

Item 22 - Homelessness Out of Hours Service Update

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Health Advisory Committee on 14 June 2022. The relevant Minute extract is below.

Housing & Health Advisory Committee (6 June 2022, Minute 12)

The Chief Officer - People and Places presented the report which gave an update to the Committee on the Council's contract with Centra to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service. Since October 2019, 135 calls were taken by the Out of Hours team which released increasing pressure on the Housing Advice team and provided continued support to residents out of office hours to find immediate emergency accommodation in line with legislation. The CCTV team took a weekly log of calls which were recorded for monitoring purposes along with internal Officer meetings. An on-call Housing Officer could be contacted by Centra in an emergency. The log was sent to Centra and the CCTV team in case of emergency.

Members expressed the importance of the out of hour's safety net. In response to questions Officers confirmed that during the initial months of the scheme in 2019, communications problems were identified but had been resolved since. Mental health and social services support provided a challenge, but it was emphasised that from a homelessness perspective the scheme was working well.

In response to Member queries The Chief Officer - People and Places advised that any issues with the service should be reported to the team and would be looked into. Officers would review the reported incident and the contact information for the service in light of Member queries.

Action 1: For the Chief Officer - People and Places to report back to the Committee with an update on an incident reported by a member on 22 May 2022 relating to a homelessness gentleman, which could not be resolved due to CCTV being unable to contact the homelessness out of hours service or on call housing officer.

It was confirmed that the Housing team would pick up the problems from the Out of hours homelessness service during office hours and the two operated in unison. Discretion was used once users had been checked and their validity assessed for placement in accommodation.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that an extension to the current contract with Centra for a further three years to deliver the Council's homelessness out of hours service, be approved.