



Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 04 February 2021 at 17:30

PRESENT:-

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

Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs N Turner (Housing Director), Ms K Watts (Strategic Director), Mrs K Sly (Finance Director), Mr J Williams (Community Protection Manager), Mr T Chaplin (Housing Transformation Manager), Mrs D Patterson (HRA Service Accountant), Mrs C Spooner (Housing Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager) & Mrs C Webb (Executive Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 were confirmed by assent.

4 MATTERS ARISING

With regard to minute number 9, Resident Engagement Strategy, Councillor Wainwright reported that he had not received the budget figure for tenant engagement. The Housing Director reported that she had emailed the information to Councillor Wainwright and would re-send following the meeting. Councillor Wainwright also queried why the strategy had not been added to the Forward Plan. The Housing Director reported that the strategy would be added to the Forward Plan and it was hoped to bring a report to Committee during June/July this year.

With regard to minute number 7, Council Homes Programme, Councillor Williamson clarified his request to the Committee as the minute did not make his intentions clear. The Housing Director noted his update.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and noted the Forward Plan.

The Committee requested that the Residents Engagement Strategy be added to the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the Forward Plan with the addition of the Residents

Engagement Strategy.

6 SELECTIVE LICENSING REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report from the Strategic Director and Community Protection Manager.

The Strategic Director and Community Protection Manager gave an update of the Council's Selective Licensing Scheme to the Committee.

Councillor Smith-Clare asked whether the scheme would be rolled out to other wards in the Borough. The Strategic Director reported that it was hoped to introduce the scheme in other wards once the added value work was embedded.

Councillor Wainwright asked that Ward Councillors be kept in the loop as they were often the first port of call from landlords. The Strategic Director reported that she would discuss this request with the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Martin highlighted the need for Community Connectors in the community to build relationships and trust with residents who were often afraid to report unsatisfactory housing conditions for fear of landlord reprisals.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report and to receive a further update in six month's time.

7 HOUSING & NEIGHBOURHOODS PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 AND Q2

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

The Housing Transformation Manager reported the salient areas of his report detailing key performance indicators during quarters 1 & 2 of 2020/21.

Councillor Martin asked for clarification regarding HN09 and asked whether the number and contact details for the community groups could be shared with Members. The Housing Transformation Manager reported that he would take advice as to whether the data could be shared.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the report.

8 HRA BUDGET REPORT 2021-22

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

The HRA Service Accountant reported the salient areas of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget 2021/22 to 2025/26, HRA capital programme 2021/22 to 2025/26, HRA Rent and Service Charge proposal 2021/22 and the revised HRA revenue and capital forecasts for 2020/21.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 39 of the agenda report; decarbonisation, and highlighted the problem of damp in numerous properties within his ward which posed a health concern to the residents and he was unhappy that damp walls were just washed down without the root cause being tackled. The HRA Service Accountant reported that work to external walls and loft insulation was covered under this but she would ask the head of property & Asset Management for further details. The Housing Director reported that she would forward a note to Members explaining decarbonisation.

Councillor Wainwright referred to page 43 of the agenda report and asked whether the contact for communal digital aerials had been sorted. The Housing Director reported that it was a long term contract and she would investigate and report back to Councillor Wainwright after the meeting.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council:-

- (i) The increase in rents of CPI + 1%, as set out in the new Rents for Social Housing Policy for 2021/22. For 2021/22 this equates to 1.5%,
- (ii) The Revenue Budget for 2021/22, together with the forecast projections for the period up to 2025/26, including the extended borrowing to support the provision of additional HRA homes,
- (iii) The Capital Budget for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26,
- (iv) The HRA Service Charges for 2021/22; and
- (v) The revised HRA Capital and Revenue forecasts for 2020/21.

9 RETAINED RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS POLICY

The Committee received and considered the report from the Housing Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer.

The Housing Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer reported the updated Use of Retained Right to Buy Receipts Policy which reflected operational changes and requirements as detailed in the report.

Councillor Wainwright asked if Members could be informed of the addresses and tenure of the affected properties. The Housing Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer reported that this would form part of the yearly update to the Committee.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Policy & Resources Committee:-

(i) That the Committee approve the updated use of Retained Right to Buy Receipts Policy and recommend the adoption of the policy by Policy & Resources Committee; and

(ii) That Policy & Resources Committee approve the Use of Retained Right to Buy Receipts Policy and delegate approval of expenditure in accordance with the use of Retained Right to Buy Policy to a Strategic Director in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer.

10 GREAT YARMOUTH HOMELESS ALLIANCE

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

The Housing Director reported the work undertaken by the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance, which was a multi-agency group established to support reductions in homelessness across the Borough.

Councillor Smith-Clare thanked the Housing Director for the excellent report for the much needed scheme within the Borough and asked for reassurances that youth homelessness would be included. The Housing Director reported that DIAL would be leading the scheme and YMCA would be involved.

Councillor Williamson reported that he fully supported the scheme and suggested that the homeless model adopted by Denmark should be considered as they housed the homeless person first and then tailored the required support services to their needs.

Councillor Martin reported that Covid had highlighted the plight of the homeless and although the Government had implemented the "Everyone In" scheme, homelessness needed a long term solution.

Councillor Talbot asked how the Council supported the homeless who needed to detox as Herring House was unable to offer support. The Housing Director reported that the Borough did not offer any "wet houses" and discussions had

taken place as to whether and how the Council could meet this need.

RESOLVED:-

(i) That the Committee endorses the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment; and

(ii) Requests and annual update on the work of the Homeless Alliance.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

The meeting ended at: 19:30