

Scrutiny Review Scope	
Proposed Title	Scoping Date
Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review	23 September 2019
Criteria and reasons for selecting topic	
<p>Identified at the Tourism, Economy and Communities (TEC) Scrutiny Workplanning Workshop for scrutiny during 2019-2020.</p> <p>Housing is a major issue within the town with a large quantity of low quality privately rented accommodation in the form of flats and bedsits. The letting of 80% of these properties to people relying on benefits set at fixed levels gives little incentive for investment from the private sector.</p> <p>The town has also typically experienced high levels of Homelessness. Levels of homelessness in Blackpool that are three times the national average per head of population continue to be driven by chaotic lifestyles, social issues, and poor quality housing and not by an absolute shortage of housing.</p> <p>The Council agreed a Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy in spring 2018 in response to these key issues and the impact of the strategies since their introduction is also a topic of interest to Members.</p>	
Which priority within the Council Plan does this topic address?	
<p>Priority One – The Economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool</p> <p>Priority Two – Our Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience</p>	
What are the main objectives of the scrutiny?	
<p>To consider the impact of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy and to gain an understanding of the challenges faced by the Housing Service. Once the Panel has knowledge of these challenges, it can determine if the strategies are sufficient to address the key issues and areas of concern. This will include consideration of evidence to determine whether the implementation of the strategies will improve the provision of housing in Blackpool and improve outcomes for people presenting as homeless in Blackpool.</p> <p>To ensure that joint working with partner organisations is effective, determining if improvements can be made.</p>	
What specific issues will be addressed as part of the scrutiny?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing provision in Blackpool including the role of social and affordable housing • Housing Revenue Account (funding for Council housing) – Potential options for future use • Improving quality in the private rented sector • Meeting the housing needs of an ageing population • Supported Housing provision • Homelessness including rough sleeping • Responding to rough sleepers, number of temporary hostel beds and service provision • Funding Streams including what are they and how they are spent in order to determine value for money of service provision • Relationships with other agencies and partners • Universal Credit – Impact on homelessness • Future Plans 	
What possible outcomes are envisaged in terms of service improvements / benefits to the community?	
Improved service provision and outcomes for service users. This will include ensuring that housing and	

<p>homelessness strategies and work is robust and will lead to improved provision of housing and reductions in homelessness.</p> <p>Determination that funding for housing and homelessness is sufficient and demonstrates value for money.</p>
<p>How will the public be involved? (consider invitations / press releases for meetings, consultation with community groups / clubs, etc)</p>
<p>Input from individuals who have used housing and homelessness service and professionals from partner agencies will be sought for their views on the current service provision and any impact of recent changes made.</p> <p>Community groups, including faith based ones, will also be contacted to provide their experiences of working with housing and the homeless in Blackpool.</p>
<p>How will the scrutiny achieve value for money for the Council / Council Tax payers?</p>
<p>The review will consider the impact of the of the Council’s plans and strategies and if these have led to improved outcomes for homelessness in Blackpool. It will also look at the value for money of the services provided.</p>
<p>What primary / new evidence is needed for the scrutiny?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance against Key Performance Indicators • Information on current and historic levels of homelessness. • Housing Affordability Study – Commissioned study with details available from autumn 2019 • Cold Weather Protocol – How does Blackpool compare with other authorities in reacting to safeguarding homeless people during periods of cold weather • Budget and financial information including service accounts
<p>What secondary / existing information will be needed? (include background information / existing reports (consider Internal Audit) / legislation / central government information and reports, etc.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy 2018-2023 • Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2023 • Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – Outlines the Council’s statutory responsibilities • CfPS Guide – Taking on the Housing Challenge https://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CfPS-Taking-on-the-housing-challenge-WEB-3.pdf
<p>Which Council officers / departments will provide information, advice and assistance for the scrutiny?</p>
<p>Portfolio Holder – Cllr Neal Brookes Head of Housing – Andy Foot Housing Options – Vikki Piper Public Protection – Tim Coglán Benefits Public Health Adult Services</p>
<p>What expert witnesses will the panel request input from outside of the Council?</p>
<p>Representatives from partner organisations that work with the Council, such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Partnership – a partnership involving the Council and third sector organisations • Charities • Community/Faith Groups

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords Forum • Rough Sleeping Multi-Agency Group • Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) • My Blackpool Home • Lancashire Constabulary <p>Potential for an individual who has used homeless services to provide testimony could also be considered.</p>
<p>What type of meetings (e.g. fact finding, evidence gathering, consultations, questioning, site visits), and how many in number are envisaged for the scrutiny?</p>
<p>Series of review meeting by a panel of interested members.</p> <p>1st Meeting would be an overview of work undertaken by housing and housing options during the past year and an outline of the future challenges faced. The scope of the review and topics for consideration will be confirmed at this meeting.</p> <p>The review panel should also consider the potential of conducting a site visit to a homeless shelter or other suitable location as part of its evidence gathering.</p> <p>This will be followed a series of meetings to consider and gather evidence on specific topics and a final meeting to consider conclusions and recommendations</p>
<p>Timescales / likely duration of enquiry</p>
<p>To commence 23 September 2019</p>
<p>Lead Scrutiny Officer</p>
<p>John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser</p>
<p>Scrutiny Panel Members</p>
<p>Martin Mitchell Gerard Walsh Paul Galley Jane Hugo Paul Wilshaw</p>