

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 22 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor T Wendels (Chairman)

Councillor M Brock, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor R Crowe, Councillor L Goff, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor J Lee and Councillor J Kellas

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Mrs R Holloway (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Mrs L Dales (Committee Member) and Councillor T Wildgust (Committee Member)

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

39 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED that there would be an audio recording of the meeting undertaken by the Council.

40 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 'new normal' meeting.

The Chairman informed the Committee that as part of the preparations for winter, a refresh of all the emergency flood resilience stores is taking place to ensure contact details and stocks within the stores are replenished prior to winter. The County Council have recently undertaken consultation on their new revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and a joint response from Public Protection and Planning was submitted.

The Council takes its Safeguarding duties seriously and refresher training has been provided over the past few months for all new staff. This will be further supported by training for all Business Managers early in 2022.

The local implementation of the Council's duties under the Domestic Abuse Act continue to be developed in partnership with the County Council and local partners. A domestic abuse case worker has been appointed and additional funding for the sanctuary scheme (which provides additional security measures to enable people to

stay in their home) has been secured. Further actions will be developed over the coming weeks and months.

The Chairman advised that the Annual Tenant Report for 2020-2021 has been produced, detailing performance over the past 12 months, how the rental income we collect from tenants has been spent and how tenants feel about our services, as well as sharing some of the future tasks they are looking to deliver. The Chairman reminded the Committee that it is an online report and to keep an eye out for it.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Tenant Forum has been busy with digital training and a two-day course on Mystery Shopping, which is hoped to start rolling out early next year. The Forum have reviewed the Repairs Policy and Consumer Regulation Gap Analysis as well as supporting a number of surveys of tenants and events.

A survey of all tenants in Chatham Court has provided further insight to what activities tenants would like to see at the hub (recalling this was part of the Safer Streets legacy) and the best times of day for these to happen. It is clear the children and youth activities are important and we are continuing to hold monthly sessions supported by Play Support and The Youth Service. The weekly drop in to see the Tenancy Officer has also started to gain pace, as has the coffee mornings with involved tenants seeing more new faces. New activities include a Gardening Club hosted by Newark in Bloom, which started in October and Police drop in sessions throughout November are being trialled.

The Chairman advised that currently they are experiencing increased levels of ASB, criminal behaviour and breaches of tenancy on one of our larger estates on the Sherwood side of the district. This has prompted a multi-agency approach involving our housing team, the Police, the local members, colleagues in Environmental Health and Public Protection and the youth service. A number of enforcement actions have already been undertaken and secured at court; including three injunctions prohibiting individuals entering the estate.

The Chairman was pleased to report some great progress in relation to the replacement of the temporary accommodation at Seven Hills, as the project team have reached the milestone of handing the vacant site to the contractors on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 following months of hard work and planning to make alternative arrangements for customers. The new provision will be constructed using modern methods and there are many green initiatives being included, the Chairman advised the Committee to watch this space for further updates.

The team has worked closely with colleagues from the varying departments including Tenancy and Estates and Repairs to source and make ready the alternative provision. All in all it has been a massive team effort to get to this point but the reward for all this hard work will be a brand new facility due to complete in 2023. Demolition of the existing site has commenced and Woodheads, the allocated contractor, will then begin preparing the site to start construction early January 2022.

This followed hot on the heels of the formal opening of The Broadleaves Extra Care Village in Boughton on November 5<sup>th</sup>. The Chairman was delighted to attend this

event along with the Vice-Chairman and the Chairman of the Council and met some of the residents. This is a very thoughtful and well-designed build that is something it is hoped members, the residents and those who have brought it to life are very proud of.

42 FORWARD PLAN - DECEMBER 2021 TO NOVEMBER 2022

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for December 2021 to November 2022 with the Chairman inviting Members to put forward any items they would wish to be considered by Committee at a future meeting.

It was noted that there would be only 2 meetings of the Committee taking place in the new year as moving from a Committee system to a Cabinet from May. A Committee Member therefore requested that a further Yorke Drive update be provided in March. The Chairman was also mindful that any other relative reports were also included in the January or March meetings.

43 REVIEW AND UPDATE OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection seeking Members approval for amendments to the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants Policy.

The report highlighted to the Committee that Disabled Facilities Grants are the mandatory grants that are designed to provide adaptations to the home to allow a disabled person to continue living in the community. These grants are subject to a means test and some applicants do have to pay a contribution towards the cost of the work. Referrals for these grants come from the Occupational Therapy team of the County Council.

Providing a policy gives a transparency of approach to service users and they can clearly see the circumstances that might apply to their need.

The Committee were informed that the revised policy does not differ fundamentally from the previous document but seeks to address a number of consistency issues identified via a Nottinghamshire County wide review, which included the seven District Councils and the County Council Adult and Children's Occupational Therapy services.

AGREED (unanimously) that the draft Disabled Facilities Grant Policy be approved.

44 NEWARK AND SHERWOOD COMMUNITY LOTTERY ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FROM INCOME GENERATION PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report from the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager providing an update on the progress of Newark and Sherwood Community Lottery since its launch in May 2021 and to secure approval for the process of spend for income generated through both the lottery 'Central Fund' and 'Operator Fund'.

The Committee were informed that there are currently 54 Good Causes within the District signed up to the lottery, meeting the annual target of 50 within 3 months of its launch date. Case studies and positive feedback from registered 'Good Causes' were provided in Appendix A of the report.

The report advised that the lottery is forecast to generate approx. £22,600 each year, with a full breakdown of finances provided in Appendix B.

One of the key proposals was the total income generated through the 'Central Fund' is used to establish a 'lottery within a lottery', whereby funds are distributed to registered 'Good Causes' through a 6 monthly raffle style draw.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the proposed method and process of spend for income generated through Newark and Sherwood Community Lottery 'Central Fund' (3.1 and 3.2), and the 'Operator Fund' (3.3) be approved.
- b) the process for spending income generated through both the 'Central Fund' and 'Operator Fund' is reviewed on an annual basis, with the flexibility to adapt and modify the process if required, subject to Member approval as part of the annual report.

#### 45 NEWARK AND SHERWOOD EEM LOCAL INITIATIVE FUND PROPOSAL

The Committee considered the report from the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager to secure Committee approval to use the Council's EEM (Efficiency East Midlands) contribution through the establishment of the Newark and Sherwood EEM Local Initiative Fund and the proposed process of distributing donations within the district.

The report highlighted that EEM is a non-for profit organisation that chooses to distribute a proportion of its operating surplus to its Members in the form of community donations. The council currently holds EEM community donations to the total value of £26,616 (£12,783 2018/2019 and £13,833 2019/2020). Donations for the year 2020/2021 are not yet confirmed and are dependent on a sufficient surplus with consideration of the uncertainty of the pandemic.

EEM have requested that the donation should be spent on a project or multiple projects that benefit a community and for those that are not covered by budgets as standard. EEM also request that details of how the donation is spent are provided to enable good news stories to be shared publically.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the establishment of the proposed Newark and Sherwood EEM Local Initiative Fund as outlined in 3.1 be approved.
- b) the proposed process for submitting, reviewing and approving applications as outlined in 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

- c) the proposed reporting and update arrangements as outlined in 3.4 be approved.

46 SAFER STREETS FUND

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection updating the Members on the progress of the Safer Streets Two project.

The report highlighted the success of the Safer Streets project and how a smaller Safer Streets project continues with a similar focus on crimes associated with the areas identified referring to the map at appendix one.

The partners being involved are:

Newark and Sherwood DC

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Nottinghamshire Police

Nottinghamshire County Council

The project is scheduled to end by 31 March 2022 and the Committee were informed that progress is going well and a table at 2.5 of the report as at end of September 2021 sets out the work achieved so far.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the progress of the Safer Streets Two project.

47 HOUSING SERVICE COMPLIANCE 2ND QUARTER OUT TURN PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the report from the Director for Housing, Health and Wellbeing providing the Committee with an overview of compliance performance of the housing service at the end of September 2021.

The report provided the compliance performance to provide Members with an oversight and input into the essential services. The report included information on the following:

- Landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures including fire protection, gas, lifts, asbestos, electrical and water. It also summarised details of the Council's housing stock.

A committee member referred to Appendix 1 and highlighted how 'Red' performance can be seen as 'good' to then show as working to increase performance.

The operational performance of other key housing services was provided as a separate report to the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee noted the performance of the housing service compliance functions.

48 COMMUNITY PLAN PERFORMANCE - YEAR TO DATE

The Committee considered the report from the Transformation Manager presenting the year to date performance report covering Q1 and Q2 (April to September 2021).

The Committee were informed that Quarter 1 had not been reported to the Committee as the development of the new style of reporting had been underway. As an alternative, a year to date (combined quarters 1 and quarter 2) report had been developed and was attached as Appendix 1. Additional performance indicators were provided at Appendix 2 as to the Council's tenanted properties.

The report provided a new approach to performance to develop performance management from a counting device and into a tool for change. This expanded report provides greater learning and feedback and easier for residents to understand. The Chairman noted that tenants were happy as seen as the Council were doing something right.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members reviewed the Community Plan Performance report attached to the report as Appendix 1.
- (b) Members noted the RIPA and Ombudsman reports (Appendices 3 and 4).

49 YORKE DRIVE AND LINCOLN ROAD PLAYING FIELDS REGENERATION - UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Growth & Regeneration Lead Officer updating the Committee on progress with the Yorke Drive and Lincoln Road Playing Fields Regeneration project including the successful grant funding award from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of £1.05m.

The report was able to show the next steps to achieving the next milestone of submitting reserved planning.

The Committee were informed that the Residents Panel had resumed, the last meeting being held on 10 November which made clear the Council's ongoing commitment to the regeneration scheme and what the residents can expect to see on the ground in the coming months following the result of a successful bid with DLUHC.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) progress on the delivery of the York Drive Regeneration Project is noted.
- (b) a further recommendation to Policy & Finance that as and when grant funding is received, that is absorbed into the capital programme budget to enable spend to be achieved within timeframes set.

50 WINTER PROVISION UPDATE

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Business Manager for

Housing and Estate Management to update Members on the winter provision being provided for any rough sleepers in the Newark and Sherwood district this year.

An update was provided at the meeting to inform the Committee that Public Health had advised both the Council and the Church that plans they wanted to put in place were not Covid safe and to be withdrawn for this year and that the Council would have to revert to looking for self-contained accommodation as Plan B.

Future funding is expected over the next three years and the Committee were advised that currently there is one rough sleeper, who has been made an offer of accommodation but had not at this point taken up the offer.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members noted the content of the report as updated.

51 HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2022 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services comparing the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2022 with the Projected Outturn forecast for the period, based on meetings with Financial Services staff and the appropriate Business Manager. These are based on six months' performance information on the Council's revenue and capital budgets, including:

- General Fund (GF) Revenue
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Capital Programme

The Committee were reminded that it was requested by Members at the Policy & Finance Committee during February 2020 that reports were presented to individual Committees, for noting, for them to understand the financial position of their Committee.

The Committee were presented with the report for noting and to be taken to the next Policy & Finance Committee on 25 November 2021.

AGREED (unanimously) that the contents of the report be noted.

Meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Chairman