

# **Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee**

## **Minutes**

Thursday, 08 December 2016 at 18:30

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Grant (in the Chair); Councillors Borg, M Coleman, Flaxman-Taylor, K Grey, Robinson-Payne, Rodwell, Walch, Waters-Bunn & Wiliamson.

Councillor Bensly attended as a substitute for Councillor Carpenter.

Councillor Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Hacon.

Councillor Jeal attended as a substitute for Councillor Robinson-Payne.

Mr R Read (Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods), Mr T Chaplin (Group Manager, Housing Services), Mrs V George (Group Manager, Housing Health & Wellbeing), Mr R Gregory (Group Manager, Neighbourhoods & Communities), Ms H Notcutt (Community Development Manager), Mr C Rowland (Corporate Policy & Performance Officer) & Mrs C Webb (Member Services Officer).

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Carpenter, Hacon & Robinson-Payne.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jeal declared a Personal Interest in Item 6, Assets of Community Value, as he was a member of CAMRA.

## **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2017 were confirmed with the following amendment. With regard to Item 7, Councillor Jeal proposed that the Chairman and one other Councillor from the Committee, but not the Councillor who represented the tenant(s) ward, should be involved in the eviction process.

## **4 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the above minutes.

## **5 DECISIONS TO EVICT COUNCIL TENANTS WHERE A POSSESSION ORDER HAS BEEN GRANTED**

Members received and considered the report from the Monitoring Officer which followed on from a discussion at the last Committee meeting where Members queried the decision making process for evictions.

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that under the delegation scheme approved by Council and contained in the Constitution, possession and eviction decisions were delegated to Officers. This has been in operation for the last fourteen years and was the position in nearly all other housing authorities.

The Group Manager, Housing Services reported that Officers took into account the Council's general policies including the GYCH Rent Income & Arrears Policy, GYCH Introductory Tenancy Policy & the GYCH Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. The individual circumstances of tenants and their families, and the decisions made in other cases were also considered which ensured consistency of decision making.

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that the Court also had a wide discretion in whether to grant a suspended possession order and whether to suspend a warrant of possession which provided an independent

review of the decisions made by officers.

In discussing the Monitoring Officer's report the following issues were raised :-

- Whether the advice from the Monitoring Officer should be agreed
- The option of this Committee to reinstate the Housing Appeals Committee after six months of operation of the new Committee System of Governance.
- The question of whether evictions should be delegated to Officers to determine

RESOLVED:

That the Committee recommend to Council that the Housing Appeals Committee be re-instated and that decisions on evictions are referred to Members.

## **6 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Corporate Policy and Performance Officer.

Members agreed that the former public house would no longer be viable and as there were other public houses in the near vicinity, there was no need to list the property as an Asset of Community Value.

The Committee had been asked to consider a nomination by CAMRA, which asked the Council to list the Ferry Boat Inn, 5 Ferry Hill, Gorleston as an Asset of Community Value.

RESOLVED:

That the property not be listed as an Asset of Community Value as the property, as it was unlikely and unrealistic to consider that the property would further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community in the next five years or the foreseeable future.

## **7 NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS - INFORMATION & ADVICE SERVICES AND BUILDING RESILIENT LIVES**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Group Manager,

Housing Health & Wellbeing which summarised the two consultations which were currently being undertaken by Norfolk County Council and the potential impact on the residents of the Borough. The impact of these proposals was going to be significant for both service users and organisations delivering service to vulnerable people in the Borough.

Councillor Williamson reported that he accepted that County had to make cuts but he was extremely concerned that Health and Social Care should be joined up and not considered as separate funding streams within the Sustainable Transformation Plan in order to deliver a coherent service. Councillor Williamson also felt that the recommendations were not robust enough and that Norfolk should be urged to conduct a thorough systems wide review.

Councillor Waters-Bunn reported that the warden service was a lifeline to many sheltered housing tenants.

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that the report highlighted that a prevention service was being pitted against a crisis service and that he would liaise with the Group Manager, Housing Health & Wellbeing regarding strengthening the resolutions.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee respond to the consultation documents to express their concern in terms of both the level of savings proposed and the timeframe within which they were expected to be delivered

(ii) That the Committee highlight that the proposals did not take account of the impact on the wider system and did not address the issue of increasing demand on acute services, therefore, these proposals were unlikely to deliver any real savings; and

(iii) That the Committee recommend a thorough, systems wide review, as part of the development of the Sustainable Transformation Plan.

## **8      NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WORK - 12 MONTH PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Community Development Manager. The Community Development Manager updated the Committee with progress and outcomes of the first year of delivery from the Big Lottery funded Neighbourhoods that Work project.

The Community Development Manager reported that an Annual Study visit was held in October 2016 to mark the end of year one which was well supported with over 90 delegates in attendance. Neighbourhoods that Work had had a successful Year 1 and had met or over-achieved most targets. The Big Lottery Fund were learning from our unique model and were looking to replicate the model in other coastal towns across the country.

Councillor K Grey commended the Neighbourhood Teams for delivering much needed support services which made a difference to the quality of life for many local residents.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

## **9 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION BIDS - TRAILBLAZER AND ROUGH SLEEPING**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Group Manager, Housing Services.

The Group Manager, Housing Services reported that the Government was aiming to put prevention at the heart of their approach to reduce the number of people who faced a homelessness crisis in the first place. As part of this, the Government was making available £40m to prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Group Manager, Housing Services outlined the bids which would be submitted by the Council for Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers and Rough Sleeping programmes.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

## **10 HOUSING & PLANNING ACT AND AUTUMN STATEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Group Manager, Housing Services which gave an update on the impact of the Housing & Planning Act 2016 to Housing Services.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

## **11 QUARTER 2 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Business & Finance Manager.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee consider the 2016/17 Housing Revenue Budget monitoring position - Period 1 to 6 (April - September 2016) and the full forecast budgets for 2016/17

(ii) That the Committee agree an increase to the existing HRA capital programme of £100k (£759k approved in Quater 1) to finance a planned increase in planned maintenance works. (as detailed in Table 4 of the agenda report)

(iii) That the Committee approve a virement of £100k (£455k approved in Quater 1) from revenue repairs & maintenance budget to the HRA capital programme (as detailed in Table 5 of the agenda report)

(iv) That the Committee agree an increase in to the revenue supervision & management budget of £110k to cover extra costs such as maternity pay, NI contributions and Leaseholder services; and

(v) That the Committee approve an additional virement of £22k (£347k was approved in quarter 1) from HRA reserves to finance the increase to the HRA year-end deficit of £369k (as detailed in Table 3 of the agenda report).

## **12 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (2)**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Business & Finance Manager which presented the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy as it related to the Housing Revenue Account and which set the scene for the forthcoming Housing Revenue Account Budget.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

## **13 APPLICATION TO THE DWP'S FLEXIBLE SUPPORT FUND**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Employment & Skills Co-Ordinator.

The Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods reported that in response to rising demand on services run by the Council and the voluntary sector as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit, the Council had approached the East Anglia District DWP to consider the allocation of additional resources into the area. This had opened up the opportunity for the Council to make an application to the DWP's Flexible Support Fund, providing that outcomes to achieving job readiness and job entry outcomes could be achieved.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee approve the submission of an application and in the event of a successful submission; it captures interim impact as part of a strategy of sustaining the arrangement with the DWP beyond the initial 12 month funding period and that it agrees with the DWP to share learning with other district's across the new Anglia LEP area and beyond, as a blueprint for making Universal Credit work more efficiently.

#### **14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Walch asked if the Group Manager, Neighbourhoods & Communities could resend the account to Great Yarmouth FC, to include a breakdown of outstanding charges, and also if details could be provided regarding issues of the maintenance of the football pitch on the Wellesley Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED:

That the Group Manager, Neighbourhoods & Communities to provide a report for the Committee to consider at the next meeting.

#### **15 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

RESOLVED :

"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 I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act."

#### **16 DISPOSAL OF VOID HRA PROPERTIES**

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:30