

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 15 September 2016 at 18:30

PRESENT:-

Councillor Carpenter (in the Chair); Councillors Borg, Grant, K Grey, Mavroudis, Robinson-Payne, Walch, Waters-Bunn & Williamson.

Councillor Annison attended as a substitute for Councillor Hacon.

Councillor Bensly attended as a substitute for Councillor M Coleman.

Councillor Smith attended as a substitute for Councillor Flaxman-Taylor.

Councillor Jeal attended as an observer.

Mr R Read (Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods), Mr T Chaplin (Group Manager Housing Services), Mrs V George (Group Manager Housing Health & Well-being), Mr R Gregory (Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities) and Mr P Shucksmith (Senior Environmental Ranger).

Mr G Hollingdale (Managing Director - GYN), Mr S Baker (Property Services Manager - GYN) & Mr R Oliver (Asset Manager - GYN).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors M Coleman, Flaxman-Taylor & Hacon.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors K Grey & Smith declared a personal interest in agenda item 15, but in accordance with the Council's Constitution were allowed to speak and vote on the matter.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2016 were confirmed.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the Forward Plan.

5 PRESENTATION BY GY NORSE ON HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT

Mr Oliver, Assets Manager, GY NORSE, gave a presentation to the Committee on Housing Asset Management.

The Chairman thanked Mr Oliver for his informative presentation.

6 GYBC SOCIAL HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD POLICY

The Group Manager Housing Services reported that the Council had recognised procedures for investigating social housing tenancy fraud but did not have a published policy. The draft policy presented to the Committee for consideration brought together current practice and provided a clear message to tenants, residents and staff, of the Council's approach to tenancy fraud.

A Member asked if Community Housing had a dedicated Housing Fraud Officer as fraud was riddled with technicalities and officers needed to be trained correctly to deal with cases of fraud with tact and sensitivity. The Group Manager Tenancy Services reported that most cases of housing fraud were investigated by Estate Manager's and all housing staff were trained to operate with tact and sensitivity at all times.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee approve the Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy.

7 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT PERIOD 4 2016-17

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that the majority of the HRA revenue income and expenditure budgets were on track with the budget, with only changes to the repairs and maintenance budget and revenue funding for capital works. The forecast deficit for the year had increased to £1.4m from an original £1.1m. The deficit would be financed from the HRA revenue reserves. The capital budget had increased by £759k, which was good news, as this would result in higher volumes of delivery.

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that it was planned to introduce a solid 5 year Capital Programme.

A Member requested that the loss of parking spaces for tenants and residents on Daphne Way which resulted from the Council disposing of the Shrublands Community Centre and associated car park without any consultation with Ward Members needed to be addressed, as lack of parking was a real issue for the residents. The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that it could be considered for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee note the 2016/17 Housing Revenue Budget Monitoring Position,

(ii) That the Committee agree an increase to the existing 2016/17 HRA Capital Programme, as detailed in Table 5 of the report,

(iii) That the Committee agree a virement from HRA reserves to revenue contribution to capital, as detailed in Table 3 of the report, subject to approval from the GYBC Section 151 Officer; and

(iv) That the Committee agree a virement from HRA reserves repairs & maintenance budget to the HRA Capital Programme, as detailed in Table 5 of the report, subject to approval from the GYBC Section 151 Officer.

8 CAR ENTHUSIASTS - GREAT YARMOUTH SEAFRONT

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported on the current and ongoing issues around the escalation of unauthorised car and motorbike enthusiast events on Great Yarmouth seafront and proposed multi-agency response, including the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) by the Council.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that several projects and operations had been attempted in the past to deal with this issue and had had varying levels of success. In late 2015, complaints had fallen to the lowest ever, due to a decrease in numbers of enthusiasts on the seafront. However, in 2016 there had been an escalation in the size of these events, unlike anything that had been witnessed for a number of years.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that existing powers and byelaws/legal orders available to agencies did not allow enforcement of all the issues in the affected area and along the remainder of the seafront. The proposed area for the PSPO would cover the entire length of Great Yarmouth Seafront from the Seashore Holiday Park in the north to the entrance to the Port in the south together with anticipated displacement routes within the immediate vicinity.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that the introduction of a PSPO presented an opportunity to tackle the anti-social behaviour associated with unofficial vehicle events. This would not prevent organised tourism events from happening on the seafront. Enforcement of the PSPO would be at the discretion of the Council. A further Traffic Regulation Order around parking times would help to assist the Council in enforcing issues relating to parked vehicles causing a nuisance for residents and local businesses.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that the establishment of a PSPO would have immediate financial implications for the Council. The Council would have an obligation to provide appropriate signage within the designated area of a PSPO. The cost would be approximately £5k to £7k. If the Council decided to delegate powers to enforce a PSPO to Civil Enforcement Officers or Environmental Services Officers this would incur overtime staffing levels on a Sunday evening. There would also be a requirement for additional staff time to prepare paperwork should cases progress to court.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that an establishment of a further Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to address parking issues would cost approximately £5k. Norfolk County Council were exploring how they might be able to resource this work. A TRO would take approximately 8 to 9 months to implement.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that a consultation had been launched on 24 August and would run until 21 September 2016. To date, 92 responses had been received.

A Member requested that the proposed area for the PSPO be extended to include Jellicoe Road/Fremantle Road/North Denes Bridge as the car enthusiasts used these roads as a warm up track. A Member requested that the PSPO include no defecating or urinating. The Group Manager Housing & Communities agreed to include these requests in the consultation.

The Group Manager Neighbourhoods & Communities reported that he would bring the consultation findings and a further report on the implementation of the PSPO to the next Committee meeting in October.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee note the report,

(ii) That the Committee approve additional set-up costs for signage associated with the implementation of a Vehicle-Related Public Space Protection Order and approve up to £7,000 for associated signage,

(iii) The Committee note the implications relating to resourcing the enforcement of a Vehicle-Related Public Space Protection Order and the implications relating to enforcement of the current Traffic Regulation Order; and

(iv) The Committee note the Norfolk County Council position with the regard to the implementation of further Traffic Regulation Orders.

9 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT SERVICES - COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Councillor Jeal declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item and left the room whilst the matter was dealt with.

The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that for more than ten years the Council had provided financial assistance in the form of core grants to a range of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations to contribute to the delivery of their support services. Annual grants were awarded to the same organisations for several years without the need to re-apply, without definite criteria linked to the Council's corporate priorities and with limited monitoring and performance management.

The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that Internal Audit had examined grant processes during July/August 2015 and had recommended a review and re-commissioning be undertaken. The review recommended :

- Establishment of a clear, open process for commissioning (replacing the current closed group of annual grant recipients)
- Establishment of a Grants Allocation Panel or a Strategic Commissioning Panel, to approve all funding applications based on clear and agreed eligibility criteria, explicitly linked to the current Council's corporate priorities;
- The initiation of Service Level Agreements with successful applicants for

longer periods (up to three years) with claw back conditions.

The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that a one year extension (2016-17) to existing funding arrangements with grant recipients was proposed by Councillors, and agreed at Full Council in November 2015. Applicants would be able to apply for one or more of the lots, individually or in partnership, from a total budget of £50,000.

The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that a "Grants Page" had been set up on the Council's website outlining application procedures, procurement cycles and timelines, assessment criteria and delivery specifications. on-going work would continue in order to develop partnerships with VCS organisations in the Borough to better support local residents. This includes working to build stronger communities, increasing capacity at the neighbourhood level and reducing demand across frontline services. There were no financial implications beyond the budgeted annual £50,000 to support voluntary sector organisations from 2017 onwards.

The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that the refreshed approach to resourcing the VCS to deliver services in line with corporate priorities would allow the Council to have an improved strategic approach to working with the voluntary sector, ensuring the process was open, accessible and transparent. The new model complemented existing delivery and would allow for collaborative forward planning regarding support services and changing needs within communities. The outcomes from the first year of delivery would be presented to the relevant Council committee.

A Member queried why the funding pot for this year had been reduced. The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that the funding pot was still largely the same, for the award of commissioning grants, discretionary rate relief and the Centre 81 grant (which had been rolled into one amount).

A Member asked for clarification as to whether this new funding arrangement would encompass new charities and enable them to apply for funding from the Council. The Group Manager Housing & Communities reported that this would be an open and transparent process which would be fair to all charities both new and old.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Committee note the report and approve the commissioning process; and
- (ii) That the Committee nominate Councillors Carpenter, Robinson-Payne & Walch as a sub-group to ratify decisions.

10 NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WORK - STUDY VISIT 2016

The Group Manager Housing & Communities briefed the Committee on the forthcoming study visit for the Neighbourhoods that Work programme. The

Study Visit would provide a key opportunity to promote and share the developments and outcomes of the high profile Neighbourhoods that Work (NTW) programme in Great Yarmouth. It also provided a significant opportunity to explore and progress place based leadership for the Borough. The outcomes from the first complete year of NTW delivery would also be presented to the relevant Council committee.

The Chairman congratulated the team on their successful delivery of the NTW programme to date.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

11 OVERVIEW OF PSPO'S - DOG FOULING

The Senior Environmental Ranger reported that it was intended to have an overarching Boroughwide Dog Fouling Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which would cover all land which could be designated. In addition, a Boroughwide Dog on Lead Request Public Space protection Order had been proposed, allowing officers to deal with accompanied dogs causing nuisance across the Borough. There were more site specific proposals for PSPO's relating to dog bans or lead requirements to be placed on fenced play areas, the main tourist beaches and adjoining promenade and cemeteries.

A Parish Council consultation had been undertaken and the Council had received a number of other suggestions and proposals from members of the public and private land owners. The next step would be an Internal Consultation to seek Member's and departmental views on any orders that might be required in addition to those proposed. Once these had been collated, a final draft report would be presented to the Environmental Committee together with a proposed Public Consultation which will be required to be undertaken.

The Senior Environmental Ranger reported that once the consultation process had taken place, consideration would be given to each suggestion and the proposals would then be finalised. They would then be presented for a decision as to whether the Council wished to proceed with the Orders. These would also need to be considered and agreed by the Police.

A Member proposed that the PSPO should include that dogs must be put on a lead when games were taking place on all playing fields in the Borough. The Chairman seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the Public Space Protection Order to include the proviso that dogs must be put on a lead when games were in progress on all playing fields in the Borough.

12 BETTER CARE

The Group Manager Housing Health & Wellbeing reported the next steps in making the Better Care Fund Locality Plan operational.

The Group Manager Housing Health & Wellbeing reported on the recruitment process required to engage two officers who would be crucial to the delivery of the plan and achieving the capital spend.

The Group Manager Housing Health & Wellbeing reported a proposed new fee structure which would be applied to this project and the works undertaken by the Safe at Home, Home Improvement Agency.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee approve recruitment to the two new posts; an

(ii) That the Committee recommend to Full Council that they approve the schedule of fees for both Better Care Fund and Disabled Facilities Grant elements of work.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Sport, Play & Leisure Strategy

The Chairman reported that the Council's Sports Strategy now came under the remit of the Committee.

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that he would forward a copy of the summary document of the Sport, Play & Leisure Strategy to all Committee members.

14 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Committee moved the following resolution:
That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act.

15 FOOTBALL CLUBS AND FACILITIES

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:30