



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
HELD IN
THE FORLI ROOM, TOWN HALL
ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillors D Over (Chairman), R Brown (Vice Chairman),
Bull , H Fuller, D Fower, JR Fox, J Whitby

Also Present: Henry Clark Independent Co-opted Member
Keith Lievesley Independent Co-opted Member
Philip Nuttall Independent Co-opted Member

Officers Present: Gary Goose, Head of Community Services
Anne Keogh, Housing Strategic Planning Manager
Chief Inspector Rob Hill, Community and Safety Services Strategic
Lead
Karen S Dunleavy Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Allen, Councillor Bull is in attendance as substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 11 July 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2016 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Housing Strategy and Rural Implications

The report was introduced by the Housing Strategic Planning Manager to Members, which provided an update on the development of the Housing Strategy 2016-20 and to seek comments from committee on the proposed content, particularly regarding rural housing issues. Members were informed that a draft version of the Housing Strategy would be ready for comment at Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee Cabinet on 25th October 2016 and presented to Cabinet on 7th November 2016 for the purposes of approval to commence a 4 week public consultation.

Comments and observations were made around the following area:

- The LA had no control over the changes in national priorities for the Affordable Housing funding programme. There had been a significant shift away from funding for rented affordable homes as the Government had shifted its focus on to home ownership products.
- The allocation of the LA's own capital funding for affordable housing had been subject to some recent changes. The main stream of funding which was received from Cross Keys Homes (CKH) from right to buy capital receipts, had been ring-fenced to the Council's recently approved housing Joint Venture to invest in the provision of

affordable homes. The funding stream currently amounted to £14.6m. The Joint Venture would be able to direct the funding towards the different tenures of affordable housing in the most appropriate way.

- The other source of housing capital funding available was through developers' contributions paid for off-site affordable housing provision via s106 agreements. The funding stream currently amounted to approximately £3m and would continue to be invested in affordable homes in Peterborough through funding bids received from the Council's affordable housing provider partners. There would be a shift in emphasis towards allocation of the funds on loan or an equity stake basis to enable the funds to be recycled, although grants would be available where circumstances were required.
- The Housing Strategy was a strategic document and had not been developed with an extensive action plan. It had been intended to provide a high level overview of Peterborough's housing agenda and since it had been a five year lifespan an action plan. To ensure that the Strategy remained current and appropriate throughout its lifespan an annual report would be published, which reviewed progress.
- Issues such as homelessness and empty homes had their own more detailed strategies, with their own action plans which would be reported through the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee.
- The draft strategy would be presented to Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee on 25th October and to Cabinet on 7th November 2016 for approval for public consultation and Members and Parish Councils would be invited to comment.
- A target for new homes up to 2036, had been included in the emerging Local Plan.
- The LA was not currently meeting the new homes target within the existing Local Plan, which had resulted in a backlog of homes to be built. By resetting the date of the Local Plan and updating the target the LA would be in a position to meet the housing need.
- The Devolution deal would provide control over funding for housing, education, skills and jobs on a local level rather than by the Government. Partner authorities would need to decide how the funding would be allocated appropriately in order to strengthen infrastructure.
- There would be more money available for affordable housing through the Devolution deal, however, partners such as Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire had significant pressures over affordable housing issues. Peterborough should receive a proportionate allocation of Devolution housing funds which would be additional to other funding opportunities such as the national Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding programme.
- The Housing Strategy would not include details of the preferred development sites such as Castor and Ailsworth, as they would be included in the next version of the emerging Local Plan which would also be presented to Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet at the same time as the draft Housing Strategy to also gain approval to commence public consultation.
- Publicly owned land would also be considered for inclusion in the list of preferred development sites in the next version of the emerging Local Plan, however, there had been an assessment process involved to evaluate whether the land put forward was appropriate for development. Issues such as whether the site was located on a flood plain, would be considered to ensure appropriate access to amenities and that the overall impact on the public was taken into account.
- The LA could not prioritise allocating affordable homes built within the village envelope to its local residents over and above other Peterborough residents. Affordable homes within the village boundary as they would be allocated to the households with the highest priority need for rehousing in the same way as affordable homes built in the urban areas. Affordable homes built on rural exception sites however, did prioritise identified local need that had been established through a local housing needs survey.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission recommended that the Housing Strategy demonstrated evidence that the Rural Vision and Parish Charter had been taken into account.

ACTION AGREED

The Commission noted the content and format of the draft Housing Strategy and requested that the Housing Strategic Planning Manager:

1. Ensure the Housing Strategy was prefaced with a clear statement of what it was trying to achieve and how the remit of the Housing Strategy differed from the Local Plan; and
2. Provide confirmation of the housing development target within the existing Local Plan and whether the LA was currently achieving its target and confirmation of the housing target being set in the emerging Local Plan.

5. Prevention and Enforcement Service

The report was introduced by the Community and Safety Services Strategic Lead, which outlined to Members, details of the development of the multi-agency Prevention and Enforcement Service with a particular focus on rural communities.

The Community and Safety Services Strategic Lead and the Head of Community Services responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- The Rural Crime Action team (RCA) team responded to crime trends and would organise force strategies and objectives, however, there had been no current set judicial priority in respect of trends. Crime trends were being mapped and would be part of the Tasking and Co-ordination Hub (TaCoH).
- The RCA team did not hold any jurisdiction over domestic violence crimes which occurred in rural areas as the issue had been a police priority. The Public Protection team and Domestic Violence team, located at Thorpe Wood Police Station, would respond to domestic violence crime incidences as they were reported for rural areas.
- The RCAP team had an action plan and a clear strategy in order to tackle fly tipping. The TaCoH would also map fly tipping hotspot areas.
- The action plan developed to monitor the progress of Prevention and Enforcement Services was a long-term solution, which had involved various agency organisations over a six year period. Partner organisations had signed up to the action plan and there would be national monitoring on its progress, however, progress to date was in its infancy.
- A cross party group in relation to 4.6 of the report in regards to the Traveller Liaison and Enforcement would be covered by a Strong and Supportive Community Scrutiny Committee task and finish group and a meeting date was to be announced.
- Current police powers to remove abandoned vehicles would be expanded to some PES officers, which would increase the footfall in monitoring and reporting the issues.
- There was no legislation currently in place to grant powers of arrest to PES officers, however, the officers were able to call for a response.
- Fly grazing and the control of stray horses around parkways was being investigated through seeking the details of land ownership through the Land Registry office in order to pursue removal action by the Prevention and Enforcement Services.
- Training for the PES officers would be undertaken by a training scheme and close supervision in order to provide an understanding over the use of their enforcement powers.

- PES officers had been appointed from the current staff structure. Consideration would be given to the recruitment of future vacant PES positions to include applicants from varied ethnic backgrounds.
- A joint approach between the LA and the police would be taken in terms of tackling the dangerous cycle issues along Bridge Street, which would include the provision of education to cyclists to outline the dangers by the placement of efficient signage. The issues raised by Members regarding the dangerous cycling issues would be taken on board.
- Speed watch and police checks would need to be evidenced in order to assist in detecting significant speeding issues in rural areas. However, the speeding issue concerns in rural areas raised by Members would be taken on board.
- It was acknowledged that there were a number of issues in regards to car drifting in rural areas and these issues would be investigated by the road traffic police. Calls to 999 would provide an immediate response, however, 101 would rate then refer on the issue. There were plans for speeding incidents to be tackled by a triage team through the PES services, which was to be developed in due course.
- The accountability for PES progress was the responsibility of the Strong and Supportive Scrutiny Committee and the governance arrangements was the responsibility of a management board which reported to the statutory Community Partnership Board.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission recommended that the Prevention and Enforcement Service address the ongoing speeding issues experienced in rural areas in order to gain public buy in of the scheme.

ACTION AGREED

The Commission noted the report and requested that the Community and Safety Services Strategic Lead:

1. Provided contact details for RCAP in conjunction with organised crime for theft issues;
2. Keep Members updated on the progress of the PES in particular to rural areas; and
3. Confirm whether the horses fly grazing on land between Peakirk and Eye was legal.

6. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Commission received the latest version of the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following month. Members were invited to comment on the Forward Plan and where appropriate identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

AGREED ACTION

The Commission noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and required further information on:

- Local Plan
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Vivacity Premier Fitness Invest to Save Scheme
- Review of Emergency Stopping Places
- Potential Energy Joint Venture – KEY/07MAR16/04

7. Work Programme 2016/17

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a work programme for 2016/2017.

The Committee noted the report.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 7 November 2016.

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.41pm.

CHAIRMAN