



# Kensington and Chelsea Advice Forum Tackling Homelessness

Wednesday 5 August 2020, 10.30am – 11.30am  
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Notes taken by: Zina Serageldin, KCSC

Item	Notes	Action
1	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> - Angela Spence (AS), KCSC CEO</p> <p>AS welcomed everyone and invited them to introduce themselves.</p> <p>Zoom ground rules were added to the chat window.</p>	
2	<p><b>Kensington and Chelsea Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy - Scoping the Action Plan</b> Rob Shaw, Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, RBKC</p> <p><a href="#">Presentation slides</a></p> <p>The action plan setting out prevention and reduction priorities for the next twelve months will be presented to the Leadership Team on 16 September where a final strategy will be recommended.</p> <p>The action plan will include consideration of the pandemic and its effects especially in terms of support and access to advice.</p> <p>Rob Shaw (RS) ran through the ideas and priorities currently being considered. Input was requested at the meeting or by e-mail following the meeting.</p> <p>RS noted that the Council website is an area where there is a need for improvement</p> <p>There is a need to be objective and realistic in what can be achieved over this period.</p> <p>RS concluded by discussing longer term objectives for the team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding causes of homelessness</li> <li>• Better understanding of the impact of homelessness for different communities</li> <li>• Rolling programmes of community events/workshops on housing</li> <li>• Framework of different specialist housing pathways (e.g. adults with learning disabilities, young people specialist advice)</li> <li>• Seeking accreditation from Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance</li> </ul> <p>Any feedback or questions please contact the team by e-mail on <a href="mailto:housingpolicy@rbkc.gov.uk">housingpolicy@rbkc.gov.uk</a></p>	

3	<b>Questions</b>	
	<p>Baljit Badesha (BB) asked if the Home Truths Report would impact the plan?  RS said it that it and other recent reports had been reviewed and would be used to build into the restructure and the culture rather than the 12-month plan.  RS explained that the team are interested in looking at training for the housing staff e.g. trauma informed training and are looking at lessons from the Systemic Centre for Social Work. Looking at areas of how they can engage with families in a different way and make improvements.</p> <p>BB had a question about the use of DHP mentioned in the report and asked if there were any plans to be more flexible and transparent in its use in different areas such as rent and deposit payments or using them for the purchase of white goods as this is an area where there is often a shortfall. More of a wrap-around provision.  RS explained that temporary accommodation soaks up the majority of the DHP pot and could be better used elsewhere in preventing or at least in delaying homelessness. In reducing the numbers of residents in temporary accommodation the team want to make effective use of that pot and RBKC prevention funding in areas such as supporting residents in the private rented sector, with bedroom tax and those subject to benefits cap.</p> <p>Joe Batty (JB) informed the group that Home store run by Quaker Social Action who were one of the organisations that were pivotal in getting accommodation furnished during resettlement has gone into liquidation. A large number of tenancies fail when homes people move into do not have basic furniture leading to a return to the street. There are currently no other options available for this provision. While JB praised the work done during the lockdown period he asked what work is being done with the immigration services to ensure that a large proportion of people who have no recourse to public funds will be resettled?  RS said he welcomed Joe and Baljit to e-mail with the issues and potential solutions for Rob and the team to think about and discuss with them.  RBKC joined other London councils in lobbying government about insufficient derogation funding. They have written to the Home Office to say something needs to be changed so residents can be supported. They are continuing to support resident with no recourse and working with Housing and other service providers such as ClemenJames to work with those that can get back into eligibility.  Finance has not changed which is a restriction but this is in the action plan.</p> <p>Cllr Judith Blakeman (JB) asked if meanwhile housing as recommended in the Affordable Housing SPV is being considered by the Council? In the interest of speed are prefabricated homes on sites such as Kensal and Earls Court being looked at?  Rob said that when this was explored he was told that so far no sites with potential within Kensington and Chelsea have been identified. Earls Court could present an opportunity but there has been a degree of nervousness mainly with owner concerns about what happens when development starts. Kensal Gassworks has issues with ownership with regard to planning. RS will continue to ask about this.</p> <p>Are rough sleeps housed under Covid-19 rules still being housed?  RS reported that 26-27 people are still in Holland Court Hotel they all have a settlement plan either needing more support or waiting for appropriate vacancies in appropriate temporary accommodation. There are no plans to evict anyone remaining in Holland Court Hotel. A number of residents have moved into supported accommodation already. A large number who could be deemed at risk of rough sleeping were identified and provided with temporary emergency accommodation. A fairly low priority need test threshold was used at this time and they were placed</p>	

in accommodation in Hillingdon, almost all have been moved to settled private rented accommodation through St Mungos.  
 RS noted that the numbers of rough sleepers have been rising across London. Less so currently in K&C but statistics show a rise in rough sleeping again. Not at levels seen during Covid-19 and immediately after when people lost jobs and were waiting for benefits to come through but the rise is concerning.

BB noted that RBKC doesn't support any direct housing advice in the not for profit sector, is that on the priority list?

Rob has raised the idea. At the moment there are no plans the focus is on the restructure and finances they have to use. However, they need to speak to the community engagement team see if funding can be used to boost prevention activities without compromising other areas.

Rob asked that if anyone comes across joint funding opportunities to let them know and they would do likewise. In future certain activities could be delivered in the community rather than through the Council.

BB also raised the idea of working in partnership in the wider areas of debt and benefits.

RS added that the policy team are interested in doing more visits with Early Help identifying residents that may be struggling. There may be a case of referral to another department being needed. Funding will be a big consideration.

Daniel Furlance who has just joined from Southwark and has experience in this area would be the best person to discuss this matter.

AS asked if there were plans to have an integrated shared information system? This would be pivotal to a more holistic approach to support ensuring that you know the history and interventions having taken place.

RS explained that there is nothing in place in terms of technology that can provide a shared system. Internal departments in the Council use different systems that are not compatible. There are also issues raised by GDPR. The use of public duty rather than consent for storage and sharing of certain information is being investigated. This might make sharing of information possible. An agreed framework of how referrals might work is being looked at.

AS asked RS and the team would be happy to attend the next forum on 8 September 2020.

RS said that Daniel Furlance and Linda might be to attend and introduce themselves and share data and information about housing and homelessness.

This should also be an opportunity to hear about the idea of a homelessness forum. Daniel Furlance has experience of them in Southwark.

## ATTENDANCE LIST

Name	Organisation
Abigail Simpson	Marie Stopes UK
Alex Blackwood	RBKC
Angela Spence	KCSC
Baljit Badesha	Nucleus
Carla Maistre	ADKC

Joe Batty	KCSC
Judith Blakeman	BME Forum and Notting Dale Ward Councillor
Lauren Best-Shaw	The ClementJames Centre
Megan Redhouse	Nucleus
Rob Shaw	RBKC
Sandy McDougall	RBKC
Tasio Cabello	Age UK Kensington and Chelsea
Zina Serageldin	RBKC

*The information above will appear in minutes for this meeting which will be made available to all the attendees and published on KCSC's website.*