



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 14 July 2022 at 18:30

PRESENT: Councillor Flaxman Taylor (Chair), Councillors Wainwright, Price, Cameron, D Hammond, Smith-Clare, Martin and Jeal

Councillor Carpenter attended as a sub for Councillor Grant.

Councillor Paul Hammond attended as a substitute for Councillor Galer.

Councillor Paul Wells attended as Chairman of the Environment Committee

Also in attendance were:

Kate Blakemore (Strategic Director); Paula Boyce (Strategic Director); Dean Wilson (Neighbourhood Manager); James Dudley (Community Champions Programme Co-ordinator); Russell Heath (Resident Engagement Officer); Nick Fountain (Principal Strategic Planner); Sally Pearson (Democratic Services Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Candon, Williamson, Galer and Grant.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Smith-Clare declared an interest as he runs a Community Garden.
Councillor Penny Carpenter declared an interest as she sits on the GYN Liaison Board.

3 MINUTES

The minutes were agreed subject to Councillor Price being added to the list of attendees. He was also attendance at the previous meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and noted the Forward Plan. It was noted that the Right to Succeed in the Nelson Ward has started and Paula Boyce is in the process of organising a briefing for ward members and group leaders.

6 DRAFT OPEN SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Principal Strategic Planner explained the Open space Needs Assessment which had been carried out to identify the open space needs of the Borough, and presented the recommendations from the assessment to the Committee.

Councillor Wainwright added that it was a very comprehensive report with a lot of strands covered but the document does not commit the Borough Council to deliver anything, it will though assist in attracting funding if necessary. He added that some play areas in the Borough are a disgrace and referred to a piece of equipment in Magdalen Ward which was closed in April for Health and Safety reasons but that no one was informed. Councillor Wainwright referred to the recommendation in the report from Magdalen Ward but that there was no mention of Magdalen Square. He added that he supported the document but with the cost of living crisis people want to visit open spaces and play areas and the Council needs to get its house in order.

Kate Blakemore agreed to take this away as an action and bring back in due course, as this was a different piece of work to the strategy. With regard to the survey of the play equipment she added that work had been completed on mapping the assets and this will be presented to the Environment Committee. The play equipment health and safety regime is part of this work and assessing what equipment to keep.

Councillor Jeal referred to equipment in Blackfriars Road which had been fenced off since March with the fence now also damaged.

Councillor Smith-Clare praised the report which will bring opportunities and added

that there needs to be accessible natural green spaces. Referring to the deficits he added that there are also resources that aren't being fully utilised and urban areas with pockets of green space which could be developed and involve the communities. He added that lot's of play equipment is not fit for purpose.

Councillor Price agreed that it was a very good and positive report and fully supported the actions suggested. He added that reported repairs needed in Claydon Ward had been completed and he had received thanks from residents, adding that good points need to be recognised as well. He added that there is lots of positive points but if things aren't being done they should be.

Councillor Martin requested that the report be sent to the Environment Committee. In praising the report she added that more accessible and inclusive equipment should be encouraged and for the disability awareness groups to be involved.

Councillor Wells advised that the Play Park review was presented to the Environment Committee and underwent a lot of scrutiny, a copy will be forwarded to Members. He added that all Members should have been contacted prior to committee with information for their specific ward.

It was clarified that Beaches are excluded from the Open space needs assessment but that other spaces are recognised which would help recreational needs.

It was discussed how off site contributions should work and it was confirmed that there will be a geographical tie up and that they would relate to the regulations on Section 106 spending which in order to meet the requirements have to be spent locally.

Councillor Hammond asked where land will be found to mitigate the deficits identified in the report. The Principal Strategic Planner advised that one element could be in larger developments providing play space amenity in the development site and also by enhancing existing sites in the Borough or reorganising existing sites.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor echoed some of the comments and added that private stock is also in need of long term maintenance.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee approve the content & recommendations contained within the Open Space Needs Assessment for consultation.

It was agreed that inclusivity be added to the report and that the report be sent to members of the Environment Committee.

7 NORFOLK AND WAVENEY NHS INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM (ICS)

Paula Boyce presented the report which provided members with an overview of the changes that took place on 1st July 2022 moving from a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) operating model to an Integrated Case System (ICS) governance model and the role the council plays in the new ICS at Place level.

As part of the new governance arrangement at Place level of the footprint of the borough council area, members were asked to agree to the formation of a Great

Yarmouth Health & Wellbeing Partnership and two Community Partnership areas aligned to Primary Care Network boundaries.

Councillor Wainwright advised that it was very good comprehensive report and that the workshops were really effective. Referring to the two new boards he asked where the two would be located and asked for Councillor Jade Martin to be the Labour representative on the Board which will feed in the Board of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

Paul Boyce added that they will be new entities, partnerships rather than Boards. They will not be decision making and won't hold any budget but will be important in community engagement. One will be located for Gorleston and the Southern parishes and one for Great Yarmouth and the Northern Parishes. They will be located around these geographical areas to ensure fair representation. Paula added that through the Community Hub operating model, work tackling the health and inequalities plan is being piloted.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor added that there is a lot of work being undertaken by the Integrated Care System but this is also about grass root community work adding to the work being done as existing Councillors helping hard to reach areas and the District Council representation gives a voice.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee

Note the new arrangements for health & social care under the Norfolk & Waveney ICS, the formation of a Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB), an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and the role the borough council plays in supporting the wider ICS both at 'Place' level for Great Yarmouth and Waveney and locally within the borough of Great Yarmouth in relation to supporting the health & wellbeing of residents and communities.

Agree to the formation of the Great Yarmouth Health & Wellbeing Partnership (HWP) to be chaired by Cllr Emma Flaxman-Taylor as nominated by Council.

Agree to discontinue the three Neighbourhood Boards and form two Community Partnerships to help inform the HWP's work.

Note the proposed spend of Norfolk Public Health Covid Recovery Funding on resourcing the operation of the community hub operating model' namely the council's Community Marshals, case workers and Community Champions' Programme to support the HWP & Community Partnerships in 2022/23 with support from the HWP partners.

Request the Great Yarmouth HWP and Community Partnerships provide an annual report to Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee in relation to delivery of agreed community-focused locality priorities, including tackling health inequalities and closer integration with NHS partners, working in collaboration with partner organisation and community groups.

8 LOCALITY STRATEGY - COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

The Neighbourhood Manager explained the report which took the learning and insight gathered from the recent Housing & Neighbourhood's convened 'Community Conversation' held on 25 April 2022, and set out a proposal for Action Plans to deliver the Locality Strategy's four priorities:

Health and Well-being
Low Educational Attainment, Skills and Aspirations
Vulnerability and Exploitation
Loneliness, Isolation and Social Exclusion.

The report also provided members with an update on the Great Yarmouth Community Investment Fund (GYCIF) 2021/22 managed on behalf of the borough council by the Norfolk Community Foundation as it moves into Year 2 of the community grant-giving fund for 2022/23.

The Neighbourhood Manager added that all of the organisations funded in 2021/22 are on course to fulfil the outcomes of their plans. The application process will start early next week for the Year 2 Community Grant programme with the final panel meeting held by Monday 19th September.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing & Neighbourhoods Committee:

Agrees the 'Tackling Health Inequalities' Action Plan as set out in Appendix 1.

Notes the outcomes to date for the Great Yarmouth Community Investment Fund 2021/22.

Agrees to financially support Year 2 of the Great Yarmouth Community Investment Fund managed by the Norfolk Community Foundation.

9 COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor congratulated all the work carried out by the Community Champions Programme and their recent award.

The Community Champions Programme Co-ordinator gave a presentation on the Community Champions' Programme in operation in the borough and its embedded partnership work with other health and VCSE partners which now sustains it. The report provided Members with an overview of the interventions undertaken to date, working closely with Norfolk Public Health, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk & Waveney CCG colleagues at place level, and the Great Yarmouth & Northern Villages and Gorleston & Southern Parishes Primary Care Networks.

Councillor Wainwright praised the report and congratulated the work of the Community Champions programme and the recent award. Referring to the Community Food Stores and Foodbanks Councillor Wainwright supported these but commented that the cost of living crisis would mean more would be needed and that it

is a disgrace that people have to rely on support from these due to abysmal wages. He added that there had been excellent work on the vaccination programme but that people should have a decent living wage and not be reliant on the community food stores.

Councillor Smith-Clare agreed with the Community Champions Programme Co-ordinator that the Community Food Stores are not hand-outs but hand ups and added that there is not a part of the community that is not being affected by strangling poverty. He added that Community Champions are in some cases experiencing some poverty themselves but are still helping others to survive. He added that the current situation won't just go away and the end of poverty needs to be championed and that this is a sticking plaster.

Councillor Price added that he understood the comments made but didn't agree with the way they were said. He added that the Community Champions is a fantastic scheme and goes a long way to address the problems experienced in Great Yarmouth and the world today. He added that all are affected by the cost of living crisis. He explained that he had been appointed to the MESH Committee and was very impressed by those who attend those meetings and look after the community and that so many businesses are contributing to stock for the community foodstores. He added that everyone in Great Yarmouth is pulling together where possible to help others are proud to help others not as fortunate.

Councillor Jeal added that the foodbanks are fantastic but that by Christmas the situation would be a great deal worse. He added that more help is needed from the Government to help with electricity and gas. He also referred to the excellent work undertaken in Peggotty Road and surrounding area.

Councillor Martin said she was proud to be associated with the food banks but that they are another element of failure, the cost of living crisis is an excuse and there had been years to sort things out. She added that she was proud of the community and the community champions and pleased that the project is continuing.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor gave thanks for the presentation highlighting the work undertaken. She added that she had received good feedback from a visit by the Community Champions to Ormiston Venture Academy and suggested it would be good to also visit other high schools. She added that the current situation is disappointing but as a Council would carry on together to help as many residents of the Borough as possible.

It was noted that the report should read as recommendation to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee and not Policy and Resources Committee as stated.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee resolves to:

Note the successes and continued work of the Community Champions' Programme in the Borough of Great Yarmouth.

Agree to continue with the Community Champions' Programme to actively engage with all sectors of the community.

10 FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OUTTURN 2021-22

The Finance Director explained the report which was the final budget monitoring report for the 2021/22 financial year and the position that will be used to inform the production of the statutory accounts. The report and appendices provided the detail of the outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account plus the capital programme in relation to the housing stock.

The outturn position showed a surplus of £824,000 compared to the originally budgeted deficit of £2.784 million, resulting in a net underspend of £3.4million. The main reason for the underspend was largely due to a lower amount being required to fund the capital programme in the year from revenue, due to slippage in the capital projects, totalling £1.4m underspend.

In addition, there had been an increase in the rent income in the year largely due to reduced right to buy sales in the current and prior years compared to the level assumed when the budget was set, thereby delivering additional income of £903,000 in the year.

The impact of the reduced borrowing in the year had also resulted in an underspend of £361,000 in the year.

The Finance Director explained that Section 3 of the report outlined the outturn position on the capital programme. Where programmed work had not been completed in the year, the remaining project budgets had been carried forward to 2022/23. Whilst the previous update to the capital programme assumed total spend of just over £10 million, the outturn position was just under £8m.

The updated capital programme was included in the report at appendix D and as part of approving the updated programme as outlined at section 4.2, Members were asked to approve the addition of £125,000 to the Housing transformation project budget to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deliver this project.

The report also commented on the right to buys completed in the year which was 18, which whilst it was double that for last year, is still lower than the level before 2020/21.

Overall, the Housing revenue account had delivered a surplus for the year of £824,000 which means the HRA reserve to be carried forward into 2022/23 was just under £9.4million.

Councillor Paul Hammond queried the figure in paragraph 3.6 of the report and it was clarified that this should read as £2.7m.

Councillor Wainwright referred to the massive underspend while the housing stock was getting in a worse state and repairs not being carried out. The Strategic Director advised that the Asset Management Strategy would be reported back to Committee in September.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee recommend to Council the following:

The outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22 as included in the report and appendices

The updated 2022/23 HRA revenue and expenditure budget as detailed at Appendix C

The updated 2022/23 HRA capital programme and associated financing of the as detailed within the report and at Appendix D.

11 ROUGH SLEEPING ACCOMODATION PLACEMENT POLICY

Kate Blakemore, Strategic Director, presented the report which sought approval of a new placement policy which set out how the Council will use homes provided specifically to meet the needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

Councillor Jeal asked if it could be ensured that whoever is placed in the accommodation does not end up in subsidy due to the rent being too high and that the charge would not be more than the government guidelines adding that the aim is to help people not burden them with more debt. The Strategic Director advised that she will check and circulate information to members via email.

Councillor Martin asked for it to be ensure that the rent is not higher than the housing allowance and for it to be kept in line with this to prevent debt.

Councillor Smith-Clare asked for the report back to Committee to consider changes in perception in rough sleeping and requested the number of people sleeping in cars or back of vans etc. The Strategic Director agreed to confirm this number with the Rough Sleeper Team and report back to Members via email.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor added that it is also important to have eyes and ears for those who may be missed and link where possible with the Community Champions and referred to a comment made by Councillor Myers who raised that Community Partners could work with people who are placed in accommodation. Councillor Flaxman-Taylor will raise this with Paula Boyce, Strategic Director to ensure that they have all the help and advice that they need.

Kate Blakemore advised that part of the funding package included revenue funding to provide support to those living in that accommodation. This will be a stepping stone with wrap around support to help them secure and maintain a tenancy moving forward.

Councillor Jeal added that there are some rough sleepers who do not want to live in accommodation and help should be given to them even if they do not want to be housed.

RESOLVED:

That Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee Adopt the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme Placement Policy

12 COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND POLICY

The Enabling and Empty Homes Officer presented the report which provided members with an update on the Community Housing Fund and the Community Land Trust established in the Borough.

RESOLVED:

That Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee:

Note the contents of the report.

Approve the provision of a “working grant” to existing and new Community Led Housing Organisations as per the Community Housing Fund Policy to support the development of the organisations and housing projects.

Approve the amendment to the CLH Loan to allow for properties already holding planning permission or the acquisition of buildings to be eligible for a loan.

13 COUNCIL HOUSING COMPLIANCE AND PERFORMANCE - SIX MONTHLY UPDATE JUNE 2022

The Resident Engagement Officer explained the report which provided the six monthly position for the Council’s compliance and performance in relation to its housing stock for the 2021/22 financial year and the Council’s compliance against each of the Consumer Standards and the Rent standard.

Councillor Wainwright expressed concern at the underspend in the HRA when looking at the graph in paragraph 2.1 which showed that the quality of accommodation was not compliant in one area in June 2022 and this was also the case in November 2021. He added that he hoped that the Council could get on top of this and not have any non compliance.

The Strategic Director added that this had been recognised and additional resources had been brought in with an action plan which would be presented to committee in September.

Councillor Smith-Clare referred to the number of complaints, the highest being staff behaviour and asked what this related to. The Resident Engagement Officer advised that the reason for the complaints can be how the processes have been interpreted, the category has a broad meaning and more detail will be provided to members.

Councillor Jeal referred to the Selective Licensing Scheme and that Members are contacted by Landlords regarding standards of Council accommodation and it would be good to say that the Council’s housing stock had been improved.

Councillor Price added that contractors had not been able to go to properties to do repairs due to Covid, and that everyone wants to see the housing stock improve. He suggested that local contractors could be used to get works completed and asked for reassurance of a timescale for works to be caught up. The Strategic Director advised that the Council has a procurement strategy in place to follow and it is being investigated how works could be sub contracted to further contractors. This will be part of the Asset Strategy which will be presented to Committee again in September.

The approach being taken is to prioritise works by risk with the resources available.

RESOLVED:

That the committee note the contents of the report and the work in progress to address areas of poor performance.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Wainwright advised that it was Anti Social Awareness Week next week and the need to ensure that the Police have the correct codes to access GYBC properties.

The meeting ended at: TBC