

MINUTES OF MEETING Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel HELD ON Monday, 27th February, 2023, 6.40 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dawn Barnes, Khaled Moyeed, Matt White (Chair) and Charles Adje

ALSO ATTENDING:

97. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein'.

98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Blake, Cllr Harrison Mullane & Cllr Hymas.

99. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business

100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

101. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None

102. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting on 12th December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

103. PLACEMAKING APPROACH

The Panel received a report which set out the new Placemaking approach for Haringey, the Placemaking approach to the emerging new Local Plan, and the rollout

of Wood Green Voices and similar exercises to follow elsewhere in the borough. The report was introduced by Cllr Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for Council House Building, Placemaking and Development, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 13-18. Peter O'Brien, AD Regeneration & Economic Development was present for this item, along with Bryce Tudball, Head of Planning Policy, Transport and Infrastructure. The following arose during the discussion of this report:

- a. The Panel sought clarification about what was being done differently in the Placemaking approach, that the authority had not done previously. It was commented that the Placemaking priorities were all well and good but they were the type of things that every authority would strive towards and that nobody would propose the opposite of what Haringey was laying out as priorities.
- b. In response, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that to some degree that was true, but emphasised that this was about embedding a new approach into all of its Placemaking activities, incorporating the Haringey deal as part of this process. By way of example, the Broadwater Farm engagement was sited, including the translation of communication materials into several different languages. Central to the Placemaking approach was putting people at the heart of it and considering how they used a particular space and how this could be supported through how those spaces were designed.
- c. The Panel sought clarification about the Cabinet Member's suggestion that part of the Placemaking approach was ceding power to the community, given that ultimately Cabinet would still be taking decisions. In response, the Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of co-production and co-design in terms of working with the community. As part of this, one of the key stakeholder groups was young people and ensuring that they were part of the co-design process. As part of Wood Green Voices, a representative group of stakeholders was put together and that this group would be built upon going forwards. This group would continue to be consulted with on future developments. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that certain processes would have to be agreed by Cabinet as that was the legal framework for local government decision making and that areas of technical expertise would still sit with officers.
- d. The Panel sought elaboration on how the Council was learning from its past mistakes through the new Placemaking approach. In response, the Cabinet Member set out that she felt the Council had perhaps not paid sufficient attention to the views of the community in the past and had tended to impose decisions rather than incorporate the views of its residents. The Cabinet Member emphasised that ultimately, it was a change of approach and culture of who the Council was as much as anything else.
- e. In response to a question, the Cabinet Member advised that a huge effort had been made to speak to groups that may not always have been engaged with in the past and that in terms of specific groups, Greek Somali and Alevi communities had been engaged as part of Wood Green Voices. The Cabinet Member commented that she did not think that the authority had done this to the same degree before, even though there had been a number of attempts at consulting and engaging in the past.
- f. The Panel raised concerns about the Council being seen to be participating in gentrification, even unwittingly, and were particularly opposed to any historical instances of attempting to design people out of a particular location. The Panel sought reassurances that local people would be at the heart of the

- Placemaking approach. In response, the Cabinet Member acknowledged those concerns and advised that the process was iterative and that the Council would continue to engage with residents and stakeholders throughout the process. The Council would re-engage with the groups who had come forward as part of Wood Green Voices and would also be looking to expand upon these groups.
- g. The Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Private Renters and Planning advised that a key aspect of Placemaking was around ensuring that the Boroughs planning policies reflected the core values and aspirations set out in the report. Officers advised that, to this end, they were developing a new Local Plan and that this would be a more nuanced, locally specific Local Plan that was broken down into defined geographic areas. The new Local Plan would promote the delivery of genuinely affordable housing and also affordable workspace as part of a Placemaking approach.
 - h. In response to a question, the Cabinet Member advised that they would be adopting a quantitative, as well as qualitative approach to engagement. The 350 people engaged with as part of Wood Green Vices was only the start and the exercise was deliberately done over a truncated timeframe to speed up the process.
 - i. In response to a question about engagement with businesses, the Cabinet Member advised that officers had spoken to the Wood Green Business District and the Cultural Quarter as part of Wood Green Voices. The Cabinet Member also promoted the role of the Council in developing Wood Green through the fact it owned a lot of buildings in Wood Green. Officers emphasised the fact that they would continue to build upon engagement in Wood Green and that it was not a closed pool of consultees. The Council had won an award for its engagement on the new Local Plan, which involved speaking to 2000 people. The Local Plan would be going out to draft consultation in early summer.
 - j. The Cabinet Member also gave assurances that the organisation would be adopting a broad based approach and that would include engaging with local ward councillors.
 - k. The Panel commented that many of the proposals had been done previously by past administrations and a Panel Member rejected any suggestion that there had been a top-down approach to decision making in the past. Concerns were put forward about any perception that the administration was trying to talk down past achievements. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that there was no attempt to downplay previous successes, rather this was a process of trying to build on the good stuff that had happened in the past. This was as much about the culture of the Council and how it worked with its communities, as anything else.
 - l. The Panel ruminated that the key challenge was how could the Council improve the lives of its residents and the places they lived and worked without pushing up prices and pushing people out of the borough. The Cabinet Member set out that the Council's Housing Strategy would play a key role in this and the building of 3000 Council homes.

RESOLVED

Noted.

104. IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR HOUSING

The Panel received a report which provided an update the Housing Services Improvement Plan. The report was introduced by Cllr Carlin, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Private Renters and Planning, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 19-22. Jahedur Rahman, Operational Director of Housing Services, and Building Safety was also present for this agenda item. The following arose as part of the discussion of this report:

- a. The Panel questioned whether the Members Improvement Board that had been established would report into, or otherwise update, this scrutiny panel. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that the exact governance arrangements around this were still to be determined by the Housing Improvement Board. The Cabinet Member commented that in her view, the Members Improvement Board needed to report somewhere and that this Scrutiny Panel could be that place.
- b. The Cabinet Member advised that the Housing Improvement Board was a closed Board, which was not open to the public. This was because the Board needed to be stringent and provide robust challenge, which may not be suitable for a public setting.
- c. In response to a question, the Committee was advised that the Chief Executive chaired the Board and that Cllr Carlin sat on it as the Cabinet Member. The Board Members were councillors Dunstall, Mason, Ali and Rossetti. The Board had held its first meeting in order to set up its terms of reference and it would continue to meet every six weeks.
- d. In response to a questions about officers on the Board, the Cabinet Member advised that key Housing officers would be present at meetings, but would not sit on the Board as members.
- e. The Panel questioned whether the Panel would be able to request the minutes of the Board. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that the exact governance arrangements were being determined and that this was a request that would have to be put to the Board itself.
- f. Officers advised Members that the Membership Improvement Board had no decision making powers and that it's role was to monitor the implementation of the Improvement Plan. The Membership Improvement Board did not produce minutes but it would produce a key actions log that could be shared with the relevant governance body.
- g. The Panel commented that there might be a lot of interest in the Board and that some thought would need to be given on how to manage the fact that the Board did not meet in public.
- h. In relation to a query about the budget, officers advised that aspects of spend related to the Housing Improvement Plan would go through existing formal financial approval processes, as per other areas of spend.

RESOLVED

Noted.

105. HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

The Panel received a verbal update from the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Private Renters and Planning, along with the Assistant Director of Housing, on

housing associations. The Chair advised that housing associations and what the Panel can do to scrutinise them was one of the key issues that arose during the public scrutiny café event in September. The following key points were noted:

- A meeting was held in the previous week with registered social housing providers, which was chaired by the Chief Executive of the Council. The meeting was well attended, with 17 Housing associations being represented.
- The meeting was held in order to agree how social housing providers could better work together in the interests of residents. By adopting a new partnership approach, it was hoped that providers could work together to solve common problems. The two key issues that arose at this initial stage were around engagement and damp and mould.
- This strategic level meeting would meet every six months and there would be additional workstreams and meetings flowing from this; with task and finish groups picking up specific areas of concern.
- In relation to possible roles for scrutiny in this process, it was suggested that the Panel could request performance updates from the seven largest providers (covering 84% of housing association tenants in the borough). As part of developing a strategic relationship, the group had agreed to share performance data and the Panel could request this from officers as and when it was available. Other possible areas to consider were: Inviting some housing associations in to answer questions; speaking to residents; site visits to a housing association; and requesting an analysis of complaints from housing associations.

In response to this update, the Members asked some questions:

- a. The Panel queried whether, given the issue at stake, meeting every six months was too infrequent. In response, officers advised that the meetings were held at quite a strategic chief executive level and that six months was felt to be a realistic time frame. There would also be additional meetings and workstreams that fed down from this group.
- b. The Panel suggested that a briefing note should be circulated to all councillors on the partnership approach with housing associations as all members will receive extensive case work from residents. The Cabinet Member agreed to send an update to all members. **(Action: Cllr Carlin).**
- c. In relation to a realistic time frame for receiving the first batch of performance information, officers advised that the partnership had just been set up and that this may take some time. It was suggested 3 months was a reasonable timeframe. The Chair suggested that he would also like to invite representatives from housing associations to the same meeting to answer questions.
- d. The Panel agreed to have a separate discussion about how best to take forward scrutinising housing association as a panel. **(Action: Philip).**

RESOLVED

Noted.

106. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED

The Panel's work programme for 2022-23 was noted.

107. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

108. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

TBC

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair

Date