



## **Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee**

### **Scrutiny Observations to Cabinet on: 01.08.2023**

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee completed a virtual Scrutiny and considered the following documents:

Powys Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-2028 and associated minor policy amendments to the 'Homes in Powys' housing allocations policy (& Appendices)

The Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee thank the Portfolio Holder and Officers for providing the reports to the Scrutiny Committee.

#### **Committees Comments:**

- An excellent report was produced with proactive and ambitious plans.
- [2.7] – It was felt that the targets for a typical stay within a triage centre is essential but ambitious and fully dependant on having the right 'next step' accommodation available. Having all three options (Supported /Modular interim accommodation and the option for flipping) will be essential to help meet the proposed targets. Concerns were raised on how the homeless triage system would be made available, and how the homeless would access the service. Key locations for the triage centres must ensure they meet demand, with easy access to all, including supporting services.
- [3.1.5] – Concerns were raised that those on the Homes in Powys waiting list would be disadvantaged, and more accommodation would be needed.
- [4.6] - It was felt that the success of the projects 24/7 triage, emergency housing and the change from temporary to permanent accommodation falls to ensuring that skilled dedicated support staff are made available.
- Concerns were raised on how the Council propose to recruit the staff needed due to the current recruitment challenges within the care sector.
- And what steps are being taken to ensure the availability of qualified/ trained employees to run the proposed triage centres and provide client support.
- [4.7] – Support was felt if the Council were to provide modular interim accommodation it would have a positive immediate impact.
- Repurposing existing Council buildings for accommodation could also go towards meeting needs greatly in demand, it was asked if this had been considered.
- Concerns were raised over the modular interim accommodation locations, as it is vital to ensure that all the relevant support services were easily available, with the aim to provide help and support residents towards the next step.
- It was felt that modular interim accommodation was an excellent way to provide a multi-pronged approach to meeting the homeless housing need.
- [5.1.1] - proposed policy amendment - Homeless Duties Section 75 (S75) - was supported:
  - that suitable temporary accommodation could become permanent.
  - to minimise the need for homeless households to move twice.
- However, the impact of flipping would leave the housing stock depleted and would be reliant on more suitable accommodation being sourced in the area.

- It was noted that the change (S75) may lead to abuse, with tirage centres having to act swiftly to action any abuse.
- [5.2.1] – proposed policy amendment – due regard to the Armed Forces Covenant was supported.
- It was asked that the areas below were noted, and plans were appropriately monitored:
  - the allocation of housing to ensure that being homeless is not seen as a fast-track route to housing.
  - to ensure equality is evidenced throughout the waiting list.
  - to promote the right home, right place, right time.
  - to ensure all relevant and appropriate support is available to help residents.

The ultimate aim is to reduce the cost (Financial and social) of homelessness and repeat homelessness by supporting residents back to meaningful lives.

Scrutiny's Recommendation	Accept (plus Action and timescale)	Partially Accept (plus Rationale and Action and timescale)	Reject (plus Rationale)
<p><b>1</b> To plan and monitor the allocation of housing to ensure that being homeless is not seen as a fast-track route to housing.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> – Allocations to homelessness households will continue to be considered as part of the quarterly review of all allocations by the Homes in Powys Working Group to ensure that they are proportionate to those made to other households in housing need.</p>		
<p><b>2</b> Ensure equality is evidenced throughout the waiting list.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> – Allocations to all households will continue to be considered as part of the quarterly review of all allocations by the Homes in Powys Working Group to ensure that they effectively reflected the proportion of households on the Common Housing Register with protected characteristics.</p>		
<p><b>3</b> To promote the right home, right place, right time.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> – Each household on the Common Housing Register is routinely made aware of the</p>		

	availability of social housing stock. In addition, homeless households are actively supported to explore securing a tenancy in the Private Rented Sector as part of maximising their housing options.		
<b>4</b> Ensure all relevant and appropriate support is available to help residents.	<b>Accepted</b> – An assessment of both housing and support needs is completed for households threatened with homeless/homelessness and where needed individually tailored support is subsequently provided. At more a general level, households on the Common Housing Register are signposted to partners that can provide appropriate advice and support.		

In accordance with Rule 7.27.2 the Cabinet is asked to provide a written response to the scrutiny report, including an action plan where appropriate, as soon as possible or at the latest within 2 months of the date of the Cabinet meeting i.e., by 20.10.2023

Membership of the Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee Members that participated in the scrutiny process:  
County Councillors: A Davies, A Jones, A E Jones, L Rijnenberg, C Kenyon-Wade