

Notice of:	EXECUTIVE
Decision Number:	EX15/2021
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform
Date of Meeting:	22 March 2021

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SCRUTINY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review Final Report.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the report and offer a response to the recommendations contained within the Action Plan, forwarding the recommendations to the relevant organisations for consideration and implementation.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The recommendations contained within the final report seek to deliver improvements to the Housing Service.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 The Executive must consider the recommendations outlined in the Scrutiny Review but may accept them, reject them or vary them.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 As part of its workplanning workshop for the 2019-2020 Municipal Year the Tourism, Economy and Communities (TEC) Scrutiny Committee identified housing and homelessness as an issue for review.
- 6.2 Housing and homelessness were considered significant issues facing Blackpool. In spring 2018, Full Council had agreed a Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy in response to the housing issues and Members wished to review what impact these had had and what other work was being undertaken to address these issues.
- 6.3 Following the workshop the Scrutiny Committee agreed on 19 June 2020 to undertake the review.
- 6.4 A total of eight meetings were held as part of the review process between September 2019 and December 2020. The review heard evidence from Housing Officers, the relevant Cabinet Member, local housing providers, representatives of homelessness charities and an individual with lived experience of homelessness in Blackpool.
- 6.5 The final report details the findings and recommendations of the review and is attached at Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.
- 6.6 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny / Cabinet Member Relations Protocol, the final report has been considered by the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2021, which approved the report for consideration by the Executive. Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform has provided their comments on the recommendations contained within the report.
- 6.7 The Chairman of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Martin Mitchell, who was also the lead Councillor for this review, had been invited to the Executive meeting to make representations on behalf of the Committee.
- 6.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 2(a) – Housing and Homelessness Scrutiny Review Final Report

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) of the report.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Not applicable.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Not applicable.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Contained within Appendix 2(a) to the Executive report.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 Minutes of the 3 February 2021 meeting of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: N/A

Date approved: N/A

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Executive resolved as follows:

To approve the final report and recommendations resulting from the scrutiny review of the Housing and Homelessness subject to the Cabinet Member's comments in the report and the additional observations made at the meeting listed below in response to the comments made by the Lead Councillor:

- i. In respect of recommendation 3 that a named independent person had already been identified namely Ian Treasure of Fulfilling Lives to lead the Homelessness Support Group. A key aim though remained to avoid the duplication of meetings.
- ii. In respect of recommendation 6 that it should be noted that the Council adopted the "Everybody In" process rather than utilising the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. It needed to acknowledge that this would be dependent on funding but an undertaking would be given to bring a report to the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee as early as possible.
- iii. In respect of recommendation 9 the Cabinet Member supported the possible use of a mystery shopping exercise and that it could be useful. The Cabinet Member emphasised though that it would form part of a range of monitoring tools.

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1 22 March 2021

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 The recommendations contained within the final report seek to deliver improvements to the Housing Service.

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 23 March 2021

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1 Councillor L Williams, in the Chair

Councillors Benson, Brookes, Campbell, Farrell, Hobson, Kirkland, Smith and Taylor

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1 Councillor Mitchell as Chairman of Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee and lead Councillor for the review was in attendance and made representations to the Executive. Councillor Mitchell paid tribute to the work of the Councillors on the review and the supporting officers, noting that the review had identified significant good practice particularly in the changing landscape of coronavirus. In response to the Cabinet Member's written comments in the report - Councillor Mitchell made the following observations in regards to recommendation 3- the view that it would be important to identify a named independent person to co-ordinate homeless support, in regards recommendation 7 that a report should be brought to the Committee in advance of next winter to enable meaningful engagement and in regards recommendation 9 that an independent mystery shopping exercise remained potentially beneficial.