

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 14 March 2019 at 18:30

PRESENT:

Councillor Grant in the Chair; Councillors Bird, G Carpenter, Drewitt, Flaxman-Taylor, Hammond, Martin, Smith-Clare, C Walker, Wainwright & Williamson.

Councillor Annison attended as a substitute for Councillor Hacon.

Mr N Shaw (Strategic Director), Mrs N Turner (Housing Director), Mrs K Sly (Finance Director), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mr A Nicholls (Head of Planning & Growth), Mr T Chaplin (Housing Transformation Manager), Mrs D Lee (HRA Service Accountant), Mr A Moore (Housing Growth Manager) & Mrs C Webb (Senior Member Services Officer).

Mr S Baker (Business Support & Development Manager, GY Norse).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hacon.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest declared at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2019 were confirmed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Wainwright asked for clarification as to why the subject of Period Poverty had been removed from the Forward Plan. The Chairman reported that this item was removed from the Forward Plan as a briefing paper had been sent to all members of the Committee informing them of the current position.

However, the Chairman agreed to reinstate the item to the Forward Plan and a report would be received at the next meeting of the Committee in June 2019.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was received and noted.

Period Poverty would be added to the Forward Plan at the request of the Chairman.

6 2018/19 PERIOD 10 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

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

The HRA Service Accountant reported the salient areas of her report to the Committee. The kitchen & bathroom improvements had been delayed by extended procurement timescales but GYN had provided the Council with a reasonable assurance that they would both reach the number of replacements programmed for 2018/19 by the end of the financial year. The windows and doors replacement scheme had been delayed due to sourcing fire doors replacements to meet the required standards. Works were due to increase during Quarter 4, although works due in communal areas and blocks were on

hold until formal notification was received regarding door specifications. Therefore, any remaining budget would be carried forward into 2019/20.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee consider and note the 2018/19 Housing Revenue Budget monitoring position as at the end of period 10.

7 PROPERTY ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL POLICY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Growth Manager.

The Housing Growth Manager reported that as a result of the Committee approving two approaches to bring back empty homes into use; a home improvement loan scheme and an invest and lease scheme. The Council was now seeking to build on this work to acquire residential properties in order to provide better quality homes in the Borough through refurbishment and then either letting or re-sale.

A Member requested that the policy be amended at paragraphs 7.1 & 7.2 to include that Ward Councillors be informed of any acquisition at the point of consideration.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee approve the Acquisition & Disposal Policy attached as Appendix 1 to the report, which would replace the Council's existing Disposal of Surplus & Underused land & Property Policy,

(ii) That the Committee delegate authority to the Strategic Directors in consultation with the Section 151 Officer to approve the acquisition of property purchases from the open market and the disposal of properties; and

(iii) The Committee recommend to Policy & Resources Committee approval of this policy with the agreed amendments at paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the report.

8 HOUSING STRATEGY - UPDATE ON DELIVERY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Director. The Senior Member Services Officer circulated hard copies of Appendix 1 which had been omitted from the agenda report and she apologised for the oversight.

The Housing Director reported progress against delivery of the Housing

Strategy which was approved in January 2018. The Strategy had four priorities:

- New Homes: ensuring there were enough good quality new homes
- Our Homes: improving the quality and use of the Council's Housing Stock
- Decent Homes: providing a good mix of decent homes across all tenures
- Healthy Homes: meeting the needs of vulnerable households.

The Housing Strategy was supported by a Housing Strategy Action Plan which contained a number of strategic objectives designed to deliver against the four priorities of the Housing Strategy. The Housing Director would provide the Committee with a report detailing progress made against the actions set out within the Housing Strategy Action Plan at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the progress to date and request a further report in 12 months.

9 REVIEW OF UNBUILT HOUSING PERMISSIONS/ALLOCATIONS

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Planning & Growth.

The head of Planning & growth reported that there was a growing gap between housing permissions and housing completions in the borough of Great Yarmouth and targets for housing completions had not been met for some years. This had resulted in a situation where there was not currently the required minimum five year supply of housing land.

The Head of Planning & Growth reported that whilst much of the strength of the housing market was outside the direct control of the Council, the Council had already undertaken a number of activities and initiatives to try to improve the situation.

The Head of Planning & Growth reported that the publication of the first national Housing Delivery Test Figures in February 2019 had confirmed that with our housing delivery below 95% over the three year period, the Council would need to publish a Housing Action Plan. This would set out the nature of the problem and proposals to mitigate the situation and the Council had a six month period to complete this.

A Member reported that the hands of Councillors were tied in this matter and that the Government must be lobbied to introduce financial penalties for builders who land bank and do not build out.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Committee acknowledge that the Council was required to prepare a Housing Action Plan to set out the reasons why housing delivery had been below target; and
- (ii) That the Committee note the steps required to prepare the Action Plan and to comment on the potential content, process and timescale of the Action Plan.

10 TCOSY REFURBISHMENT - MIDDLEGATE

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

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that the TCosy system was being developed to provide a retrofit solution to existing properties to bring the existing building to a Passivhaus standard, reducing energy costs for the tenant whilst reducing issues such as damp and condensation.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that the system aimed to produce a fast, efficient and cost effective solution which did not involve the tenant vacating the property during building works. The System included new triple glazed windows and a mechanical ventilation system in each flat. Fire prevention was a high priority of the system and an innovative integrated sprinkler system would be installed. The works would be carried out by Beattie passive at nil cost to the Council.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that this request was in line with funding requirements to approve access for monitoring purposes both pre and post retrofit to provide vital design information for use by Beattie Passive to enable further development of the system for wider roll out across the country.

A Member reported that this was an excellent opportunity and that the relevant Ward Members be kept fully informed of progress of the project as communication was key to a successful project.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee grant permission for Beattie Passive to undertake the retrofit of the TCosy Passivhaus System to the Middlegate block numbered 89-90 consisting of 6 flats, at nil cost to the Council.

11 GYN ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The Committee received and considered the GYNorse Annual Report

2017/18.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that the annual report would normally be presented during the second quarter of the following year. However, this was later than anticipated as a result of prioritisation of the procurement of Planned and Capital Programme and structure changes within the GYN Team. The Annual Plan was produced as a requirement of the Joint Venture.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee received and noted the contents of the GYNorse Annual Report 2017/18.

12 HOUSING & NEIGHBOURHOODS QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018-19

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

The Housing Transformation Officer reported the salient indicators to the Committee and performance data from the Housing Department for Quarter 3 of 2018-19.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report.

13 RNLI LIFEGUARD SERVICE

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

The Strategic Director reported that the Council currently funded a lifeguarding service for the beaches at Hemsby, Great Yarmouth & Gorleston provided by the RNLI. The service was currently funded from the GYBS Joint Venture partnership budget and has been part of the Joint Venture since 20018.

The Strategic Director reported that the Council was proposing to contract this service directly from the RNLI and be removed from the Joint venture. This would provide more clarity around service provision through the agreement of an updated contract with the RNLI for the lifeguards to take on a wider role around promoting the Borough and to achieve better value for money.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Council agree a new three year contract with the RNLI for the

provision of lifeguard services from the beginning of Spring 2019,

(ii) That the Council delegate authority to one of the Council's Strategic Directors to develop and sign the contract for the Lifeguard Service; and

(iii) To seek agreement from the GYBS Company Board to reduce the GYBS Joint venture budget by £46,500 and transfer this funding back to the Council and update the GYBS Partnership Agreement to reflect the change of service provision in the Joint Venture.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported the outcome of the tender for Ormesby Lane, Filby (New Build & Refurbishment) whereby four tenders had been received.

The tender criteria comprised of 60% price and 40% quality. The average of the tenders submitted was £441,203 and the cost of preliminaries from the Contract Sum analysis showed a wide range of sums, however, T Gill & Son Ltd and Wellington Construction Ltd did not provide a full breakdown in all sections of the tender form.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that based on the evaluation of 60% price and 40% quality, the highest overall score was 82.98 out of 100 for T Gill & Son Ltd, however, it should be raised that they were not the lowest overall price.

The Head of Property & Asset Management reported that T Gill & Son Ltd had a good reputation and track record of delivering well built homes in the area. A Member reported that the Committee should heed the advice of the officers and award the contract to T Gill & Son Ltd.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee accept the tender from T Gill & Son Ltd as detailed on the report.

15 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

It was noted that there was no members of the public attending the meeting so the above resolution was not moved by the Chairman.

16 GYN BOARD MINUTES

The Chairman reported that these minutes would be circulated to the

Committee outside of the meeting.

17 DEVELOPMENT OF HMO PROPERTIES THROUGH INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee received and noted the report from the Housing Growth Manager.

The Housing Growth Manager reported that the report, going forward, would not be confidential on the advice of the Monitoring Officer. However, the appendix would remain confidential as the Council did not want to place their financial modelling assumptions in the public domain.

The Housing Growth manager reported that the Council was seeking to build on the framework provided by the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy to acquire residential properties in order to provide better quality homes in the Borough.

The Housing Growth Manager reported that the Council proposed to invest its own capital to purchase carefully selected residential properties, renovation them and bringing them back into use as houses or flats in an improved condition. Case by case, they could be sold, used as an affordable rented home or as part of a market rent scheme. The Council would need to establish a property development company to hold any properties outside of the HRA.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Committee approve that the Council progresses the HMO and Guesthouse Purchase & Repair Scheme as outlined in the report; and

(ii) That the Committee recommend an initial £2 million capital budget to be used to deliver the Purchase and Repair Scheme and refer the approval of the initial £2 million capital budget to the Council's Policy & Resources Committee.

The meeting ended at: 19:55