

Topic/Scrutiny Panel	Issues Identified
<p>1) Review of the Crisis Fund (Resources Scrutiny Panel 10 November 2016 and 16 February 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The award system focuses more on the crisis itself and an immediate solution rather than analysing the applicants overall situation, lifestyle and other issues that may be contributing to their need for support; • A number of people submit repeat applications for the same or similar crisis situations even though the fund is limited to 3 awards per financial year; • Most awards are not subject to any type of review or follow up to see if the award achieved its purpose or if refused what steps the applicant took to alleviate the crisis; • The Council does not currently routinely review the system to discover what impact (if any) the crisis funds awarded had on the claimants; and • It was not currently possible to track which clients referred to CAB actually made contact for support due to Data protection issues.
<p>2) Financial Awareness (Resources Scrutiny Panel 10 November 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals were often reluctant to seek advice and when they did it was often too late; • It was considered important to teach financial life skills at an early age; • People are not aware what help is available; and • It would be helpful if the list of identified organisations who could also offer assistance was up-to-date. People in financial difficulty could then be signposted to these associations.
<p>3) Debt Recovery Process (Resources Scrutiny Panel 10 November 2016 and 16 February 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with debt are not always in financial difficulties; • People are reluctant to contact the Council or avoid our calls; • People often ignore the early letters and miss opportunities to avoid incurring fees later on; • People often agree to payment arrangements that they can afford at the time and then an unexpected cost comes along that means they don't keep to the arrangement so they stop paying altogether; • Sending debts to bailiffs works as lots of people pay but for some people it just makes things worse as more fees are added so people end up paying a lot more than their original debt; • Housing Benefit overpayment debt will get more difficult to collect and it is growing as people don't report their change in circumstances in a timely way and people are often on low incomes and struggle to pay their overpayment back; and • Further welfare reform changes such as the roll out of Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap may impact on household budgets.

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<p>4) Childcare and the impact on Poverty (People (Children's) Scrutiny Panel 17 November 2016 and 23 February 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed Early Years National Funding Formula to increase free entitlements for three to four year olds from 15 to 30 hours, if implemented, could have a significant impact on the viability of Rutland Early Years Providers; • The imminent (National) cuts in funding for child care support could impact disproportionately on Rutland residents; and • Support needs to be closely monitored though the collection of additional information to ensure the small amount of funding has the greatest impact and targets families most in need. • Paying for essential childcare before and after school from organised providers represents a significant financial burden for parents who work, or would like to work full time. Many people rely on friends and family for provision of this care.
<p>5) Rutland Children, Young People and Families Plan 2016-2019/Child Poverty Strategy (People (Children's) Scrutiny Panel 17 November 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current plan and strategy were satisfactory, but should be kept under review and amended in line with the outcomes of the Poverty Review.

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<p>6) Homelessness (Places Scrutiny Panel 24 November 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rent Deposit Scheme was designed to help with the costs of private rental deposits. Efforts were made to recoup this money, with payment plans set up, but often the full amount was not repaid; • A breakdown of the reasons (hidden pressures) for housing allocation and homelessness might help to understand the causes; • Housing allocation worked on a points system, which helped to avoid the under occupation of homes, however, properties for older people often did not meet tenants aspirations; • Housing at St Georges Barracks would still be used for forces accommodation once the base had been closed. Issues arise if families were to split, service personnel would stay in the home with the rest of the family potentially becoming homeless; • The majority of homelessness cases in Rutland were due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with Social and Private Housing/Landlords • Parents / relationship breakdown • Poverty affected people that were asset rich but cash poor; • Reduced tolerances of Social Housing Landlords, could result in repeat homelessness; • The Council did not currently have enough housing stock, particularly 4/5 bedrooms homes for larger families; • A Social Housing marketing exercise was carried out 2 years ago. The result was that the number of people on the Housing Register increased as a result of increasing awareness through marketing Social Housing options; • There was more the Council could do regarding communication; • Disruptive families with complex issues that may result in homelessness had limited options given the rural nature of Rutland; • Service users in need of housing related support often struggle with financial and practical aspects of moving home because of their experiences or their level of skills – Assistance provided to service users can be extensive but is focused on promoting independence.
<p>7) Domestic Abuse (Places Scrutiny Panel 24 November 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic abuse could be both the cause and the effect of Poverty; • Although support for victims of domestic abuse had improved since new contract arrangements had been put in place, the LLR Joint Contract should be kept under review; • The Council currently has no Perpetrator Programme in place (Work was underway to put a programme in place with funding supported by the LLR Police and Crime Commissioner)

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<p>8) Health Inequalities (People (Adults and Health) Scrutiny Panel 1 December 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are economically disadvantaged may find it difficult to make healthier lifestyle choices in terms of diet and activity/exercise; • Being sedentary has a high impact on heart disease and diabetes; • Improvements could be made regarding communicating and promoting local sports clubs and activities to encourage members of the community to take part; • Transport and costs of activities could be restrictive; • Sports activities did not appeal to all people, but increasing any physical activity would have a positive impact; • Local initiatives and schemes were not always supported appropriately, which made it more difficult for those working hard to promote activities in rural locations; and • Education on the benefits of activity/exercise and healthy eating in schools could be improved.
<p>9) Access to Services (People (Adults and Health) Scrutiny Panel 1 December 2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rutland was considered to be reasonably affluent, but rurality and isolation were a barrier to accessing services. It is more difficult to ask for help in a more affluent area where a person might feel they were in the minority; • There was an assumption that everyone could access information through the internet, but the elderly, frail and disabled might not have access to the internet and others might not be able to afford internet connection; • There was a need to look towards the voluntary sector, Community Agents and also improving community relations. Parish Councils and Meetings may also help people with accessing services and encourage/coordinate volunteers; and • People who have moved into the area may not have a network of support in family or friends that live locally and so will be isolated in that way.

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<p>10) Fuel Poverty (People (Adults and Health) Scrutiny Panel 2 February 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many properties and some villages in the county were wholly without a mains gas supply. Spire Homes, who manage social housing stock in the County, worked with the Council to install gas and subsequently central heating in some properties in Oakham. Where this was not possible they had upgraded the existing electric heating provision; • Improvements to insulation could be limited where a property had listed building status or was in a conservation area; • Publicity surrounding initiatives and help around energy switching, fuel poverty and other issues was mainly internet based. It was felt that this was not sufficient as not all households had access to the internet; • Statistics on fuel poverty could be flawed, for example: a well-insulated, energy efficient property with a low household income could still be in poverty but would not be included in the statistics due to the energy requirements being low. Conversely, rural solid wall properties would fall into the statistics possibly having high energy requirements but many have a higher household income and fuel bills would not result in residual income being below the poverty line; • Energy costs did not attract financial assistance from government sources in the same way as council tax might; and • Spire Homes could ask tenants for information but there was no obligation on tenants to supply it. Without knowledge of household income or fuel costs it was not possible to ascertain which properties suffered from fuel poverty.
<p>11) Transport Poverty (Places Scrutiny Panel 9 February 2017)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a rural transport network connecting the smaller market towns in Rutland, there was little or no evening and Sunday services; • Call Connect was being considered as part of the Transport Review, but this service was very expensive form of public transport; • Raising awareness of the issues and promotion of volunteers helping within their own communities may alleviate some of the issues; • There were several successful “Good Neighbour Schemes” running within the County including in Whissendine, Market Overton and Greetham, but these were not always well-publicised; • Non-emergency medical transport was not well publicised, this service allowed people to access transport to hospital appointments as long as had a medical need; and • Transport Poverty in Rutland was probably a low risk and dispersed, but that did not negate from the impact on those that suffered from Transport Poverty.