

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, 11 June 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT:                   Councillor B Laughton (Chairman)  
                                  Councillor T Wendels (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor Mrs C Brooks, Councillor  
Mrs I Brown, Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor N Mison, Councillor  
N Mitchell, Councillor Mrs P Rainbow, Councillor Mrs S Saddington,  
Councillor Mrs S Soar and Councillor D Thompson

APOLOGIES FOR       Councillor M Buttery  
ABSENCE:

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

Councillor Mrs Saddington declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 11 - Annual Exempt Report as her husband volunteered for the CVS.

2       DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

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

3       MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4       PRESENTATION BY ROBERT WOODHEADS - HOUSING DELIVERY IN THE DISTRICT

Craig Pygall, Alistair Taylor and Chris Tutin from Woodheads Developments were in attendance to deliver a presentation to Members on progress of the delivery of housing developments across the District in partnership with Newark and Sherwood Homes and the Council. They described the methodology behind the developments and the core values of the company, and how in practice this facilitated apprenticeships, local employment and local investment.

Members of the Committee thanked Woodheads for the presentation, and welcomed the progress, successful partnership working and their social attitude. The provision of high quality affordable housing with a local commitment was applauded. Members heard that the savings achieved, of around £380,000 were made by changes to how the project was run, finding added value where possible, and clustering the site developments. No savings were made by changing anything from inside the properties.

Members were impressed with the delivery of the project, that quality of the housing provided and the savings achieved and passed their congratulations to the officers and partners involved.

## 5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY 2017/2018

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager- Strategic Housing to provide detail of affordable housing delivery across the district for the financial year 2017/18. The Committee heard that 135 homes had been delivered during the period, with 14 at social rent, 96 affordable rent, 21 intermediate ownership and 4 discount for sale.

Members welcomed the report and were pleased with the affordable housing delivery. Members queried how the tenure of the properties was allocated. The Business Manager- Strategic Housing explained that some funding sources dictated the tenure, for example Homes England Funding had to be affordable rent. Officers tried to provide a range of tenures to suit the different needs of tenants. The Committee were pleased with the level of negotiation between the Council and developers in their aim to provide affordable housing.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee noted the delivery of affordable housing in 2017/18, future anticipated delivery and progress with the Council's five year development programme making any observations as appropriate.

## 6 LOWDHAM FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

The Community Safety Business Manager was in attendance to present a report seeking a financial contribution for delivery of a flood risk management scheme in Lowdham.

The village of Lowdham had suffered from repeat flood events in 1999, 2007, 2012 and 2013. The Lowdham Flood Risk Management Scheme aimed to protect up to 200 residential properties at risk of flooding for an estimated investment of £6m. The scheme had funding in place of £3.45m. Following a review of the scheme's benefits, the Environment Agency were requesting an increase in Flood Defence Grant in Aid to £3m, which if approved, would bring the total funding available for the scheme to around £5m. The Outline Business Case for the scheme was due to be complete by summer 2018. Following this, if an affordable and technically viable solution could be identified, the scheme would progress through to detailed design in 2019. Construction could then begin in 2020 for a two year duration, with scheme completion expected by late 2022.

Members noted that the Council held a remaining grant fund allocation of £140,000 for 'Major Flood Alleviation' within the capital programme. In addition to this, the Council approved at its meeting 8th March 2018, within the budget report, to create a reserve for £250,000 as a Flooding Defence Reserve.

The Committee were in general agreement that this was an important scheme which could protect 200 properties. Members noted that not only would this help alleviate the immediate and devastating event of flooding, but could also help reduce insurance for residents in the area, however, it was vital that the Environment Agency updated the flood risk maps following works. The Committee considered that an amount of around £200,000 would be appropriate and this should be put forward to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee consider committing a level of funding towards the cost of the Lowdham Flood Alleviation Scheme in the region of £200,000, and make a recommendation to the Policy & Finance Committee for that amount to be allocated from the current major flood alleviation scheme currently included in the District Council's capital programme.

## 7 LICENSING STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager - Environmental Health and Licensing which outlined the changes to the licensing regime for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

Members heard that the definition of an HMO had changed meaning that the definition now applied to any house regardless of the number of storeys. Therefore all houses where there were 5 or more people and they were living in 2 or more separate households would now require licensing as HMOs. The second element of the definition applied to a flat which was occupied by 5 persons or more, in 2 households or more and was in a converted building: or in certain circumstances was in a building where part of the building was used for commercial or other non-residential purposes. A licence was required for an HMO, to be granted by the local authority to a 'fit and proper' person.

In order to provide consistency and to ensure that landlords were well informed about the standards that their properties were expected to achieve a set of amenity standards had been developed.

In discussion, Members heard that officers could try to locate those properties newly falling into the requirements to have a licence through contact with letting agencies and employment companies. Once located, officers had a right of entry and inspection. It was also noted that the requirement may also provide an additional tool in tackling modern slavery.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the introduction of the new licence regime relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation Members be noted; and
- (b) the amenity standards set in Appendix One to the report be adopted.

## 8 ENERGY EFFICIENCY (PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY)(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2015

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager- Environmental Health and Licensing regarding the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 and the implications for Newark & Sherwood. The Regulations set out the minimum level of energy efficiency for private rented property in England and Wales. In relation to the domestic private rented sector the minimum level was an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of band E. The report detailed the financial penalties set by the regulations, and those officers who would be designated as authorised to enforce the regulations by issuing compliance and penalty notices.

Members discussed the report, and noted that it was incumbent on the lettings agency to ensure that a property to let had an energy efficiency certificate and this requirement was well known within the industry. The District did not have a lot of private landlords with large portfolios and the Council would work with landlords to enable them to have time to undertake upgrading works prior to undertaking enforcement action.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the introduction of the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 be noted;
- (b) the Officers as set out on paragraph 5.1 be authorised to enforce the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015; and
- (c) the financial penalties as set out in paragraph 4.15 be adopted.

## 9 RECONSTITUTION OF WORKING PARTIES

The Committee considered the report to appoint two Members to the Local Development Framework (LDF) Task Group established by the Economic Development Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that Councillors Bruce Laughton and Councillor Mrs Celia Brooks be appointed to the LDF Task Group.

## 10 ANNUAL EXEMPT REPORT

Councillor Mrs Saddington declared a Personal Interest as her husband volunteered for the CVS.

The Business Manager - Customer Services and External Communications was in attendance to present a report which detailed the exempt business considered by the Committee since 16 May 2017. One item had been considered- Moving Ahead- Potential Co-location to Castle House.

The Committee considered the detail of the report and agreed that the report should remain confidential as it contained financial information which was still relevant.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report Moving Ahead – Potential Co-location to Castle House should remain exempt and not released into the public domain.

## 11 COUNCIL HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME - ANNUAL UPDATE

The Business Manager- Housing and Safeguarding was in attendance to present a report providing an update on the implementation of the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. The scheme had been in operation for 12 months, and following analysis, the majority of the changes had produced positive improvement and were achieving the desired outcomes.

The Committee considered the report and noted the impact of the changes and agreed the positive impact of the Scheme. The Committee thanked the Officers and Members involved in the work to produce the Scheme.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

## 12 OLLERTON PUBLIC SERVICES HUB UPDATE

The Business Manager - Customer Services and External Communications presented a report regarding the development of a public services hub in Ollerton. The Council was the lead authority in creation of a joint service from Ollerton and Boughton Town Hall. The existing service was very popular and demonstrated increased demand for services.

Officers had recently met with representatives from the CCG to discuss health provision inclusion. At the meeting, representatives from the CCG had confirmed their interest but needed more time to consider the detail and financial implications. It had therefore been agreed that another meeting be held in three months' time.

Members of the Committee were pleased with the effort to drive service provision within Ollerton, and local members were acutely aware of the difficulty with healthcare provision in the area. Members requested that Officers continue with their work to expand the joint services available in Ollerton. It was also noted that Universal Credit was due to roll out in the area in September and therefore additional resource had been allocated to assist members of the public with their claim process.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the content of the report be noted; and
- (b) further updates be presented to this Committee.

## 13 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Housing and Safeguarding to update Members on safeguarding matters and to confirm that the Council's activity was in line with its safeguarding responsibilities, policies and procedures.

The Committee noted the updates from the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards, the Corporate Safeguarding Group and details of case management for the period. Details of internal training and training for licensed taxi drivers was also detailed in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee consider the contents of this report and comment accordingly.

14 URGENCY ITEM - AMENDMENTS TO NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL ALLOCATION SCHEME

The Committee noted the urgent item in relation to changes to the Newark and Sherwood District Council Allocation Scheme reflecting the requirement for implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act on 5 April 2018.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

Meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

Chairman