

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, 25 November 2019 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor T Wendels (Chairman)
Councillor R Holloway (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs K Arnold, Councillor M Brock, Councillor Mrs B Brooks,
Councillor Mrs I Brown, Councillor M Brown, Councillor S Carlton,
Councillor L Dales and Councillor L Goff

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor P Harris

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor J Lee (Committee Member)

26 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.

27 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED that the meeting would be recorded in accordance with the Council's usual practice.

28 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 TENANTS INVOLVEMENT PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Richard Tracy and Ginnette Hardy of the Newark & Sherwood Tenants' Forum which sought to advise Members of the Forum's history, expertise and awards received. It provided Members with information as to the current mechanisms for tenant involvement and the achievements of the previous 12 months together with the fund raising undertaken from 2016-2019 and lastly informed Members on the Forum's future plans.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Tracy and Ms Hardy for their presentation and invited questions and/or comments from Members of the Committee.

A Member raised a number of concerns about repair works undertaken on Newark and Sherwood Homes properties following comments received from tenants.

A Member queried as to the reasons for the reduction in numbers of those involved with Tenants and Residents Association. Ms Hardy commented that the reduction could be attributed to a number of issues e.g. loss of a dedicated officer for tenant involvement.

The Chairman thanked again Mr. Tracy and Ms Hardy, adding that he was keen to see the voice of tenants being heard when the housing function transitioned back to the Council. He added that he would also welcome the Forum's involvement with the Homes & Communities Committee.

NOTED the presentation of Mr. Richard Tracy and Ms Ginnette Hardy.

30 SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought to provide Members with an update on the successful delivery of the Council's 'Award Winning' resettlement scheme and to seek approval to continue with the existing partnership model and proposed pledge for 2020/21 which was in accordance with the requirements set out in the recently announced Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

The report set out the background to the Government's pledge to resettle up to 20,000 refugees who had fled Syria over a 5 year period and the work undertaken by this Council to participate in that resettlement. Paragraph 5.0 of the report set out the proposal for the Council following the current resettlement scheme ending and the one year extension.

In considering the report Members agreed that the existing scheme had proved to be an outstanding success and were fully supportive of the proposals for the one year extension.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Council's ongoing commitment to resettlement be endorsed;
- (b) resettlement in the region of a further 9 individuals (approximately 2/3 families) in line with Newark & Sherwood's per capita share of the 5,000 national target, the precise number to be agreed by the Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations following consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson be supported; and
- (c) the successful local partnership delivery model should continue and that the MoU with Nottingham City Council as the accountable body for managing funds from the Home Office and commissioning activities in accordance with their Contract & Procedure Rules and GDPR Policy & Protocols be extended for a further year, until March 2021.

31 HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME - SUITABILITY & PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY CRITERIA

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations which sought to provide Members with an overview of the suitability/parental responsibility criteria contained within the Council’s Housing Allocations Scheme and which also sought approval for some minor amendments to that aspect of the Scheme.

The report set out the background to the report being presented to Committee highlighting that quarterly meetings were held between a Council and Newark and Sherwood Homes Officer Project Group to ensure that the Scheme remained fit for purpose and complies with all legal responsibilities. The current suitability criteria was listed in paragraph 3 of the report with the proposed amendments detailed in paragraph 4.

In considering the report a Member highlighted that the father of child(ren) always appeared to be the parent who was not allocated suitable accommodation, despite sometimes having joint custody. In response, Officers stated that evidence supported that one parent took the lead parental responsibility role and that they were the individual who took precedence and this was not determined by gender.

AGREED (with 10 votes for with 1 vote against) that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) the proposed minor amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme be approved.

32 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT WITH NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought to update Members on the implementation of the Joint Working Agreement with Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service and how it had improved local enforcement.

The report set out the background to the establishment of the joint working arrangements and what progress had been made with the trial of the national data sharing case management system (ECINS) which was to manage data sharing for vulnerable people at risk of fires within their own homes. This enabled each agency in Nottinghamshire to access information and to update cases to ensure an open flow of information. The proposals were detailed in paragraph 4 of the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the positive contribution that the adoption of the Joint Working Agreement for Nottinghamshire Housing Authorities and Nottingham Fire & Rescue Services be noted; and

- (b) the proposal to continue its application be supported.

33 ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Safety & Risk Management Officer which sought to update the Committee on performance with regard to corporate health and safety compliance within the previous 12 months and which also provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work undertaken.

The report set out the health & safety responsibilities of various post holders within the Council together with those of Members. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report provided Members with information as to violent and significant incidents with details of work undertaken detailed in paragraph 6.

In response to what protocols were in place should a member of staff have to deal with potentially violent members of the public, the Safety & Risk Management Officer advised that interview rooms and/or reception were fitted with panic alarms, CCTV with security on site. Interview rooms also offered individuals a means of escape to a safe place with appropriate risk assessment having been carried out.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) the actions taken to deal with health and safety issues that have arisen across the Council's activities over the past 12 months be considered.

34 PERFORMANCE MONITORING: NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Housing Strategy & Development which sought to provide Members with performance information relating to the operations of Newark and Sherwood Homes (NSH) in accordance with the Management Agreement and Annual Delivery Plan.

The report set out the background to the formulation of the Management Agreement with NSH and the determination and scrutiny of the key performance indicators. Appendix A1 to the report was an overview of NSH performance for the 2018/2019 financial year with Appendix A2 identifying the current performance outturn for 2019/2020, up to Quarter 2. Appendix B provided an analysis and commentary of performance where targets had not been met with Appendix C providing the STAR Survey which covered tenants' and residents' satisfaction for a number of areas.

In relation to tenant involvement, Officers advised that there was a range of mechanisms in place for tenants to become involved which included a selection process, whereby a scrutiny panel looked at specific areas of work. It was noted that the panel did not assist specific tenants but would hold NSH to account. It was further noted that there was no formal process for an individual tenant representative to bring forward an individual case unless the tenant agreed for them to be their advocate.

AGREED (by 10 votes for with 1 abstention) that the strategic performance information supplied in relation to the activities of Newark and Sherwood Homes be noted.

35 HOUSING MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION - PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Commercialisation & Major Projects which sought to provide Members with an update on the progress of the housing management implementation project.

The report set out the background to the decision to bring the housing management service back in-house with details in relation to: TUPE; Staff Engagement; Operational; Governance; Tenants; and Risk Register being provided at paragraph 3.

In considering the report Members thanked all the staff involved with the project and that it was anticipated that there would be a smooth transition back for both staff and tenants alike. Members also suggested that the relevant Director forward to the staff involved their thanks for the work undertaken to bring the housing management service back in-house.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

36 HOMES & COMMUNITIES FORWARD PLAN (DECEMBER 2019 TO NOVEMBER 2020)

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Homes & Communities Committee's Forward Plan be noted; and
- (b) Officers continue to add items to the Plan with the following issues being suggested by Members:
 - (i) provision of homeless shelter over the Christmas period; and
 - (ii) invitation to Leisure & Environment Committee for the next presentation in relation to Sherwood Forest Hospitals and the impact from winter pressures.

37 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

Chairman