

MINUTES OF MEETING Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel HELD ON Monday, 7th March, 2022

PRESENT:

Councillors: Matt White (Chair), Dawn Barnes, Bob Hare, Charles Adje, Emine Ibrahim and Noah Tucker

Attending Virtually: Cllr Kirsten Hearn

35. 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'.

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Hearn attended the meeting virtually.

37. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ibrahim advised she had a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 9, as her mother was a Council tenant on the Noel Park Estate. Cllr Ibrahim advised that she wished to recuse herself from this part of the meeting.

39. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting on 9th December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

41. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME

The Panel received a report, which provided an update on the Council's Housing Delivery Programme. The report was introduced by Robbie Erbmman, AD for Housing,

as set out in the agenda pack at pages 11-20. The following arose as part of the discussion of the report.

- a. The Panel was advised that as of the previous week, there were 1202 homes started on site, with the addition of Hale Wharf. It was anticipated that this figure would be 1289 by 31st March. To date, the Council had handed over 173 (completed) homes. The original allocation was for 60% affordable homes, this had increased to 83% of homes being built being at Council rents during the current four year period.
- b. Officers advised that although numbers were important, it was equally as important that the homes built were of the highest quality and that this was demonstrated through the number of new homes being built that were zero carbon, for example. The Council had been shortlisted for a number of housebuilding awards, including council of the year.
- c. The Panel sought clarification around the housebuilding graph and the flat lining curve after 2026/27. In response, officers advised that the graph showed housing units that were already in the pipeline and that more work needed to be done to look at the pipeline post 2027. It was emphasised that the rate of building would not tail off after 2027, it was just that more work needed to be done to add sites into the delivery pipeline post 2027.
- d. In relation to qualifying as net zero on carbon emissions, officers clarified that the scheme had to generate more energy than it took to build it. It was noted that this was very difficult to do on bigger schemes, but that the Council was achieving rates of 80 or 90% on many of these which was significantly above what was stipulated in Building Regulations.
- e. In relation to a follow-up question, officers advised that the fabric of the building was the primary focus of achieving net zero carbon and that as well as the district energy network they also used air source heat pumps. Officers also set out that all schemes had the expectation of net zero, albeit that they may not all achieve it. However, sustainability was a primary concern under the house building programme.
- f. The Panel congratulated the team on their work and the fact that they had been nominated for a number of awards. The Panel questioned what was being done to highlight the Council's achievements in this area. Officers advised that they were working with the Council communications team to publicise the work that was being done and the fact that they had been shortlisted for a number of awards.
- g. The Panel sought assurances around whether the team were operating at full strength capacity in terms of staffing numbers. In response, officers advised that there were always a handful of vacancies, given the nature of project management and the demand for good project managers. However, officers stressed that there were enough staff to implement the programme.
- h. The Panel sought assurances that, given the fact that there were 10k people on the Temporary Accommodation list in Haringey, how confident officers were that the House Building programme could deliver enough houses, given a shortage of land in London. Officers responded that this was a challenge that affected most other boroughs. Whilst the Council could do, and was doing, a lot, it was important that other providers such as housing associations and private developers also did their bit to build more housing of the type and tenure required. In relation to available land within London, officers set out that

- that sites did come up for development and that the Council was a long way from a failure to acquire land stopping or slowing down the programme.
- i. In relation to the district energy network, officers confirmed that the heat source for this was the NLWA Edmonton incinerator. The Panel questioned the extent to which burning household waste was truly carbon neutral, particularly when some of the electricity from the grid was de-carbonised and from renewable energy sources. Officers set out that the heat was generated from waste that was going to be incinerated anyway and that this was widely accepted within policy circles as being net-zero. This was for instance, accepted as net-zero within the London Plan. Officers commented that there were other ways to power the district energy network, such as through air source heat pumps and that future changes in incinerator usage would not scupper the Housing Delivery Programme.
 - j. In relation to a question around the carbon footprint from demolition of exiting sites, officers advised that the economics of demolition meant that this was not a viable option pursued as part of the programme, due to the costs involved. The only two sites that involved demolition were Broadwater Farm and Love Lane, as there was no alternative.
 - k. The Panel sought assurances around the extent to which any conversations had taken place with the Cabinet Member around direct labour organisations. In response, officers advised that the organisation was some way off from setting up a DLO and that the housing programme needed to be developed in terms of its scope and scale, before any conversations about bringing a DLO could be had. Officers advised that their priority was delivering housing and that this needed to remain as the area of focus moving forward. Officers noted that the HfH repairs DLO would be coming in-house as part of the overall transfer of HfH and that there was some work to be done to get this to work as well as it should.

RESOLVED

That the HRSP noted the report.

42. INSOURCING HOMES FOR HARINGEY

The Panel received a report which provided an update on the Council's plans to insource housing services and staff from Homes for Haringey. The report outlined implementation plans, the proposed structure and the key messages and priorities for the programme. The report was introduced by David Joyce, The Director of Housing, Regeneration & Planning as set out in the agenda pack at pages 21-28. The following arose as part of the discussion of this agenda item:

- a. The Panel sought assurances around the impact of HfH customer service staff being brought in-house and whether adequate training would be provided for them on the full range of Council services. In response, officers advised that work was already underway to ensure that adequate training was in place for all staff that transferred over.
- b. In response to a follow-up question about the support that was in place for managers and directors transferred across, officers advised that additional resources were going in and that there would be a lot of training offered to staff in order to make the transfer work.

- c. The Panel suggested that a follow up report on HfH insourcing should be provided to the next iteration of the Panel.
- d. The Panel requested further information about the co-design approach that had been adopted. In response, officers advised that there had been a number of resident engagement sessions undertaken and that work had been done to try and engage with a wide array of service users. Officers advised the Panel that they were also looking to secure a continued role for the HfH scrutiny panel going forwards and that a set of proposals was coming to Cabinet in July around this.
- e. The Panel also highlighted possible confusion from Members and the residents over the respective roles of the AD Capital Projects and Property and the proposed AD Housing Property Services and that there was a need for a clear distinction between the two roles. An example given was in relation to who would be responsible for Council homes that were located above commercial properties. In response, officers acknowledged these concerns and agreed that some further thought would be given to differentiating the two roles.
- f. In relation to a question about savings, officers advised that the rationale for insourcing HfH was never about making financial savings. However, officers set out that it was hoped that there could be opportunities for efficiency savings and that these savings could then be reinvested across the wider Council.
- g. The Panel queried whether there were any indicative figures for the level of savings that might be achieved. In response, officers advised that there were no targets in relation to possible savings. The approach being taken was to 'lift' and 'shift' the HfH structure into the Council and there were only two posts being deleted. Therefore, this would not generate big savings. Officers advised that they would be looking to undertake service reviews to make improvements to frontline services after the transfer, but it was reiterated that there were no targets involved.

RESOLVED

The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel noted the report.

43. PROGRESS ON THE BUILDING WORKS TO THE NOEL PARK PODS

Clerk's note 19:40 – Cllr Ibrahim left the meeting at this point

The Panel received a written update on the progress of the building works on the Noel Park Estate around replacement of the 1970's pre-fabricated extensions to kitchens and bathroom called 'pods' in 242 properties on the estate. It was noted that although, the overall programme for the external works on Noel Park had been delayed, the team had undertaken as much enabling work as possible to lessen the impact once planning permission has been granted. The report was introduced by Judith Page, Executive Director of Property at HfH as set out in the agenda pack at pages 29-32. Kurtis Lee, Director of Asset Management for HfH was also present for this agenda item. The report also included a Heritage Statement appraisal report that was commissioned for the estate, as an appendix to the update. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Panel sought assurances around the timescales for the planning application process. In response, officers acknowledged the planning

- applications had been submitted in batches, with three of the four batches submitted. The final batch was due to be submitted the following week and that a consultation meeting with leaseholders on the final batch was scheduled for 26th March.
- b. Officers estimated that the first batch of applications would commence from July 2022, with phase 1 of the overall programme due for completion in February 2020. The final phase should begin onsite by September 2022 and be completed by September 2023.
 - c. The Panel queried how many leaseholders had accepted the Council's offer. In response, officers clarified that the process was more about leaseholders coming back to the Council to say whether they fitted the criteria for a range of support measures, such as buy-back and phasing of payments. HfH advised that they were unable to give an accurate number during the meeting as the figures tended to change on a daily basis. HfH officers agreed to come back to the Panel with these figures in writing. **(Action: Judith Page).**
 - d. The Panel questioned the short timeframe in which leaseholders were given to accept the cost of the works and the fact that there was no guarantee to the overall cost of the works. In response, HfH advised that they had to follow the Section 20 process as set out in legislation and that this included an open tender for the works and an assessment of leaseholder costs being made as part of that tender. The Panel was advised that there was an overall price cap in place and that quality of works was also an important consideration.
 - e. In response to a follow-up question, HfH advised that they had tried to include all of the possible costs that they thought leaseholders might reasonably incur. If, upon further inspection, some of the work was not required, then the cost reduction would be passed on to the leaseholder.

RESOLVED

Noted.

44. HIGH ROAD WEST - UPDATE ON COUNCIL HOUSING ELEMENTS

The Panel received a verbal presentation on the council housing elements of the proposed High Road West (HRW) scheme, along with a briefing paper that was included in the agenda pack at pages 87-90. The presentation was introduced by Sarah Lovell, Head of Area Regeneration. Peter O'Brien, AD for Regeneration and Economic Development was also present. The following key points were noted from the presentation:

- There are three key ways in which the Council can ensure that the agreed number of Council homes are delivered – The Development Agreement with Lendlease, GLA funding contracts and Planning policy.
- HRW is a phased agreement. The Development Agreement is structured in such a way as to ensure that conditions are met before a phase can progress. Land will not be passed to Lendlease until conditions are met. The core requirements of the scheme are the primary requirements which must be delivered. These include the delivery of 500 council homes at social rents. The scheme cannot proceed until the core requirements are met.

- GLA Funding contracts – Should the scheme not deliver the social rent homes by the agreed milestone dates, GLA funding for the whole scheme could be withdrawn. Consequently, 500 social rented homes must be delivered otherwise the scheme cannot progress.
- Planning Policy also provides protections on the amount of affordable homes delivered. Planning policy requires the scheme re-provides the existing social rented homes on Love Lane Estate. HRW is targeting 40% affordable homes across the whole scheme. Phase A already has a firm commitment to deliver 40% affordable housing, including 500 social rent homes.
- The Love Lane Estate currently has c.220 tenanted and 45 leaseholder properties, the scheme has to be delivered in phases. The Council has agreed phasing commitments, which are enshrined in the landlord offer, which seek to minimise disruption to residents and maximise the number of residents who move once from their existing homes on the Love Lane Estate into their new homes within the scheme.
- To meet this commitment, Lendlease must build social rented homes early to ensure that residents can move to their new homes. If Lendlease do not do this, vacant possession of Love Lane cannot be achieved, and development can't proceed. This is the reason that the first phase includes 100% council homes that council homes are prioritised in the subsequent phases.

The following arose during the discussion of this agenda item:

- a. The Panel noted that there had been a number of rumours floating around that Lendlease were going to reduce the number of homes for social rent down from 500 and that they would seek to build this element of the scheme last.
- b. The Panel welcomed the assurances given in the presentation that this was not the case and suggested that the Council should be proactively seeking to counter these rumours with the information provided in the presentation. The Panel noted that Members had received an email from the Love Lane Temporary Accommodation Group that set out a number of concerns based on incorrect information. The Panel requested that officers engage with TAG to assuage their concerns and counter some of the rumours that were circulating. In response, officers acknowledged that they were happy to do so but they had not seen the email in question. Officers assured Members that the Council was seeking to move residents out into replacement accommodation as quickly as possible and that it needed the social housing elements built first, in order to achieve this. Email to Members from TAG to be circulated to officers. **(Action: Clerk).**
- c. In response to a follow-up question, officers agreed that the reserve matters planning process provided additional safeguards around the ability of the Council to ensure that the social housing elements of the HRW scheme were front-loaded.
- d. The Panel sought assurances around the risk management processes that were in place for the scheme. In response, officers advised that as with any scheme this size, there was a robust set of risk management processes in place and that a Risk Register was part of this. Officers identified the 17th of March Planning Committee date and the need to secure vacant possession in

- order to secure the site for development as examples of some of the key risks for the scheme.
- e. In response to a question, officers acknowledged that Spurs owned a relatively small area of land south of White Hart Lane and that officers hoped to be able to secure this site through negotiations with Spurs. However, as with any other site, the Council had the option to pursue a CPO although this was very much seen as a last resort.
 - f. In terms of timescales, officers advised that Plot A of the scheme, which included the GRACE Centre, was being progressed and that everything was in place to deliver this. However, there were risks with the other plots and that these could require a CPO to progress. Officers advised that a report was being prepared for June Cabinet which would begin the CPO process. It was anticipated that the process would take 18-24 months. By the end of this process, it was anticipated that Plot A would be finished, and that the development would move on to other phases of the scheme.

RESOLVED

Noted

45. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The work programme was noted.

The Panel recommend that the next iteration of the Panel receive a further update on the building work on the Noel Park pods, at a future meeting. It was suggested that this should be in 6-9 months' time.

46. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

47. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

TBC

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair

Date