

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON MONDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2018, 6.30 - 10.25 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Ruth Gordon (Chair) Isidoros Diakides, Bob Hare, Yvonne Say, Daniel Stone and Paul Dennison

1. 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’.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Barnes and Cllr Williams. Cllr Dennison was attending the meeting as a substitute for Cllr Barnes.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

6. MINUTES

With regards to item 8 (Housing-related support for older people) the panel requested further information on:

- the “hub and cluster” model – including a full list of hubs and what services they provide.
- current supply and demand for sheltered housing – including the current rate of vacancies, over/underoccupation and waiting times.

The panel noted that there were two action points outstanding from the meeting in March:

- that details would be provided on the expected completion date for redevelopment works at Larkspur Close.
- that further information would be provided on the provision of kitchens in family sized housing units.

AGREED: That updates on all of the points above would be provided ahead of the next meeting in November 2018.

AGREED: That the minutes of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 13th March 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

AGREED: That the terms of reference, protocol for Overview and Scrutiny and the policy areas/remits and membership for each Scrutiny Panel for 2018/19 be noted.

8. SERVICE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The panel was provided with an overview of Housing and Regeneration in Haringey from senior officers beginning with Helen Fisher, Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning.

This set out the structure of the department with the three main parts of the service represented at the meeting by Dan Hawthorn, Director for Housing & Growth, Emma Williamson, Assistant Director for Planning, and Peter O'Brien, Assistant Director for Area Regeneration. There is also a capital programme team that works on delivering the capital projects.

The main challenges for the borough in terms of securing sustainable development included the lack of shortage of housing supply and affordability and pressure on space for employment activity but there were also opportunities including the Upper Lea Valley Opportunity Area and the Wood Green Opportunity Area.

Dan Hawthorn spoke about housing services in Haringey which has five main sections:

- Strategy & Commissioning (housing policy)
- Housing Supply (driving the supply of new homes, particularly affordable housing)
- Housing Need (tackling homelessness)
- Private Rented Sector (enforcement team and the proposed new licensing scheme)
- Housing Benefit Service

Many aspects of these functions rely on relationships with partners, including developers. In addition there is Homes for Haringey (HfH), the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), which is responsible for managing and maintaining the Council's housing stock and delivering front-line housing management services. Cabinet has previously agreed to extend the ALMO management agreement with HfH until 2026 although there is a review clause in 2021 which would allow the Council to terminate the agreement.

Current issues relating to the Housing team's work that were outlined included:

- That meeting the housing need of the borough's population is increasingly challenging due to a growing population with an insufficient supply of housing, unaffordable house prices/rents and issues with poor quality housing, particularly in the private rented sector.
- The leading reason for households presenting to the Council as homeless is due to eviction from private rented sector housing.
- Haringey has around 3,000 households in temporary accommodation and the Council has a significant challenge in finding a sufficient supply of suitable affordable accommodation for people in this situation and some households with complex needs can find themselves in temporary accommodation for years.
- The New London Plan is setting a very challenging target for the borough of 1,958 new homes per year of which 40% should be affordable according to the Local Plan. Additional funds had been allocated by the Mayor of London to support the building of more affordable homes by Councils and a funding prospectus had recently been published. Haringey would be making an ambitious bid for this, but so would other Boroughs. Dan Hawthorn agreed to circulate a link to the funding prospectus to panel members. **(ACTION: Dan Hawthorn)**
- Strong progress had been made towards Haringey's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 2020 and to make Haringey zero carbon by 2050, supported by the Carbon Management team and involving work such as retrofitting residential and commercial building and by setting and enforcing more stringent planning requirements. In response to a query from a member of the Panel, Dan Hawthorn agreed to circulate a written update to clarify how carbon emissions associated with new housing developments are taken into account when planning decisions are made. **(ACTION: Dan Hawthorn)**

Peter O'Brien spoke about the Regeneration team which covers a complex area, involving multi-agency partnerships, and aims to invest in communities to make them better places to live and work. The two main areas of focus currently are Tottenham and Wood Green.

The Delivery Plan for Tottenham is updated annually and includes four Priority Areas:

- North Tottenham – including the High Road West programme, the new Tottenham Hotspur stadium development, improvements to White Hart Lane and Northumberland Park rail stations and community engagement in the Northumberland Park area.
- South Tottenham – including the delivery of the Tottenham Hale District Centre Framework, redevelopment in the Seven Sisters area including at Wards Corner and Apex House and transport improvements at Tottenham Hale and Seven Sisters.
- Place – including town centre management activities, a new High Road strategy and improvements to Tottenham Green and Bruce Grove.
- People – including an Estates Regeneration Fund programme with projects to engage with local residents and improve conditions on estates.

In Wood Green, a Business Improvement District had recently been established which will coordinate investment in the area. The Connecting Wood Green scheme, supported by the GLAs Good Growth Fund, will deliver a series of projects in the area to make public realm improvements, including to the main pedestrian routes. Social enterprise projects had also been established including Blue House Yard, Green Rooms and Wood Green Works.

Other key issues to be aware of included the government's move towards Business Rates retention and strict five-year housing targets.

Steve Carr, Assistant Director for Economic Development & Growth gave an overview of the Strategic Property Unit which supports other departments through a range of functions including through leasing, collecting rents, managing the community buildings portfolio and managing site disposals and acquisitions. He also spoke about employment and skills services including the Haringey Adult Learning Service (HALS) based in Wood Green Library and employment support provided by Tottenham Works.

Emma Williamson spoke about the work of the planning team which includes:

- Development management
- Planning policy
- Planning enforcement
- Strategic transport
- Building control and land charges

In 2013 the planning service had been identified as a failing service but following improvements is now one of London's top three performing planning services. The planning service leads on the production of the Local Plan, which sets Haringey's Planning Policies.

Emma Williamson also gave an overview of Haringey's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which began in 2014 and is collected from developers to help pay for infrastructure costs. The CIL can only be spent on infrastructure that is necessary for growth and is included on the Council's 'Regulation 123' list which was adopted in

2017. The list includes items such as facilities for education, health and wellbeing, social and community use, parks and open spaces.

On collaboration with other boroughs, Panel members asked for more information about Central London Forward (CLF). CLF is one of four London sub-regional partnerships and comprises of 12 inner London boroughs which work together on developing skills, jobs and homes in the sub-region. Haringey also works closely with Enfield and Waltham Forest boroughs although they are in a different region. Panel members noted that they had not seen the minutes of these meetings and it was agreed that the minutes of the last two meetings of the CLF would be circulated.

(ACTION: Dominic O'Brien)

On collaboration with developers, Panel members were informed that there are two 'landowner forums', one for the Tottenham area and one for the Wood Green area which provide a space for the Council and developers to share information and support joint working. They are not decision making bodies and are not part of the Council's constitution. Minutes are published for the Tottenham forum but not yet for the Wood Green forum.

Panel members expressed concerns about the public perception of the relationship between the council and developers, noting that there ought to be greater transparency of such forums. Panel members queried a number of aspects of the Tottenham and Wood Green landowner forums including their membership, terms of reference, political oversight and access to information about the issues discussed. The Panel requested that further information on these points be provided to the next meeting of the Panel. **(ACTION: Helen Fisher)**

The Panel also noted the performance indicator dashboards which had been provided for priorities 4 and 5.

9. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - HOUSING & REGENERATION

Cllr Emina Ibrahim, Cabinet Member for Housing and Estate Renewal reported on and responded to questions on the following issues:

- Reducing the need to use temporary accommodation is a priority for the Council. The current use can involve paying expensive rates for poor accommodation and the use of such accommodation for periods of up to 12 weeks can be particularly damaging for children and destructive to their education. The provision of more Council housing would contribute towards this aim although it was recognised that the building of 1,000 new homes, as promised by the manifesto, was not going to end the waiting list by itself. Increasing the supply of temporary accommodation owned by the Council may help to improve matters as this could often provide better living standards than some of the privately-owned temporary accommodation available elsewhere.
- Cllr Ibrahim confirmed that the current Housing Strategy would be reviewed. The development of a new Housing Strategy would take some time and require a period of consultation and this will take place during 2019. In the meantime, amendments to the existing Housing Strategy will be submitted to Cabinet in

November. This will involve changes to Appendices C and D of the strategy which relate to the mix of housing in new developments and the definition of affordability.

- The process of rehousing the residents of the Tangmere block of the Broadwater Farm Estate due to the structural defects that had recently been identified was proceeding quickly. Only seven households were still waiting to be matched to a suitable home. There were some complications, including that the large room sizes in Tangmere block made it difficult for residents to move their existing furniture to otherwise suitable alternative housing with smaller room sizes. Because this evacuation had happened quite rapidly it was important not to put too much pressure on residents to move too quickly while these issues were resolved. Secure tenants and resident leaseholders would receive Home Loss Payments to compensate them for the loss of their home. A decision had been taken not to hold a residents' ballot on the Council's preferred option to demolish the blocks as the fact that this related to a health and safety issue made it an inappropriate issue to hold a ballot on.
- A decision had been taken at Cabinet to create a single homelessness hub which would provide a range of specialist services in order to deal with the multiple and interrelated problems typically faced by people who find themselves to be homeless.
- Performance issues at HfH had been improved with 99% of appointments now on time.

Cllr Charles Adje, Cabinet Member for Strategic Regeneration, outlined the headline areas of his portfolio including regeneration in Tottenham and Wood Green and the approach to employment and skills and the approach to accommodation strategy. Particular priorities included the progress of the High Road West project, determining the future approach to Northumberland Park following the cancellation of the HDV, the future of the High Road in Wood Green and Town Centre management in Tottenham. It would also be necessary to look at options for the Council's accommodation in Wood Green, specifically River Park House, Alexandra House and Wood Green Library as the Council is struggling for space and has maintenance issues.

Due to a lack of time, it was agreed that Cllr Adje should be invited back to the next meeting of the Panel in November for a full Q&A session. It was also agreed that a written question from Cllr Hare regarding data on employment sites should be submitted to Helen Fisher for a response. **(ACTION: Dominic O'Brien/ Helen Fisher)**

10. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The panel noted the process for the development of the work plan, and the positive feedback from the recent "scrutiny café" consultation event.

The panel raised a number of issues that could potentially be included in the work plan:

- the supply of affordable housing in Haringey

- the Tottenham Area Action Plan (AAP)
- the Wards Corner redevelopment
- homelessness caused by eviction from private sector housing
- Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy

The Chair proposed that the panel explore the option of appointed a non-voting co-opted member to the panel with expertise in housing issues and planning policy.
(Action: Cllr Gordon/Dominic O'Brien)

11. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meetings of the Housing & Regeneration scrutiny panel are scheduled to take place on:

- 15th November 2018
- 17th December 2018
- 15th January 2019
- 14th February 2019
- 14th March 2019

CHAIR: Councillor Ruth Gordon

Signed by Chair

Date