

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - FOOD POVERTY

Monday, 2 March 2020

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Meredith (Chair), Councillors Bottwood, Roberts and Smith

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Paul Foster Emmanuel Church
Clive Ireston Northamptonshire Food Poverty Network

Officers

Geraldine Mahney, Customer Services Manager
Tracy Tiff, Democratic and Member Services Manager

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Russell.

2. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 were signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

4. WITNESS EVIDENCE

The Scrutiny Panel considered the written response to the core questions from the Employer and Partnership Manager, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP.)

The Scrutiny Panel commented that the answers required were more Northampton specific and when the Employer and Partnership Manager had attended the previous meeting she had referred to data and this data would be useful in informing the evidence base of this Scrutiny review. Specific data around mis-management of finances would be requested.

The Scrutiny Panel discussed Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) which is a locally introduced Policy. It is not a national one. There is set criteria for DHP and this would be circulated to the Scrutiny Panel.

AGREED: That information that is Northampton specific would be requested from the Employer and Partnership Manager and also any data that could help inform this Scrutiny Review.

5. STATUTORY AND SOCIAL OVERCROWDING

The Scrutiny Panel considered a briefing note regarding Statutory and Social Overcrowding. The Scrutiny Panel had considered this item at its previous meeting but it had been brought to this meeting for further discussion.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment:

- Concerns were raised that a 5-foot x10 foot room could be categorised as a bedroom for a child.
- There is a need for more housing stock
- NBC's Policy to following statutory overcrowding criteria.
- Families living, sleeping and cooking in the same room was referred to.
- Briefing note is a not- regarding statutory overcrowding.
- A member of the Scrutiny Panel referred to a family with two young children sleeping in the living areas – it was questioned whether they more likely to order a take away and create no noise from pots and pans during cooking.
- A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested that the criteria for social housing is looked at as this can impact of food poverty with families living and sleeping in the same room and the quality of the food that they are able to eat due to this fact.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

6. PUBLISHED REPORTS

The meeting concluded at 6:43 pm