

# Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

## Minutes

Thursday, 05 September 2019 at 18:30

### PRESENT:

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

Councillor P Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Hacon.

Mr N Shaw (Strategic Director), Mrs N Turner (Director of Housing), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mr T Chaplin (Housing Transformation Manager), Ms D Lee (Service Accountant HRA), Mrs S Bolan (Enabling & Empty Homes Officer)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hacon.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Grant declared a personal interest in the item relating to Community Housing Fund Policy as he is the Chairman of one and Deputy Chairman of two further Community Land Trusts.

Councillor Galer also declared a personal interest in the same agenda item due to him being the Chairman of a Community Land Trust.

However in accordance with the Council's constitution they were allowed to speak and vote on the matter.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25th July 2019 were confirmed.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman reported that there were no matters arising from the above minutes.

### **5 FORWARD PLAN**

The committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

A ward level breakdown of health indicators was requested to be added to the Forward Plan for October 2019.

A quarterly update on Period Poverty is to be added to the Forward Plan.

Any comments/questions in relation to item 8 - CCG - Strategic Transformation Plan, to be forwarded to Neil Shaw.

### **6 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the HRA Service Manager.

Councillor Williamson requested to see the profile of the capital carried forward figure so that he is aware of the reserves going forward. The HRA Accountant agreed to this request.

RESOLVED:

That the committee considered the 2019/20 Housing Revenue and Capital Budget monitoring position - Period 1-3 (April - June 2019) and the full forecast budgets for 2019/20.

### **7 H & N PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Transformation Officer.

Councillor Candon queried when one of the sub-contractors went into

administration. The Head of Property and Asset Management confirmed this took place very quickly in July. There was no tenant impact and notifications were sent to those who were in a programme of repairs to advise of the delay.

Councillor Williamson voiced concern over HN08 (home adaptations) and the large number of days from the initial request through to completion. The Director of Housing advised that a report looking at possible resolutions to reduce the days will come to the October or November committee. Councillor Williamson also requested that the figures be broken down into those properties waiting 3 months, 6 months and 1 year as the heavy ones may distort the figures.

Councillor Candon queried HN01 and whether there is a relevant reason why rent arrears have increased from the previous quarter. The Director of Housing confirmed that rent arrears are generally high in quarter 1, and then fall over the course of the year. Also this year there have been a number of higher arrears which are distorting the figures. This is being watched closely as Universal Credit may be causing an impact.

Councillor Hammond has requested we list how many tenants are in arrears going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the committee note the report.

## **8 COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND POLICY**

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

Councillor Wainwright queried if any homes had been built in the borough via this method and whether it was value for money. The Chairman confirmed that no council money will be spent on this, only government monies and that so far only £8000 has been spent in the formation of four Community Land Trusts.

Councillor Martin was concerned regarding Community Land Trusts taking on loans if planning permission was not subsequently gained. The Housing Director confirmed that pre-application advice is provided and the process followed but there is always a risk that planning permission may not be granted.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the committee approved the Community Housing Fund Policy and the use of the community housing fund monies to offer financial support to Community Led Housing Organisations through the provision of grants and loans in accordance with the Community Housing Fund Policy.

(ii) That delegated authority is given to Strategic Directors in consultation with the Section 151 Officer to approve the allocation of grants and loan to Community Led Housing Organisations.

(iii) That approval is given for the use of capital funding to purchase land to assist Community Led Housing Organisations as set out in the Community Housing Fund Policy subject to the approval of the use of capital funding by the appropriate committee.

## **9 REPAIRS SERVICE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH GYN**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Property and Asset Management.

The Chairman queried whether the satisfaction survey could be undertaken in house. The Head of Property and Asset Management confirmed that this would be a huge task to undertake.

The Chairman requested the complaints data be made available for the October committee.

RESOLVED:

That the committee note the report.

## **10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Housing Director provided an update following the recent IT failure at the Yarmouth Area Office. This was caused by issues directly with BT but remedial measures were put in place and the system is now fully operational again.

The Housing Director provided an update following the fire at Frank Stone Court on Monday night where mostly smoke damage was sustained. Both GYBC and GYN staff responded brilliantly and it was an excellent example of joint working. The Chairman asked the Housing Director to pass thanks on to all staff involved.

The meeting ended at: 19:10