometimes violent), a landlord or mortgage company wanting possession of the property, a lodger being asked to leave, someone with deteriorating health unable to access their home, or a house fire.

The household's financial resources – and the support available from family members - have a huge impact on whether people can resolve their accommodation crisis themselves or need to seek advice or assistance from the Council or our partners. This is echoed through our operational experience, that of Citizens Advice Rutland and academic research into homelessness in the East Midlands (University of Birmingham, 2007).

2. Objectives of the scheme

The objective is to enable people to maintain their existing accommodation if appropriate or, if that is not possible, to them to find suitable accommodation that they can sustain. The level of assistance offered can depend upon the level of statutory duty the Council may owe to a particular household.

3. What support is available?

Citizens Advice Rutland and the Council provide advice on rent and mortgage arrears, accessing benefits and financial assistance, applying for affordable housing through the Council's housing register (waiting list), on relationship breakdown and on tenants' rights.

The Council assesses applications for the Council's housing register (waiting list) through a points based process and nominates households with sufficient priority for housing association properties. There were 205 nominations to housing associations in 2015/16, of which approximately 50% led to tenancies. (Where this did not lead to a tenancy, this was often because the household was not interested in a particular property, or because the housing association did not consider either the applicant or the property to be suitable.)

The Council also, separately, assesses whether people qualify for rehousing under the homelessness legislation. Where it appears that the person may qualify, the Council may arrange temporary accommodation whilst the application is assessed and whilst long term accommodation is sought.

There is also a range of support for people who need it. Examples of this include:

- working closely with social care regarding people at risk;
- the Domestic Abuse Group works with United Against Violence and Abuse (UAVA) to provide advice and resettlement / safety support to both male and female survivors; this also includes where appropriate access to women's refuges in nearby areas;
- the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which meets in Rutland and assesses high risk domestic abuse cases;
- liaison with the MoD and forces charities;
- housing-related support for people in temporary accommodation or who have been rehoused to help them to sustain their tenancy; this is currently provided principally by The Bridge with regard to homeless people; Spire Homes also have a housing support contract;
- the Rutland Food Bank;
- the Melton Furniture Project;
- the rent deposit scheme operated by the Council;
- Housing Benefit.

The support and advice services provided by Citizens Advice Rutland, The Bridge and Spire Homes are part of the Community Prevention and Wellness Services which are currently being recommissioned by the Council through a co-design tendering process to promote more integrated services.

Reasons for referral to housing support provided can include a wide range of issues. Examples include:

- assistance with setting up a new tenancy
- assistance whilst placed in temporary accommodation and transition to allocated tenancy
- assistance with benefit claims and applications
- homeless due to fleeing domestic violence
- risk of homelessness due to rent arrears.

Assistance provided to service users can be extensive but is focused on promoting independence. Detailed case studies cannot be shared for data protection reasons, but examples / outcomes include:

- working with service users in serious arrears or with benefit difficulties to successfully avoid eviction
- assisting service users to enrol on life skills courses
- working closely with Children's Services to support families they are working with where there may have been concerns
- assisting with obtaining practical items and getting utilities connected.

Although some of these tasks may be straightforward for some people, the service users in need of housing related support often struggle with these tasks because of their experiences or their level of skills and this approach has been very successful in avoiding tenancy breakdown and repeat homelessness.

4. How do individuals access the scheme?

Generally, if customers do not contact the Council initially, they contact Citizens Advice Rutland for advice. If necessary, after giving advice they will signpost people to the Council or if appropriate liaise directly with us. Customers can also approach the Housing Options team directly or be referred by another agency. In order to access the Council's housing register (waiting list) or the Council's homelessness services, the Council are approached by the customer or someone acting on their behalf.

5. How do we prioritise who receives the support?

Citizen's Advice Rutland

The advice from Citizens Advice Rutland is generally open access.

The Council's homelessness prevention and homelessness duties

The Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (as amended by subsequent legislation) sets out the duties of local authorities towards people who are homeless, or about to be made homeless. If someone is homeless or threatened with homelessness, the Council encourages them to seek advice and assistance as soon as possible to seek to prevent homelessness. Where necessary, the Council will carry out a homelessness investigation to see whether the Council has a duty to secure accommodation. The stages are set out in law and the Council also has regard to the Government's statutory Code of Guidance on Homelessness.

A Housing Options Officer will be assigned to the investigation and will be the point of contact. In brief, the Council has a duty to accommodate the household temporarily during the investigation if they have nowhere to live and Council believes they are likely to be in priority need. The statutory stages to the investigation are outlined in order below:

- whether the applicant is eligible for assistance – this is not the case if the applicant is from abroad & subject to immigration control, or is from abroad & not habitually resident in the UK, or is a British Citizen and not habitually resident in the UK;
- whether the applicant’s household is homeless, or threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days;
- whether a member of the household is in a statutory priority need group (in brief, the main categories are pregnant women and families with children, 16/17 year olds and care leavers, people vulnerable for health reasons and people fleeing violence);
- whether the applicant became homeless intentionally (for instance, through giving up accommodation when they did not have to, or through not paying their rent when they could afford to do so);
- whether the applicant has a local connection with Rutland (or there are special circumstances, such as being a member of the Armed Services, not having a local connection anywhere, or fleeing violence).

Once the investigation is complete, a senior Officer will make a decision on the application. Where a household is in priority need, is unintentionally homeless and has a local connection, the ‘full’ homelessness duty applies. This requires the Council to arrange to accommodate the household in the medium term. This may involve the use of temporary accommodation until the household may be rehoused through the housing register. The housing register gives a high priority to many homeless households. Alternatively, the household may in future be made an offer of suitable ‘qualifying’ private rented accommodation which they would be required to accept.

Prioritising accommodation through the housing register

The Council prioritises housing let through the housing register by a points system depending on need. Households generally also require a local connection to join the housing register. Households who have been accepted as homeless through the ‘full duty’ receive a high number of points, but this is not a guarantee of rehousing. The housing register is also an effective means of preventing homelessness, as people receive points for insecure accommodation and may be rehoused before they can become homeless.

Access to housing related support

Referrals for housing related support are made largely by the Housing Options team, RCC social care and housing associations.

6. What is the overall budget?

The budget for housing related support was £108,100 in 2016/17, to cover services by both Spire Homes and The Bridge. This will be incorporated within the broader Community Prevention and Wellness Services which start next year, which will continue to provide housing related support.

The budget for the Housing Options Service in 2016/17, excluding staff, was £123,000 for staffing (there are 5 members of staff, of whom one is full time) and £31,100 for other expenditure.

7. Facts & figures

In 2015/16:

- there were 67 homelessness preventions recorded by the Housing Options team;
- 34 households were accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need;
- 19 households who made homelessness applications were not classed as homeless;
- eight were homeless but not in priority need;
- one household was in priority need but was classed as intentionally homeless.

There were 334 households on the housing register at 31 March 2016.

8. Possible questions / emerging issues

The Council is developing the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22. Does the Panel have any initial views about anything that is not reflected in the current service?

The Rutland Housing Conference on 30 November 2015 wondered whether more could be done regarding mortgage arrears, or services for the occasional instances of rough sleeping in Rutland.

In October 2016, the Government announced its support for the Homelessness Reduction Bill. This will impose additional duties to Council's to seek to prevent homelessness, although much of this is similar to the Council's current preventative practices.

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Appendix B – Domestic Abuse

1. Background

Domestic abuse involves the misuse of power by one person over another who are or were within a relationship. This abuse is based on a range of control mechanisms which include:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Financial
- Social or economic abuse or neglect of an individual by a partner or ex-partner, carer or one or more family members, in an existing or previous domestic relationship.

This is regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religious, cultural or political beliefs, ethnicity, disability, health status, class or location. Domestic abuse can also include forced marriage and so-called ‘honour crimes’.

Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to the items below, although the core areas have been mentioned above:

- Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Forced marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Honour-based violence
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Online or digital abuse

2. Objectives of the scheme

The primary objective of the commissioned Domestic Abuse service is to reduce the level of risk in victims (male or female) classed as “High” or “medium risk with further professional judgement” to lower levels. This reduction of risk is via short term, intensive support and advocacy which focuses managing the risks.

The main areas of work during this intensive support is to ensure the safety of the victims and their family, presenting the victims views and concerns at a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meeting and supporting any legal interventions and attendance at the Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVC).

3. What support is available?

All victims of domestic abuse are subject to a Safe Lives risk assessment, this contains a set of questions that assist professionals in quantifying the risk associated to each case or victim. If the victim scores a total of 12 or more this is classed as high risk.

Once the risk of the victim has been established as high risk or medium risk with professional judgement, a worker will make contact with the victim within 48 hrs, (although the norm is within 24hrs) to conduct their assessment and start the various activities, which include the following:

1. Legal support, which would include support attending court, the obtaining of a wide range of orders which prevent the perpetrator making contact.
2. The creation of a safety plan for the victim and their family.
3. The request for security enhancements to the victims property.
4. Referral into the MARAC process and by the voice of the victim at these meetings.
5. Co-ordinate any actions with the victim following a MARAC or professionals meeting
6. Assist with housing related matters including private occupation and tenancy matters.
7. Refuge accommodation – ensure if required a victim can access safe accommodation.
8. One to one support either by face to face contact or other agreed methods with the victim.
9. Where a case has links to the MOD, then contact is established with the Army Welfare Services.
10. Referrals and signposting to other support agencies including substance misuse, Rutland food bank, Citizens Advice Bureau – re: benefits, online safety.
11. Ensure that smooth transition during step down between the support worker and Outreach or counselling services.
12. Referrals to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, if required.

4. How do individuals access the scheme?

To access the services of the provider (United Against Violence & Abuse) - this can be done either by a professional referral with consent, placing a call directly to the dedicated helpline on **0808 80 200 28** (This is a free call that will not show up on any phone records). The Helpline is open from 8am to 8pm - Monday to Saturday.

There is also a text support, so texts can be sent to the following number **07715 994 962**.

There is an online web form within the provider website which can be accessed via the following link - <http://www.uava.org.uk/contact/>

Traditional methods can also be used by writing to the provider at: UAVA Ltd, PO Box 26, Leicester, LE1 1AA

5. How do we prioritise who receives the support?

There is no differential on who receives support, all victims of domestic abuse, who have a “high risk” or “Medium Risk with Professional Judgement” status category are supported.

6. What is the overall budget?

As the contract for services is commissioned by Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LLR), the total value for this service per year is £824,000, of which Rutland contributes £56,500 per year plus a small amount for the contract monitoring provided by Leicester City Council.

7. Facts & figures

Since the commencement of the commissioned services as an LLR service, the below table shows some of the Rutland volumes for quarters 1 and 2 of 2016/17 for the support worker and Outreach support.

Outputs / Demands 2016/17	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Helpline Calls	28	45
Assessments completed	46	104
Safety Plans Completed	18	173
Open Cases	18	23
Closed Cases	18	23
Telephone Contacts	274	249
Face to Face meetings with clients	98	102
Multi Agency Meetings	28	20
Court Attendances	18	7
Services users that meet “Changing Lives” Definition	15	7

8. Possible questions / emerging issues

The demand for services within the LLR area is increasing and the contract lead, Leicester City Council are aware of potential pressure of the service.

There is a requirement within Rutland to have an improved service offer that covers those persons under the age of 13 years who have experienced domestic abuse.

Options to address this service aspect are currently being worked upon within Rutland County Council.

It is evident from the work done within this area on housing and through the food bank that there are very direct links to households placed into crisis and poverty. Therefore any work conducted in this area has a direct impact on lifting broken households out of domestic and financial crisis.

The Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider additional work that can be done to support the children from households in domestic violence, especially those which are immediately placed into financial crisis, or the victims and individuals concerned who no longer have access to financial support due to circumstances outside their control.