

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** Broadcast from Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 23 November 2020 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, Councillor L Goff, Councillor J Lee and Councillor Mrs S Saddington

ALSON IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs L Hurst

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

The meeting was held remotely, in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

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

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

69 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

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

70 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2020

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and to be signed by the Chairman.

71 POLICING IN NEWARK AND SHERWOOD – INSPECTOR HEATHER SUTTON

Inspector Heather Sutton from Nottinghamshire Police gave a short briefing to the Committee with reference to current activities in Newark and Sherwood.

72 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – INTERVENTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT AND POLICY REVIEW

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection providing information on the current position with regard to antisocial behaviour across the district and the range of interventions and enforcement used to combat this behaviour.

The report proposed that following Newark and Sherwood Homes having had their own Antisocial Behaviour Policy and the move to Housing Services within the Council, it would therefore be appropriate to have a single corporate policy for antisocial behaviour.

Officers from both the Public Protection and Housing Services are working together to provide a draft policy for March Committee cycle.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the data relating to ASB, requesting a 6 monthly update; and that,
- (b) Members supported the production of a single ASB Policy for the Council.

73 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman updated the committee that since the last meeting, the public protection team has been supporting residents and businesses through the introduction of tiered restrictions to help give advice and guidance around living with Covid-19. The officers have been supported by colleagues across the Council who became community advocates out and about across the District to support residents in understanding the restrictions. Now the situation has changed to national restrictions and the team are responding to issues around ASB and enforcement issues. The team continues to be very busy in providing a balance of enforcement and support. The Chairman then went on to thank all of those staff who have supported the Council in these activities and that it was appreciated.

The Chairman then highlighted how the Housing, Health and Wellbeing Directorate has also been busy with continued focus on responding to Covid through HART, supporting residents at risk of homelessness and proactively supporting colleagues and residents around wellbeing during this time.

The Chairman informed the committee that the Tenant Engagement Officer was now in place and could therefore look forward to seeing the tenant engagement review moving forward over the coming months.

The Chairman confirmed that last week saw the much anticipated release of the Housing White Paper – two years after the Green Paper was released. There is focus on realigning the relationship between tenant and landlord with greater transparency and accountability and changing the role of the Social Housing Regulator to extend their reach to consumer regulation. A paper will be coming to the January committee to help understand the changes this will bring to the role as a Landlord and to the tenants.

The Chairman informed the committee that tenants and colleagues will be consulted in completing a self-assessment of the Council's compliance with regulatory standards and the Housing Ombudsman's effective complaints handling.

The Chairman also highlighted a paper on the agenda to discuss the future delivery of the grounds maintenance service and how it provides the opportunity to bring greater accountability, quality and consistency to this service.

The Chairman expressed to committee members that they had a packed agenda and going forward a lot of work for the Committee and gave thanks to the teams continuing to work hard and provide services for residents during these challenging times and approaching the festive season.

74 FORWARD PLAN - DECEMBER 2020 TO NOVEMBER 2021

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for December 2020 to November 2021 with the Chairman inviting Members to put forward any items they would wish to be considered by Committee at a future meeting.

One Member showed concern that some items go to this committee, then are taken to the Policy & Finance Committee, with a suggestion to go directly to Policy & Finance for decision.

75 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE OF HRA LAND

The Committee considered the report from the Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing providing Members with a business case for Newark and Sherwood's Street Scene Service to deliver the Grounds Maintenance of HRA (Housing Revenue Account, or Housing Service land) land going forward, rather than contracting to a third party for this service.

To obtain an in principle decision to bring the existing contract to an end and bring the service in-house.

Members presented with details of enhanced levels of service available, to form part of a future consultation (with tenants subject to approval of business case).

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members approved in principle the termination of the existing grounds maintenance contract and recommended that the grounds maintenance service for the HRA be in sourced and provided through the NSDC Street Scene.
- (b) Members to request the decision from this committee and the Leisure & Environment Committee for consideration of matters relating to this proposal that fall within its remit before being sent to Policy & Finance Committee for approval.

76 OLLERTON LOCAL HOUSING OFFICE AND RE-PURPOSE

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Customer Services to seek approval to refurbish the Ollerton local office and refocus the purpose of it to become a multi-use facility, subject to the Policy & Finance

Committee approving the required budget.

The report highlighted that the investment in Ollerton would bridge provision of a local outreach whilst the Council progresses its longer term plans for the area. All residents will receive a good quality, one stop service for all their council services and well as a much needed self-service provision.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members supported the proposal to refurbish and re-purpose the local housing office in Ollerton, as detailed in the report, and recommend to the Policy & Finance Committee that this project be added to the HRA Capital Programme for 2020/21.

77 REVISED CUSTOMER FEEDBACK POLICY

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Customer Services to seek approval of the revised Customer Feedback Policy, subject to final approval by the Policy & Finance Committee.

The Committee were informed that this policy brings together feedback arrangements across the whole Council and will enable this to be dealt with in a timely manner by a manager best placed to resolve the issue with appropriate escalation if matters are unresolved. This will be a strong foundation for using customer feedback to inform and improve the council services.

AGREED (unanimously) that Members of the Committee supported the revised Customer Feedback Policy and recommend it to the Policy & Finance Committee for final approval.

78 AIDS AND ADAPATIONS POLICY

The Committee considered the report from the Strategic Lead for Asset & Development providing the Committee with a revised policy for aids & adaptations to demonstrate Newark and Sherwood District Council's commitment to providing assistance and delivering solutions to meet the needs of customers that are long term sick or disabled, to enable them to enjoy a good quality of life and sustain independent living in their home, for as long as possible.

AGREED (unanimously) to approve the Aids and Adaptations Policy as drafted.

79 GAS SERVICING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

This item was withdrawn from the Agenda, following further work it will be brought to a future committee meeting.

80 HOUSING SERVICE COMPLIANCE PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the report from the Strategic Lead for Asset and Development, providing an overview of compliance performance of the housing service at the end of September 2020.

A previous report was considered by the committee in September 2020.

The Committee noted that performance was improving and the Chairman thanked the team for their efforts.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee noted the performance of the Housing Service compliance functions for September 2020.

81 HOUSING SERVICES QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the report from the Performance Officer, providing an overview of performance and satisfaction within housing services for Quarter 2 of 2020/21.

A previous report was considered by the committee in September 2020.

This report provided assurance to Members that standards and performance are high, and where they are not, actions are in place to address this, particularly where there are risks associated, therefore enabling the Committee to meet its obligations to tenants.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the performance of the housing service.
- (b) Members feedback their observations about the content and presentation of the performance information.

82 RIGHT TO BUY REPORT

The Committee considered the report from the Compliance and Assurance Officer, providing Members with a briefing about the Right to Buy which can apply to homes which are owned by the Council. In particular, the report explained the eligibility of properties which have been adapted to meet the needs of tenants.

The report explained how Right to Buy allows eligible council and housing association tenants in England to buy their home with a discount. The discount is currently capped at £84,200 for the Newark and Sherwood area, however this figure is set each year in line with CPI so can increase. The level of discount is calculated using the number of year's tenancy for the applicant, currently this is 35% for the first 5 years and an additional 1% for each year (houses) and 50% for the first 5 years and an additional 2% for each year (Flats).

Eligibility requirements apply to the tenants and some properties are exempt from the Right to Buy, legislation balances the rights of the tenant's aspirations of home ownership whilst recognising the importance of protecting the housing stock to meet the needs of current and future residents.

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

83 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY 2019/20

The Committee considered the report from the Housing Development Officer providing the Committee with detail on affordable housing delivery across the district for the financial year 2019/20, along with a guide on future anticipated delivery.

The report provided the Committee with an update on the progress being made to deliver the approved 5 year council housing (Housing Revenue Account) development programme. The Committee to receive further updates going forward in the forward plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee noted the affordable housing delivery and progress of the Council's five year development programme.

84 ROUGH SLEEPER UPDATES

The Committee considered the report from the Homelessness Strategy and Safeguarding Officer informing Committee Members of the annual rough sleeper estimate for 2020 for Newark and Sherwood and provided an update on the rough sleeper initiative funding and work programme and update on the winter night shelter plans for 2019/20.

The Committee found the report to be very informative and thanked the team. Members were encouraged to let Officers know of any rough sleepers so support could be provided.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Committee noted the content of the report and endorsed the ongoing work to support rough sleepers and those vulnerably housed in the Newark and Sherwood District.

85 HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE AND CAPITAL FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2021 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services comparing the Revised Budgets for the period ending 31 March 2021 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 report explained 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 26 November 2020.

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

86 URGENCY ITEM – COMMUNITY LOTTERY – GAMBLING COMMISSION LICENCE SUBMISSION

The report provided the Committee with the urgency decision that had been taken to secure urgent delegated approval to adopt a number of bespoke policies, procedures and terms and conditions agreements that were required to meet the compliance requirements of the Gambling Commission (GC) to secure the Council's Community Lottery Licence.

NOTED the Urgency Item – Minute of Decision.

87 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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

88 URGENCY ITEM – NEXT STEPS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the exempt report regarding the Urgency Item – Next Steps Accommodation Programme.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chairman