

Research and Development Committee

Date :	Tuesday, 3rd September 2019
Time :	7.00pm
Venue:	Committee Room, Municipal Offices
Administrator	David Pope (01536) 535661 e-mail: davidpope@kettering.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous meeting to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair 5 - 8
3. Declarations of Interest

(Members are asked to make any declarations of financial or other interests they may have in relation to items on this agenda. Members are reminded to make a declaration at any stage throughout the meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.)

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
- (b) Personal Interests

4. Any items of urgency the Chair decides should be considered

Working with and on behalf of local people

5. Any matters referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to a call-in to be considered
6. Any responses of the Executive to reports of Scrutiny Committees to be considered where appropriate
7. The Chair of the Committee to ask members of the public present if they wish to speak on any public items on the Agenda
8. Main Items
 - (i) Polling Place and Polling District Review 9 - 18
 - (ii) Temporary Accommodation 19 - 22
 - (iii) Work Programme 23 - 24

The membership of this Committee is: -

Councillors Bain, Davies, Hakewill, Henson, Scrimshaw, Tebbutt and Titcombe

Substitutes:- Councillors C Brown, M Brown, Currall, Don, Marks, Moreton and Stanton

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<http://www.kettering.gov.uk/recordingmeetings>

Private and Confidential Items

The press and members of the public can be excluded from business of the meeting on the grounds that it involves items of business which include the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraphs 1-7 of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 in respect of Schedule 12A to the Local

Government Act 1972. The reason for discussing the issue in private is indicated on the Order of Business and was advertised by way of a Public Notice in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 25th June 2019

Present: Councillor Duncan Bain (Chair)

Councillors Ash Davies, Paul Marks, Mike Tebbutt, Greg Titcombe and Mick Scrimshaw

Also Present: Martin Hammond (Executive Director)
Lucky Clarke (Allocations Housing Manager)
Callum Galluzzo (Committee Administrator)

19.RD.01 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jim Hakewill and Jenny Henson. It was noted that Cllr Paul Marks was acting as substitute for Cllr Henson.

19.RD.03 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 16th April 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19.RD.04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

19.RD.05 RIGHT TO SPEAK

None

19.RD.06 HOMELESSNESS & TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION (A1)

Members received a presentation that provided a background on the challenges being faced by the housing options team and the ways in which the council is responding to those challenges

It was heard that there were 1142 customers who required assistance from the council in 2018/19 in terms of temporary accommodation. Members heard that each individual person will have advice and a specific housing plan tailored for them.

It was reported that Wellington House which provided twenty one single vulnerable households with temporary accommodation had recently closed down which posed a challenge to the council and the housing option officers.

Members heard that temporary accommodation cost the council approximately £1.2m in the last financial year and that there was a lack of suitable move on solutions especially large properties and supported accommodation.

Members were then shown a graph which provided details regarding the number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of each month and the trend increasing over time. The housing options team see's between twenty three and thirty new approaches each week and an average of 5 households are placed into temporary accommodation each week.

It was noted that a members information session would take place on the 2nd September to inform all members regarding the work being undertaken by the Housing Options team and the challenges that they face.

Members requested that figures relating to households in temporary accommodation be regularly circulated. Members also raised questions regarding the closure of wellington house and the ongoing negotiations surrounding it.

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee's attention be drawn to the need to replace Wellington House as a matter of urgency.

19.RD.07 **KETTERING TOWN CENTRE TASK & FINISH GROUP**
PROGRESS UPDATE (A2)

The Committee received a report which sought to provide the committee with a progress update in relation to the work of the Kettering town Centre Task and Finish Group.

It was reported that since its first meeting, the Task and Finish Group had held a town centre walkabout on the 23rd March 2019 and a further four meetings had taken place to receive evidence from a variety of internal departments in relation to a wide range of sectors.

Across meetings held in May the group devised questions to gather evidence from external stakeholders who had agreed to attend

meetings with the group in June. In addition to this it was noted that a questionnaire had been created to allow stakeholders who could not attend to provide their views.

In addition to the evidence gathering process, members of the Task and Finish Group had agreed a fact-finding visit to Bedford to understand the challenges and opportunities of another comparable town centre. The Group aimed to bring a final report with its recommendations to the Research and Development Committee in October 2019. This would then allow any recommendations by the Committee to be taken to Council in December 2019.

Members stated that the stakeholder engagement meetings that had taken place had provided a lot of positive feedback and brought forward several key ideas that will benefit the town centre.

RESOLVED That the progress update of the Kettering Town Centre Task and Finish Group be noted

19.RD.08 WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19 (A5)

The work programme was noted with the addition of scrutiny of the financial efficiencies of the Council's temporary housing policy and the impact this had on the people using this service

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.12pm)

Signed:

(Chair)

CJG

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Agenda Item 8i

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Committee	RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	Item 8i	Page 1 of 2
Report Originator	Ian White Electoral Services Manager	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
Wards Affected	All	3 rd September 2019	
Title	POLLING PLACE AND POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the comments of the Committee in relation to the polling place and polling district review for submitting to the meeting of the Council's Executive.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 The Polling Place and Polling District Review of the Kettering Borough area commenced in April 2019 and is due to be finalised at the meeting of the Borough Council to be held on 25th September 2019.

2.2 As part of the consultation process for the review, members were asked for their comments on the existing situation with regard to polling districts, polling places and polling stations. Reports were submitted to the following meetings of various Committees and Forums to facilitate that as follows:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>
Research & Development Committee	16 th April 2019
Kettering Town Forum	8 th July 2019
A6 Towns Forum	10 th July 2019
Rural Forum	18 th July 2019

2.3 Public notice of the review has been given and a copy of the notice relating to the review and the accompanying documentation was displayed on the Council's website. Letters asking for comments and representations were also sent to:-

- Parish and Town Councils in the Borough
- Registered Political Parties active in the Borough
- Local Groups representing people with disabilities
- Any individual elector who expresses an interest

A further reminder of the review was forwarded to local groups representing people with disabilities as well as local registered political parties active in the Borough

The consultation period closed on 31st July and a copy of all responses and feedback received is attached at Appendix A.

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- 2.4 As part of the review each polling station booking agent was asked to complete a questionnaire concerning the access arrangements into the polling station. There were no significant concerns raised during this process although a visit was made to Pytchley Village Hall to check the ramped access. Inspections were also carried out at Barton Seagrave Village Hall prior to the elections held on 23rd May 2019 and the venue was successfully used as a polling station at that election. A request was also received to consider the use of Desborough Town Council Offices situated at the Library Building. The space available inside the building was a little limited and would just accommodate one small polling station. The main areas of concern were the accessibility arrangements, especially in terms of managing queues should the need arise, as well as the close proximity of the building to the existing polling station at St Giles Church Community Centre. On balance it was felt the existing arrangements were working well but that the provision of polling facilities in Desborough should be monitored and the building re-considered if necessary at a future date.

3. FUTURE PROVISION

- 3.1 Future provision needs to be considered in light of the residential growth taking place across the borough. Although there are many external factors that can affect the rate of development, it is necessary to plan for the provision of facilities for voters and structures for polling on the basis that the proposed development will take place. Future provision also needs to take into consideration the outcomes of other review processes such as any ongoing community governance reviews and changes that may be associated with the proposed reform of local government.

The structure of the Register of Electors will need to reflect both existing levels of electors and accommodate the increases that will inevitably follow the development and occupation of new housing. We must ensure that what is in place for the 2020 elections is also suitable for polls thereafter up to 2025

- 3.2 The recommendations to be submitted to Council will seek to ensure that there is a mechanism and strategy in place to enable the Council to plan effectively for the provision of polling places and the structure to support them throughout this period. A copy of the draft recommendations is attached to assist members in their consideration of the matter.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee will be requested to consider the content of the responses and the draft recommendations and submit any comments they have to the meeting of the Council's Executive to be held on 18th September 2019.

4. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

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4.1 The consultation period for this review began on 16th April 2019 and closed on 31st July 2019. The following people were able to make representations or comment in respect of this or any other matter relating to the review:

- Any elector in the Kettering Constituency or within Kettering Borough
- Any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability

4.2 The responses to the consultation are attached at Appendix A and the draft recommendations are attached at Appendix B.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amends the Representation of the People Act 1983 to make it a legal requirement that Returning Officers review the polling districts and polling places within their Council area every five years.

6. **USE OF RESOURCES**

The cost of this review can be met from the allocated electoral services budget for 2019-20.

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

Members of the Committee are requested to consider the content of the responses and the draft recommendations and submit any comments they have to the meeting of the Council's Executive to be held on 18th September 2019.

Background Papers:

Title of Document: Electoral Commission Guidance
Date: February 2013
Contact Officer: Ian White (ext 4200)

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Ref: Various
Date: See table in 2.2 above

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Respondent	Response
Alison Williams	<p>I live on the Brambleside Estate and as such my son goes to Brambleside School. Once again I find we are in a situation where by my sons, and 350+ other children's education is disrupted due to the school being a polling station.</p> <p>It is frustrating that if I choose to take my child out of school, I am classed as a bad parent and risk being fined, but then appears for it to be considered acceptable for him to be taken out of education to suit the needs of the government. One rule for them, one rule for us. The government's argument if I take my child out of school is that this effects their education, on top of this closing the school for the day puts another additional pressure on working families, who already have to juggle around school holidays and training days. I work at a school, which is not a polling station, and therefore cannot easily take the day off. I'm guessing the council will not be covering the costs of additional childcare required by working parents that day.</p> <p>When I wrote to our MP, he did pass my comments onto the council. I even suggested using the shops / pub next to the school. The council argued for health and safety reasons these could not be considered, even suggesting that by using the pub the council could be seen to be encouraging people to drink. Clearly my son's education was way down on their list of priorities.</p> <p>I know I should be grateful that the school is only closed on 23rd May as we do not have local elections, otherwise I suspect it would be closed today also. I understand that there is currently a consultation process in place where the council are reviewing polling stations. Please can I urge you to look at this with the council, and support education and working families. Perhaps if the school really does have to shut the council in consultation with the schools could look at incorporating a polling day with a training day so that we are not affected twice.</p> <p>I thank you for your time.</p>
Harrington Parish Council	<p>Harrington Parish Council met on Monday 13th May.</p> <p>It is felt that in Harrington the best place to have a polling station is the present one, Harrington Village Hall.</p>
Desborough Town Council	<p>My Council would like to suggest that consideration be given to using the Town Council's offices in the Desborough Library Building as a Polling Place. There is a decent sized room with DDA compliant access, toilet, and kitchen facilities.</p>

Respondent	Response
Research and Development Committee	The committee raised concerns regarding the locations of certain existing polling stations being hard to find and asked that consideration be given to the placement of additional directional signage on the highway. These comments were made especially in relation to Highfield Barnes Community Centre and Counties Community Centre.
A6 Towns Forum	Members queried the possible use of temporary buildings as polling stations and polling station location directions on poll cards. The number of voters allocated to the Civic Centre was also queried as there had been an increase in the allocation of voters to this polling place as a result of largescale housing development in the vicinity. Positive feedback was received in relation to the use of Barton Seagrave Village Hall as a polling station for the European Elections held on 23rd May 2019.
Kettering Town Forum	It was suggested that the Mikado Pheasant public house be considered as a polling station to replace Highfield Barnes Community Centre. A new community centre was being developed at the former Maplefields School site and it was requested that once completed the building be considered as a polling place for future elections. A polling station had previously been located at Maplefields School prior to its closure some years ago.
Rural Forum	Cransley Village Hall had applied for funding from the Council’s community fund. A discussion also took place around the use of schools as polling stations.

Area/Ward	Recommendations
<u>Kettering Town</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except as detailed below, no change to existing arrangements unless unforeseen circumstances occur to the existing polling places. Each case to be treated individually as necessary. • Restructure the Register if necessary following the conclusion of the ongoing community governance review scheduled for completion in February 2020.
St Michael’s & Wicksteed Ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the arrangements for providing signage to the polling stations at Counties Community Centre and Highfield Barnes Community Centre. There are doubts concerning the feasibility of providing signage on the public highway but other arrangements for signage should be investigated.
Ise Lodge Ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure the Register and create a new polling district(s) to accommodate the electors from the new Hanwood Park development. • Determine the suitability of Hayfield Cross School as a polling station that could be used until such time as an alternative community facility becomes available. • Determine the likely availability and suitability of the new community facilities planned as part of the East Kettering development for use as polling places when they are built and operational. • In the case of facilities not being available at the appropriate time, consider the feasibility for a short time of a mobile building(s) being used for polling purposes in this area.
St Peters Ward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor the existing arrangements in light of the ongoing housing development in this Ward.

Area/Ward	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the introduction of an additional polling district and restructure the Register accordingly if required.
<p><u>A6 Towns</u></p> <p>Barton Ward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocate all electors (except those in the unparished area of the village) to the new Barton Seagrave Village Hall for voting purposes. Restructure the existing polling districts in the Parish to support the use of a single venue as a polling station. Consider conducting a further interim review of the polling districts and polling places in the Ward once the outcome of the ongoing community governance review scheduled for completion in February 2020 is known.
<p>Burton Latimer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor the existing arrangements in light of the ongoing housing development in the town. Consider increasing the existing number of polling districts and identify an additional location for a polling station if required at some stage in the future.
<p>Desborough Loatland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to existing provision unless unforeseen circumstances occur. If necessary carry out an interim review on a case by case basis.
<p>Desborough St Giles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to existing provision unless unforeseen circumstances occur to the existing provision. If necessary carry out an interim review on a case by case basis.

Area/Ward	Recommendations
Rothwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor the existing arrangements in light of the ongoing housing development in the town especially the largescale development planned to the North. • Consider increasing the existing number of polling districts and identify an additional location for a polling station if necessary. • Carry out an interim review on a case by case basis.
<p><u>Rural Area</u></p> <p>Cranford</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except as detailed below, no change to existing provision unless unforeseen circumstances occur. • If necessary carry out an interim review on a case by case basis. • Refer to previous recommendations concerning the polling arrangements for Cranford Parish and the ongoing community governance review scheduled for completion in February 2020. Restructure the Register in accordance with the outcome as appropriate.
<u>All Wards and Polling Districts</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise all existing polling district codes to facilitate the successful delivery of the May 2020 elections and to enable each elector in the Shadow Authority area and the new North Northamptonshire Unitary area to be allocated a unique electoral number.

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Report Originator	Mark Dickenson Head of Resources	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	ALL	3 rd September 2019	
Title	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 An update on the financial effectiveness of the Council's temporary accommodation policy

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 25th June 2019, the Research and Development Committee received a presentation on homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation. Members of the Committee asked for further information on the financial effectiveness of the Council's temporary accommodation policy.

- 2.2 The Council currently uses a range of temporary accommodation including council properties, hostel accommodation, self-contained properties leased from private sector landlords, and bed and breakfast accommodation. There is a large variation in the cost of different types of temporary accommodation with self-contained properties leased from private sector landlords and bed and breakfast accommodation typically costing the Council in excess of £40 per night whilst council properties will generate an income for the Council.

2.3 Temporary Accommodation Policy

The Temporary Accommodation Policy was approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 19th September 2018. The Policy sets out how the Council allocates temporary accommodation to homeless households and outlines which households will have priority for the different types of temporary accommodation available. It aims to ensure that temporary accommodation is allocated fairly and transparently and that applicants are provided with accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

- 2.4 The different types of accommodation that will be considered for use by the Council when providing an offer of temporary accommodation to a household are:

- Private sector leased accommodation
- Accommodation within our own HRA stock
- Bed and breakfast
- Other nightly paid, privately managed facilities - shared facilities

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- Other nightly paid, privately managed facilities – self-contained
- Accommodation owned by the council (non HRA properties)
- Hostel

2.4 The Temporary Accommodation Policy describes the order of preference in which different types of temporary accommodation will be offered to different household types. Officers will first look to place households in accommodation within the borough but where households have had to be accommodated in other areas, they will be prioritised for a move back to the Borough at the earliest opportunity.

2.5 The Council will only use bed and breakfast accommodation for households when no other accommodation is available. When it is used, we will keep those accommodated under regular review.

2.6 In establishing whether temporary accommodation is suitable for a homeless household, officers will take into account the relevant legislation and a range of factors such as employment, medical needs and the location of children's schools.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

3.1 At the end of July, there were 220 customers living in temporary accommodation. Table 1 shows that since March 2018, the Council has reduced its use of the more expensive and poorer quality accommodation such as nightly paid accommodation and bed and breakfast hotels despite the increase in the number of households becoming homeless. Conversely, a higher proportion of homeless households is in self-contained accommodation within the Borough that is directly owned by the Council.

Table 1: Breakdown of Temporary Accommodation

<i>Type of temporary accommodation</i>	<i>29 July 2019</i>	<i>31 March 2018</i>	<i>Change</i>
Bed and breakfast	12	18	-6
Nightly paid	60	62	-2
HRA stock	122	19	+103
Private sector leasing	8	9	-1
KBC acquired stock	18	0	+18
Wellington House	0	19	-19
Total	220	127	+103

3.2 A breakdown of the 220 households in temporary accommodation at the end of July shows that 200 were located in the Borough of Kettering with another 18 within Northamptonshire. Only two households have been placed outside the county and these have been for particular reasons.

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- 3.3 In summary, the Temporary Accommodation Policy has had a positive impact on the living conditions of our customers who are homeless and having to live in temporary accommodation.

4. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Expenditure on temporary accommodation has increased significantly as a result of the rising level of homelessness. The 2018/19 outturn on temporary accommodation was £1.2 million with 187 households in temporary accommodation at 31st March 2019. During 2018/19 a number of measures were put in place to provide better outcomes for customers along with reducing the cost to the Council, these are included in the Temporary Accommodation Policy.
- 4.2 Examples of initiatives include the Council purchasing a number of residential properties for temporary accommodation, this reduces the reliance on nightly paid accommodation and produces better outcomes for those in need of temporary accommodation. In cases where nightly paid accommodation is still required, work has been undertaken to reduce the cost to the Council.
- 4.3 The budget for 2019/20 is £0.8 million which provided for around 190 households in temporary accommodation across the financial year. The Council continues to experience an increase in demand for homeless accommodation and the budget continues to be closely monitored. Any changes to the projections will be reported through the durable budget report.
- 4.4 Members may also be interested in a forthcoming Members Information Session on 'Our Strategies for Tackling Homelessness' which will take place on 4th November 2019.

5. LEGAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None as a result of this report.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None as a result of this report.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That members note the current position in relation to the financial effectiveness of the Council's temporary accommodation policy

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WORK PROGRAMME

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Task and Finish Groups reporting to Committee

<u>SUBJECT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE</u>	<u>MEMBERSHIP</u>	<u>DATE FOR COMPLETION OF WORK</u>	<u>PROGRESS</u>
<p>Town Centre Task and Finish Group</p> <p><u>Aims</u></p> <p>To provide joint business and council leadership to better enable Kettering Town Centre to adapt and compete in the face of changing consumer and social trends. To achieve these aims through a combination of fact finding across Council services and by gaining a greater understanding of the national and local perspective through engagement with relevant representatives.</p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the challenges and opportunities facing town centres nationally • Benchmark the health and vision for Kettering Town Centre against other towns to identify areas of best practice • Gain a greater understanding of Council services which affect the Town Centre • Review current strategy and delivery for the Town Centre and make recommendations in context of changing consumer and social trends • Report findings to Kettering Town Centre Conference 2019 • To articulate the future vision for the town centre (TC) across the next 5 to 10 years to influence decision making of future local governance arrangements in the county 	<p>Cllrs Titcombe (Chair), Currall, Davies, Scrimshaw</p>	<p>Autumn 2019</p>	<p>ToR approved by R&D.</p> <p>Phases 1, 2 and 3 agreed</p> <p>Eight meetings held.</p> <p>Fact-finding visits to Bedford (28th Aug) and Market Harborough (5th Sept) to be undertaken.</p> <p>Final report and recommendations to Executive to be worked upon in September.</p>

Work Programme

Source Ref	Issue for Decision	Date Decision to be made	Progress update (where appropriate)	Consultation details	Contact for Representations	Documents to be Considered

Possible Future Agenda Items

Source Ref	Issue for Decision	Date Decision to be made	Progress update (where appropriate)	Consultation details	Contact for Representations	Documents to be Considered