

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY 3RD MARCH 2020, 7.00 - 9.25pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors Khaled Moyeed (Chair), Dawn Barnes, Ruth Gordon, Bob Hare, Yvonne Say and Daniel Stone**

### **44. 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'.

### **45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

### **46. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

### **47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **48. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

A deputation was received from Paul Burnham and Jacob Secker from Haringey Defend Council Housing on the subject of the Converted Properties Cleaning service charge. Paul Burnham said that service charges are increasingly becoming a significant but unacknowledged part of gross rents and are a cause of poverty. He explained that this particular charge was introduced for tenants in 2018 but that the Council had now accepted that most tenants received no cleaning at all in the first year. He added that, in the second year, tenants paid the leaseholder contribution as well as their own while leaseholders also paid. The service charge had been raised by 89% in this second year. He said that the Cabinet was given inaccurate information about the charge as they had been told that this was an existing service that tenants had not previously been charged for whereas, in fact it was a new service. New

national regulations coming into force next month would be setting minimum standards that Haringey would not meet.

Paul Burnham urged the Panel to look into this issue and to prevent further overcharging in the current and future years.

Asked by Cllr Gordon what responses he had received from the Council to his enquiries, Paul Burnham said that deputations to the Cabinet and to Full Council had been made but he did not feel that questions were answered fully or accurately. However, he had received information following Freedom of Information requests about how decisions were made. Further engagement from Cabinet Members would also be of help.

Cllr Stone asked for further details about the tenants paying towards the leaseholder charges. Paul Burnham and Jacob Secker said that their concern was that the anomalies could be revenue-driven, rather than just a result of errors, and that there should therefore be a scrutiny review looking into the decisions about service charges and how they are increased.

Asked by Cllr Barnes for their view on whether the Council was prepared for the new regulations on service charges that he had mentioned, Paul Burnham said that this should be a wake-up call for the Council to improve standards and the way that the service is managed.

Cllr Gordon noted that there still appeared to be a discrepancy in the service charge for the 2020/21 figures provided with the charge set at £1.77 per week instead of £1.11 per week. Paul Burnham said that the tenancy agreements allow the Council to make changes to the service charge with just one week's notice and that the service charge is 47% higher than it ought to be without any explanation.

Cllr Gordon requested that an agenda item to explore this issues further could be added to a future meeting of the Panel. Cllr Moyeed confirmed that the Panel would give consideration to this. **(ACTION)**

## **49. MINUTES**

Referring to budget reduction proposal HO-01 under item 41 of the minutes, Cllr Gordon requested further information on the Community Benefit Society (CBS), specifically who is on the Board, who it reports to and whether minutes are produced and can be provided to the Panel. Alan Benson, Assistant Director for Housing, responded as follows:

- That he Chairs the Board himself with Denise Gandy, Executive Director of Housing Demand at Homes for Haringey (HfH) as the Vice-Chair. The three

other members of the Board are Mark Baigent (Chair of Tower Hamlets CBS and Capital Letters), Meera Bedi (local resident and Head of Development at Barnet Homes) and Steve Beard (Director of Beacon Ltd). The Council needs to be in the minority on the Board to be fully independent and have Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) registration. The membership of the Board had been published in recent Cabinet papers. [NOTE: A report about the Haringey CBS was discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The CBS governance is described from paragraph 6.7 of the report under agenda item 74 <https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=63078>]

- The CBS is an independent body so doesn't report to anyone in the Council and has clear rules about what it can and cannot do.
- The minutes of the CBS are not published publicly and are not subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) regulations as it is not a statutory public body.

Referring to capital schedule proposal 4003 under item 41 of the minutes, Cllr Gordon requested that the Tottenham Hale District Centre Framework (DCF) be added as an agenda item to a future meeting for further scrutiny with the relevant Cabinet Member, Cllr Charles Adje, in attendance to respond to questions. **(ACTION)**

**AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2019 be approved as an accurate record.**

## **50. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS**

Cllr Kirsten Hearn, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability, provided an update to the Panel on the part of her portfolio relating to planning policy. She informed the Panel that the Council aimed to make changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which generates funds from new developments to improve local communities. There was a need to democratise this as some areas receive more funds than others. While the residential CIL rate in the west of the Borough is £265 per square metre it is only £15 in the east of the Borough and it was now proposed that the rate in the east be increased to £50.

She said that Article 4 directions had been chosen to restrict employment space from being converted into sub-standard residential space in certain areas of the Borough.

The Highgate School Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) had been developed in partnership with the private Highgate School which owns substantial land and buildings near Highgate Village. The SPD was expected to be considered shortly by the Cabinet for approval to consult on a draft masterplan for the area.

In response to a question from Cllr Gordon asking for further detail on the new CIL rate in the east of the Borough, Emma Williamson, AD for Planning, said that the consultation finished in February and representations were being considered,

although there hadn't been very many. Further viability work was needed with BNP Paribas and then it would be taken forward for examination through a formal process involving the appointment of an inspector to look at the schedule. It was hoped that the new £50 per square metre residential CIL rate could be implemented in April of next year. Initially this was only going to apply to the Tottenham Hale area but the proposal was now for this to apply to the whole east of the Borough. It was also proposed that the CIL rate for student accommodation be raised from £15 per square metre to £85 per square metre. The rates must, by legal requirement, be based on financial viability and proposals are challenged through an independent examination.

Asked by Cllr Barnes why the CIL money had not been spent yet, while other Boroughs such as Brent had delivered several projects with their CIL funds, Rob Krzyszowski said that Brent has one of the highest development rates in London so therefore generates more CIL money. It has taken some time for the CIL money to build up in Haringey but he acknowledged that it was important to be able to start using these funds. Asked by Cllr Moyeed how the CIL money would be spent, Rob Krzyszowski said that there had been a consultation about this with residents in 2018 and so the responses to this would be taken into consideration but that the other ongoing consultation about the CIL rate would need to be concluded first. A further secondary consultation with residents on how to spend CIL funds was planned for later this year. Asked by Cllr Barnes how often CIL rates are reviewed, Rob Krzyszowski said that this would typically happen every five years but that CIL rates do also automatically rise according to inflation.

In response to a question from Cllr Gordon about policy on the proportion of affordable housing, Emma Williamson said that they would be looking at changes to the affordable housing planning policy through the Local Plan review.

Asked by Cllr Gordon about how the approach to climate change policy would be factored into planning policies, Cllr Hearn said that it would be included in the new Local Plan and that there were already good planning regulations on sustainability and climate change. Rob Krzyszowski added that the government had recently consulted on the Future Homes Standard (on national environmental standards for new homes) and that the Council had submitted an objection on the basis that London and Haringey already has higher carbon and environmental standards which it wants to maintain.

In response to a question from Cllr Hare about how the Council would response to the new report from the government, Creating Space for Beauty, Rob Krzyszowski said that the report was mainly about better design of buildings which is positive but that a lot depends on whether this is carried through with new legislation. Emma Williamson added that there were already good robust design policies in London compared with other parts of the country. The concern was that the government is simultaneously

pushing for higher building targets at the same time as pushing local authorities to obtain planning applications for better designed buildings.

Asked by Cllr Gordon whether Haringey Council was now using its own child yield calculator for new developments, Emma Williamson said that the new GLA standard had been implemented. There had been a debate about whether Haringey could add its own bespoke standard, but this would potentially involve a substantial amount of work to achieve and it would now be considered through the Local Plan review.

Asked by Cllr Gordon whether Planning should be separated from the Housing, Regeneration and Planning department and instead report directly to the Chief Executive, Cllr Hearn said that she was agreed with this, that it is a big set of portfolios to manage and that it would be better served by being separated.

## **51. LOCAL PLAN**

Rob Krzyszowski, Head of Planning Policy, Transport & Infrastructure, introduced the report on the Local Plan, which he explained is the main document used to determine planning applications across the Borough, to set out a positive vision and spatial framework for development and to translate the Council's wider corporate priorities into a spatial plan. The existing Local Plan was adopted in 2017 which is made up of a number of documents: the Strategic Policies, the Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and the Tottenham Area Action Plan.

He said that there is a legal requirement to review the Local Plan at least every five years and circumstances have changed since 2017, including a new administration at the Council, and changes to the market. A new Local Plan will therefore be developed which has to be based within national planning policy and guidance and then be considered by a national inspector. It will also need to be consistent with the London Plan, a new version of which is currently in development, and will also need to reflect what is important to Haringey in terms of key planning policies and the priorities of the Borough Plan using a clear and robust evidence base. The timescales, set out on page 19 of the agenda pack, includes a consultation with residents and, while things are currently running a bit behind this timetable, it was still anticipated that the overall timescales would be met. A Member Working Group would be set up to provide a 'sounding board' for developments on the new Local Plan and this had been discussed at Regulatory Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

In response to a query from Cllr Bob Hare about the possible implications of Crossrail 2 on the Local Plan, Rob Krzyszowski said that TfL has powers to safeguard land. As there are two options for Crossrail 2 routes in Haringey, the Council would seek clarity on which sites would stay safeguarded. However, no announcement on this is expected soon and so the approach to this will need to be refined over time.

Responding to a question from Cllr Gordon about the housing target, Rob Krzyszowski said that the housing target is set in the London Plan, the new version of which is expected to set a target of 1,592 new homes per year in Haringey. The Secretary of State is expected to give a response to the London Plan in the next few weeks. In the last financial year 644 new homes had been completed in Haringey in 2018/19, which was short of the existing target of 1,500. The Council would be aiming to achieve sufficient planning permissions and site allocations to meet the target going forward. Asked about high-density buildings, he said that tall buildings would not be needed in all areas but would be required in some areas and so that is part of the discussion on the Local Plan.

Asked by Cllr Hare about balancing housing and employment needs, Rob Krzyszowski said that this is a massive challenge for any Local Plan to balance the competing priorities for land uses. However, there is emerging policy on things like industrial intensification (involving multi-storey industrial space) and co-location (which would allow for residential properties to be adjacent to industrial land with appropriate environmental controls in place). Conservation areas and other constraints are also mapped across the Borough.

In response to a question from Cllr Barnes about the community and consultation plans around new developments, Rob Krzyszowski said that the first steps consultation would be asking open questions before the plan had been drafted and that he would be happy to expand the consultation to other settings such as supermarkets as the communications and engagement plan was being developed.

## **52. BROADWATER FARM**

David Sherrington, Director of Broadwater Farm at Homes for Haringey (HfH), introduced a report on the Broadwater Farm Improvement Programme. He said that Broadwater Farm is an estate of 1,063 homes in the N17 area, comprising of 12 blocks of mainly 1-bed and 2-bed properties. The tragic events at Grenfell Tower led to concerns about Large Panel System buildings and a requirement for structural surveys which found that 11 of the 12 blocks at Broadwater Farm had structural problems. To mitigate the risks identified by the surveys, a joint project team from Haringey Council and HfH was set up to take forward various workstreams. These workstreams include:

- efforts to drive up the standard of housing management;
- the rehousing of the residents of the Tangmere and Northolt blocks that are due to be demolished;
- installing a new district heating programme along with the upgrading of kitchens and bathrooms;
- structural and refurbishment work;
- building new homes, to replace those that are demolished, through a New Homes and Urban Design Framework;

- communications and engagement with residents;
- a socio-economic programme funded by the Estate Renewal Programme and Haringey Community Gold;
- ensuring that other non-housing assets amenities, such as commercial units and the community centre, are considered as part of the overall programme;
- procuring the demolition work required on two of the blocks.

Asked by Cllr Barnes about the acknowledgment in paragraph 4.1 of the report that cleaning and maintenance on the estate was found not to be satisfactory following engagement with residents in 2018, David Sherrington said that a new estate grading system had been introduced to monitor cleanliness and communal repairs. HfH had recently approved a new deep cleaning team to be deployed at estates across the Borough to improve standards. Cllr Hare expressed surprise that these problems had not been identified earlier and David Sherrington said that he would look into this and provide a written response about the estate services standards. **(ACTION)**

Asked by Cllr Hare about the future of Broadwater Lodge, David Sherrington said it had been identified as an opportunity site and that architects had been asked to provide detailed designs for replacement homes following the demolition of the Tangmere and Northolt blocks. They had also been asked to provide design briefs for three opportunity sites which are the old Moselle school to the north of the site, a strip of land to the north-east and the Broadwater Lodge site which is a former care home currently being used as a Temporary Accommodation hostel. Broadwater Lodge currently provides an essential service which saves the Council money on Emergency Accommodation payments so, while it is included in the list of opportunity sites, this doesn't necessarily mean that a closure would be forthcoming because this service would still need to continue in some capacity. Asked by Cllr Say about timescales, David Sherrington said that it was too early to say and, while there was a clear timetable for the architects, the overall timescales would depend on the procurement process and the engagement with residents. Dan Hawthorn, Director of Housing, Regeneration & Planning, added that there is a balance to strike between not prolonging the disruption to the estate while also ensuring that residents are engaging in the design of the redevelopment.

In response to a question from Cllr Say, David Sherrington and Dan Hawthorn noted that a ballot of residents would be required for consent to the plans due to GLA guidance, however this applied only to the new plans and not the demolition because that GLA accepted the health and safety grounds for the demolition. Asked by Cllr Barnes whether there was a target for the turnout level in the ballot, David Sherrington said that there was no specific target but that the response from residents to the previous S105 consultation about demolishing the blocks had been very good with 70-80% engagement from residents.

In response to a question from Cllr Say about wider plans for the estate, Dan Hawthorn said that there were currently no plans to demolish any blocks on the estate other than the Tangmere and Northolt blocks.

### **53. HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS**

Alan Benson, AD for Housing, introduced the report on this item which concerned housing associations in the Borough and the Council's relationship with them. He said that, in Haringey, housing associations own 43% of the total social rented stock. Housing Associations own a total of 13,780 homes in Haringey, with 11,597 of those owned by just seven Housing Associations. In comparison, the Council owns 15,283 tenanted properties and is the freeholder of 4,975 leasehold properties. The Council maintains a list of all housing association properties including details of which housing association owns it and their contact information.

Alan Benson noted that housing associations broadly have the same concerns as other social landlords, such as housing management and Decent Homes Standards, but that there have recently been two main differences. Firstly, they have had no homelessness responsibilities, unlike the Council, and secondly they have become the main developer of new social housing, including through a cross-subsidy model of using private sale to subsidise social housing. He added that, over the last 15 years, the government has turned off some local authority controls over housing associations. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 had introduced the voluntary right to buy for housing association tenants, paid for by high value sale of Council properties, thereby creating a major schism between housing associations and Councils. He also said that housing associations typically have a higher proportion of properties at Decent Homes standards and higher customer satisfaction levels but that they do not usually do as well in terms of direct engagement with tenants when things go wrong.

In Haringey, there are a range of ways in which the Council engages with housing associations. There had been recent meetings between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executives of the local housing associations and a regular quarterly briefing had also been set up between council officers and representatives of local housing associations. HfH also meet with housing association staff on a regular basis to discuss housing management issues. Officers therefore have a range of options for engaging with housing associations should Members require this, but the Council cannot instruct housing associations on what they must do.

Local resident, Nicky Small, then addressed the Panel about her experiences as a tenant of a local housing association in the Tottenham area of the Borough. She described herself as severely disabled and said that she had experienced problems with violent crime and anti-social behaviour outside of her property and pest control

issues within the property. Southern Housing Group were responsible for the outside space around her property while Newlon Housing Trust own a number of the houses in the area, including her own property. A number of possible improvements to the outside spaces had been identified through discussions with the Police and with the local Neighbourhood Watch such as the blocking of alleyways, installation of gates and lighting and the felling of trees. However, she said that Southern Housing Group had not implemented these recommendations and that Haringey Council should take action to oblige Southern Housing Group, Newlon Housing Trust and private landlords to address these serious issues.

Cllr John Bevan then addressed the Panel commenting that, in his capacity as ward Councillor for the area for 17 years, he had had more dealings with this particular housing site than anywhere else and that it was particularly neglected. He said that, as Southern Housing Group owned very few properties in Haringey Borough, he was concerned that these properties might not receive sufficient attention in dealing with residents' issues. The involvement of both Southern Housing Group and Newlon Housing Trust meant that there was a lot of confusion and duplication over responsibility for issues that residents were concerned about. Cllr Bevan said that the whole estate should be managed by just one housing association to simplify these issues and that Newlon Housing Trust would be his preference to do this.

Asked by Cllr Stone how this situation with two housing associations had arisen, Alan Benson said that it was likely that some Council tenants had exercised their right to buy and that the properties had later been acquired by the housing associations. Alan Benson added that Southern Housing Group own around 30,000 properties across the country, but only 24 properties in Haringey, and should therefore not be operating in the Borough as they had no incentive to manage them effectively. Newlon Housing Trust owns a large number of properties in the Borough however, and so it would make sense if these properties were transferred to them to manage. The Council has no levers to make this happen but could have a conversation with the housing associations to encourage this. Cllr Gordon requested that some strong action should be taken over the issues that Nicky Small and Cllr Bevan had raised and that Alan Benson should report back to the Panel on this. Alan Benson said that the Council usually tends not to take enforcement action against housing associations, which are partners of the Council, but that it has been done in the past and could be done again. Asked by Cllr Hare whether the 24 properties could be taken on and owned by the Council, Alan Benson said that the Council could look at this but that it may not be viable to acquire the properties due to the prices expected of them. Asked by Cllr Stone whether action could be taken to prevent such a situation, with ownership involving more than one housing association, from occurring again, Alan Benson said that he would look into this and provide a response to the Panel. **(ACTION)**

Cllr Moyeed said that he would explore the options available to the Panel on this issue and consider what action could be taken. **(ACTION)**

**54. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

Cllr Barnes proposed that the Panel should give consideration to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's fire safety review. Dan Hawthorn noted that an update on this issue was scheduled to be on the agenda of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the following week. Cllr Moyeed suggested that the Panel should monitor this update and then determine whether the Panel requires any further information about this.

**(ACTION)**

CHAIR: Councillor Khaled Moyeed

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....