

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1st October 2020

This committee has only been in existence for a few months, being the amalgamation of three previous scrutiny committees. Three main items were discussed: 1. Progress on the Council Plan concerning Healthy, Safe and Secure key actions. 2. Homelessness Strategy Delivery. 3 Scrutiny Work Plans. I was chairing the meeting as I am vice chair as the chair Doug Banks could not attend and so I could not take my usual notes. Items 1 and 2 do not contain much of interest for Alston Moor Parish Council so I will concentrate on item 2.

Homelessness Strategy Delivery.

This was presented by Councillor Judith Derbyshire, Housing and Health Portfolio Holder and Robert Docherty, Officer (?Housing).

There has been a reduction of presentations of homelessness over the last quarter. The total was 65 as compared to 75 for the previous one. 30% needed emergency accommodation. 14 have been housed in temporary accommodation, 9 in B&B and 31 moved to permanent accommodation. The causes are: family no longer willing to accommodate and domestic abuse. Domestic abuse presentations have dropped. The total cost from March until now is £53,000. This includes accomodating rough sleepers. The council has applied fir a £300,000 grant to fund additional accomodation and pay two support workers, one of which will help residents maintain their tenancies, the other will support those with complex needs such as those with drug/alcohol addiction, mental health and ex- prisoners.

Future Concerns: End of furlough: increased arrears, debt, stress leading to relationship breakdown and increased domestic abuse. End of eviction ban. Fewer properties available in the private sector.

New Green Scheme

Robert Docherty discussed a new scheme to help fuel poverty. The council is the only one in Cumbria which has applied for this funding. A few days ago Robert heard the good news that the council was awarded the grant. It is to improve the heating in hard to heat properties and Alston Moor will one of the three parishes which will be given priority. £500,000 has been awarded and grants will go to privately owned properties where the owner has an income below £30,000 (I think I have the correct criteria). The scheme will be in partnership with EON. The scheme will only fund green energy solutions such as ground source heat pumps. I am not sure whether insulation is included. Robert thought this was a great success for the council.

The next meeting will be on the third of December.