

**MINUTES OF THE GROWTH, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7.00PM, ON
TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors Iqbal (Chair), Jamil (Vice Chair), Knight, Thulbourn, Warren and Wiggin, Ayres, S Allen, Casey, Rush and Independent Co-opted Member Parish Councillor Young.

Officers Present: Rob Hill, Service Director: Housing and Communities
Charlotte Cameron, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Anne Keogh, Housing Strategy and Implementation Manager
Nick Carter, Service Director Growth and Regeneration
Bobby Duke, Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer
Tom Hennessey, Chief Executive Opportunity Peterborough

Others Present: Kelly Jesus, Youth Council Representative

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Judy Fox and Independent Co-opted Member Parish Councillor Mark Ormston.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

Councillor Wiggin declared an interest, as appeared on his register of interests, in relation to the Growth and Regeneration Prospectus exempt appendix and the motion from Councillor Fenner

30. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISION

No call ins were received.

31. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Chair introduced the report which included the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing decisions that the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

- Members requested that they be kept informed on the Station Quarter redevelopment.
- The decision that related to Lincoln Road was exempt.
- The Locality Asset Review had been taken to Cabinet and there would be engagement with ward Councillors and community associations.

- Members raised concerns regarding the review and urged Officers to make direct contact with all stakeholders as soon as possible.
- Officers assured Members that there was a schedule of engagement.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

32. DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2029

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the proposed content and structure of the Housing Strategy that would help inform development.

The Housing Strategy and Implementation Manager accompanied by the Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer introduced the report and key points raised included:

The report covered the progress to date and the main elements of the strategy. There would be more information provided at the housing workshop on 30 November 2023.

Officers were on track to deliver to the specified timeline and were open to questions.

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to section 4.1 and queried the people from other local authorities' areas that were housed in the city. The Officers advised that this did not fall within the remit of the housing strategy.
- The Officers were aware of private companies using houses as children's homes but that it was a difficult solution to find.
- Members noted that there were no mentions of the colleges within the strategy and Officers were advised that they include reference to existing provisions.
- There had been an initiative from the housing needs service to cultivate relationships between the private sector and landlords.
- The strategy would bring together all services to ensure the housing needs in Peterborough were met.
- Members noted that a significant challenge was that landlords could not be forced to set their rents at a particular rate.
- Members queried how residents could overcome bad credit and were advised that the Housing Needs team would have the capacity to support residents into temporary accommodation.
- The temporary accommodation would then support residents in building relationships that could lead to a good reference.
- Members were advised that Officers would investigate a zero-deposit scheme and whether it was possible to bring empty homes back into use.
- Members queried why the Council were not building their own homes. The Officers advised that this had been investigated through a Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The financial position of the Council meant that we were not able to do that, as well as land restrictions.
- Members were also advised that a HRA would not be a quick solution.
- The Local Plan dictated that 30% of developments should be affordable housing (AH) however there were difficulties getting that.
- Members raised concerns regarding the number of homes that were empty and were advised that there were around 200 that had been empty for more than 2 years.

- The Officers advised that there needed to be other of ways of building housing to increase the AH supply.
- There had been an increase of registered providers (RP) in the city, and they were providing the right mix of housing for the city's needs.
- Members noted that the larger the family, the longer they would be in temporary accommodation as the suitable sized properties were unaffordable in the private sector.
- Members queried whether student accommodation had been looked at as part of the strategy and were advised that the Article 4 direction would allow the Council to change planning rights to deliver homes of multiple occupation.
- This had been an ongoing initiative and would support the development of the growth agenda.
- Members questioned whether there had been any discussions focused on identifying sites suitable for student accommodation and whether any existed within the private sector.
- An affordable home was defined by the National Planning Framework and there were various opportunities to get on the ladder like shared ownership.
- There were challenges in working with the private sector to ensure that the right housing stock was available for residents within the city. The Officers had been working hard to build relationships so that they could influence some of the decisions.
- The supply of 1 bed accommodation had become limited.
- There were 2500 people on the housing register and the assessment figure would look at supporting affordability measures.
- Officers had been working on a viability assessment that would be developed alongside the new Local Plan.
- Various departments would work together to improve the quality of social housing.
- Members were advised that the new Social Housing Regulations would give the tenants a greater voice.
- Members referred to the Environment Act 2025 and the Future Homes Standard and queried whether it had been implemented. Members were advised that there were changings to building regulations and that this would be included within the strategy.
- Members queried whether the Council should open a HRA and were advised that more detail would be provided at the upcoming Housing Workshop.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to make comments on the proposed content and structure of the Housing Strategy to help inform development of a completed draft of the document before it is presented to Cabinet on 15th January for approval for public consultation.

33. GROWTH AND REGENERATION PROSPECTUS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the Growth and Regeneration Prospectus to endorse the proposed approach. The Service Director Growth and Regeneration accompanied by the Chief Executive Opportunity Peterborough introduced the report and key points raised included:

The plan for the prospectus was for it to stand out from everyone else. The content was thought provoking and outline the plans for growth and regeneration in the city.

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to the Visitor Economy Strategy (VES) that had been written and were advised that it had been used as reference for the prospectus.
- Members referred to funding from central government and noted that there were no mention of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). Officers were advised that they include the receipt of funding from partners more explicitly within the strategy.

The following recommendation was made by Councillor Wiggin and seconded by Councillor Jamil that the Committee resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting when discussing Appendix 1 on the grounds that the item contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed as it relates to the financial or business affairs (past or present) of the Council. A vote was taken on the recommendation from Councillor Wiggin and was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

The Committee entered exempt session.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the current position of the Growth and Regeneration Prospectus.
2. Considers and scrutinises this report and accompanying Prospectus, and endorses the approach being taken.

34. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee re-entered public session.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which enabled the committee to monitor and track the progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

- There were none.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report.

35. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which looked at the work programme for the municipal year 2023-2024 to determine the Committees priorities. Members were invited to make comments and suggestions.

- Members referred to the skills remit within the Terms of Reference and requested a report come to the Committee.
- Members noted the challenges with the work programme and would review the programme at the next Group Representatives meeting.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the Work Programme for 2023/2024 and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

36. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee was noted as being the 30 January 2024

CHAIR

Public Meeting began at 7:00pm and ended at 8:17pm.
The Committee reconvened at 9:47 and ended at 9:53pm.

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