

Review of Homelessness and the Customer Journey: Witness Session 2

Committee name	Residents' Services Select Committee
Officer reporting	Melissa Blower, Housing Project Manager
Papers with report	Scoping Report

HEADLINES

This item will encompass the second witness session regarding the Committee's review into Homelessness and the Customer Journey in Hillingdon.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Residents' Services Select Committee notes the evidence heard at the witness session and seeks clarification as necessary in the context of its review of Homelessness and the Customer Journey in Hillingdon.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At its meeting on 16 January 2024, the Residents' Services Select Committee agreed to undertake a major review of the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service, with a particular focus on the residents' journey through the system and customer service. The scoping report for the review was subsequently approved at the Select Committee meeting on 13 February 2024.

At this second witness session, representatives of key partners; namely Thames Reach (Benjamin Sebok, Lead Manager) and Trinity (Carys Hedley, Director of Services) will be in attendance to outline their roles and answer any questions that may arise.

Thames Reach – Benjamin Sebok, Lead Manager

Thames Reach is an organisation that works directly with those that are rough sleeping within London or in hostel accommodation and is committed to preventing vulnerable people from becoming homeless.

Thames Reach provides a Rapid Response Team that is funded by the Greater London Authority to provide an emergency response to those that are rough sleeping across London. The team delivers shifts every night of the year and early mornings, to look for people who are sleeping rough. The team's primary aim is to respond to referrals from Street link and refer clients who are new to the street to prevent them from spending a second night on the streets.

The team's target is to conduct a first visit to a sleeping site within 24 hours of a referral being received and then support those who are rough sleeping into accommodation pathways or agencies.

Trinity – Carys Hedley, Director of Services

Trinity is a local charity that is committed to ending rough sleeping through addressing the various root causes and contributing factors that lead to people becoming homeless. Trinity supports residents through community and faith groups, responsive outreach, emergency shelter, supported housing, affordable housing, access to physical and mental health support services and addiction treatment, employment opportunities, education, social support networks and more.

Trinity seeks to create sustainable solutions that empower individuals and families to thrive in their communities. And ending homelessness by curing all the situations that threaten and cause it in society.

They do this through creating the sort of society that delivers this, in the communities, in the neighbourhoods and in the accommodation they provide. Last year Trinity housed over 600 people who were / were at risk of suffering homelessness and helped 154 people move into their own home.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were noted for this review, subject to any changes agreed by the Committee:

1. To gain a thorough understanding of the Council's Homeless Prevention Service and the resident's journey through this process.
2. To scrutinise the service delivery and review its effectiveness.
3. To review service users' feedback to explore the challenges faced by residents accessing the service.
4. To look at other local authorities that may have different models of service delivery for best practice, including research and findings from charities, housing bodies, regional bodies and organisations, e.g. GLA.
5. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose practical and deliverable actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Select Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations from the Committees are presented to Cabinet to consider, and ultimately seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.