

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 23 January 2020 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Grant (in the chair); Councillors Cameron, Candon, Flaxman-Taylor, Galer, D Hammond, Martin, Talbot, Walker, Wainwright & Williamson.

Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mrs C Sullivan (Project Manager), Mr S Brabben (Revenues Manager), Mrs D Patterson (HRA Service Accountant), Mrs S Bolan (Enabling & Empty Homes Officer), Mrs R Frosdick (Executive Services Officer).

Mr A Knight-Markiegi (M.E.L Research), Mr B Jones & Mr A Oakley (Active Norfolk)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Sue Hacon.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Talbot queried whether an answer had been received from the CCG following her question regarding out of hours services within Great Yarmouth. The Executive Services Officer agreed to look into this matter.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16th December were agreed.

5 FORWARD PLAN

It was noted that Neighbourhoods that Work was not on the Forward Plan and needed adding.

6 SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS

Adam Knight- Markiegi attended from M.E.L Research to present the results of the Survey of Tenants and Resident, look at key areas of satisfaction and see where there are suggested improvements.

This survey gave every resident their chance to input into the survey rather than a sample of residents.

Councillor Williamson commented on the survey results in light of his ward having a large number of social housing, although he raised some concern with regard to the recent performance measures which had shown a 90% satisfaction rate from tenants.

Councillor Wainwright queried who our Resident Engagement Officer is and their role and responsibilities. The Housing Director confirmed the Resident Engagement Officer for GYBC is Russel Heath who she will invite to a meeting in the future to talk about his role.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the findings of the STAR survey and agree that the results are used to develop service improvement.

7 ACTIVITY FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY REFRESH

Ben Jones and Andy Oakley from Active Norfolk attended to provide a presentation on the Activity Framework and Strategy Refresh that has been developed by Active Norfolk/GYBC in partnership with a wide range of

stakeholders.

The Borough Council produced a Sports and Leisure Strategy in 2014, however it was agreed that this strategy was not fit for purpose and resources directed at implementation have been limited.

In March 2019 it was agreed that Active Norfolk would lead on the development of a 'Framework for Action' that supports and further develops the initial vision and objectives set out in the Sport and Leisure Strategy.

Councillor Smith-Clare and Councillor Martin reiterated the importance of Community Connectors as a lot of the knowledge required for this is held by them already and that there is an existing framework within Neighborhoods that Work that would fit with this.

Councillor Wainwright raised concern with regard to the reallocation of funds currently allocated to local sports partnerships for example Sentinel. Councillor Flaxman-Taylor requested that Sentinel be contacted to provide a breakdown of activities provided using the funds allocated prior to any decision regarding the reallocation of funding. The Chairman agreed this in principle.

RESOLVED:

That the following be approved in principle but a breakdown of activities be provided for the next meeting:-

- Approved the draft Active Great Yarmouth Framework that has been developed by Active Norfolk/GYBC in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Approved the proposed governance structure for oversight of the implementation of the Framework.
- Approved the scoping of a planned shared post between Active Norfolk, GYBC and potentially GY&WCCG to lead on the strategic implementation of the Framework.

8 HRA BUDGET REPORT

The Committee received and considered the HRA Budget Report.

RESOLVED:

- The increase in rents of CPI + 1%, as set out in the new Rents for Social

Housing policy for 2020/21. For 2020/21 this equates to 3%

- The Revenue budget for 2020/21 along with the forecast projects for the period upuntil 2024/2025 including the extended borrowing to support the provision of additional HRA homes.
- The Capital budget for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 4. The HRA Service charges for 2020/21.
- The revised HRA Capital and Revenue forecasts for 2019/20.

9 EMPTY HOMES UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report from the Enabling and Empty Homes Officer.

Councillor P Hammond queried how South Norfolk Council had achieved a 15% reduction. The Enabling and Empty Homes Officer will investigate and report back.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

10 HOMELESSNESS FUNDING

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Director.

On 23 December 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government released details of additional homelessness funding for authorities across England and Wales in 2020/21. This funding has been made available to further support and aid Councils in reducing homelessness.

In 2020/21, the Council will receive an allocation of:

- £107,037 Flexible Homelessness Support Grant
- £178,346 Homelessness Reduction Grant

With the additional funding available in 2020/21 the following options will be explored in addition to continuing to fund the above areas:

- Funding provision of transitional housing – for homeless applicants or those who are at risk of homelessness, who need a period of housing with support to be able to successfully maintain a long-term tenancy.
- Extend the Private Property Officer post until March 2022.
- Funding the provision of training on how to successfully maintain a tenancy and live independently for vulnerable clients and those who have never held a tenancy before.
- Re-introduction of a second Homeless Link Worker post (12-month fixed term post) to support applicants at risk of or who are homelessness including applicants in temporary accommodation. The post will build strong links with the Herring House Trust Pathway workers, who engage with rough sleepers to identify and resolve barriers to mainstream accommodation.
- Develop a scheme/fund to provide furniture and furnishings for those homeless households who have none.

Councillor Martin inquired as to how much was spent per year on bed & breakfast accommodation. The Housing Director to provide the figures.

Councillor Williamson suggested we might look at forming a hostel with warden service to act as a transition period as this could be cost effective. The Housing Director can investigate further if required.

Councillor P Hammond complimented the report but would like to see figures added, showing how many homeless people we dealt with over the past two years. The Housing Director to provide these figures.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

12 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16th December were agreed.

The meeting ended at: 20:30