

(DRAFT) Minutes of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel
18th March 2015

Present: Cllr Adje, Cllr Bevan, Cllr Carroll, Cllr Diakides and Cllr Elliot.

In attendance: Cllr Strickland

Officers: Andrew Billany, Mustafa Ibrahim, Catherine Illingworth, Stephen Kelly, Steve Russell and Malcolm Smith.

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Engert and Cllr Marshall.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 None received.

3. Deputations

3.1 None received.

4. Urgent Business

4.1 None received.

5.0 Community Engagement with Planning

5.1 The review of Community Engagement with Planning Services was completed in April 2014 and considered by Cabinet in September 2014. The Assistant Director for Planning Services presented an update to the implementation of recommendations that had been agreed by Cabinet.

5.2 It was noted that although the Planning Service had not been successful in its bid to fund 3D modelling software (which would support public understanding of proposed developments), it was hoped that this tool could still be provided through contributions from developers. A new IT platform is expected to go live from April 2015, which will support a more developed electronic relationship with planning services.

5.3 The Policy Member Advisory Committee was not established to avoid duplication as the Regulatory Committee is fulfilling most of the expected functions.

5.4 Members of the panel noted that it was increasingly difficult to contact the Planning Service via telephone. The panel heard that the department was dealing with an unprecedented increase in workloads with a 15-20% rise in planning applications received. To assist response, the phones were also being switched through to the Customer Service Centre.

- 5.5 The panel noted that the weekly list of planning applications was still being circulated to all members. Although this was useful, it was felt that further guidance should be issues to members on how they can respond to planning applications. It was agreed that an information note would be sent to members.

Agreed: That the AD for planning would provide a note to members on how to respond to planning applications.

- 5.6 It was noted that there were inconsistencies in the report templates and styles used by the Planning Service which was confusing. Although a new standardised approach had recently been adopted, it was clear that this was taking time to fully implement.
- 5.7 Members of the panel questioned how reducing the volume of planning notification letters being sent to adjacent properties would impact on effectiveness of planning consultations. In response it was noted that this medium generates a very poor response (1%), attracts many complaints (non-receipt), is not auditable (e.g. delivered via Royal Mail) and current distribution levels exceed what is stipulated in the Statement of Community Involvement. Given this (and in the context of the need for cost savings) alternative consultation methods were being tested and trialled.
- 5.8 The panel noted that in addition to facilitating responses, planning notification letters were also a mechanism to inform the community of proposed development and caution should be exercised in moves to restrict this. It was noted that with the development of the My-Haringey, local residents would automatically receive notification of planning developments in the locality where they live, or where they specify.

6. Cabinet Q &A

- 6.1 The Cabinet member for Housing & Regeneration attended to respond to panel questions within this portfolio. A summary of the main issues covered in this discussion are presented below.
- 6.2 The Cabinet member reported that there continues to be good progress on housing and regeneration projects with a number of new recent achievements:

Regeneration

- i) Cabinet has given approval to proceed with High Road West development scheme and decanting has already started. Existing tenants have visited Brook House (a Newlon Development) and were enthusiastic.
- iii) Archway Metals have dropped the planning appeal against the Stadium development, which means Tottenham Hotspur can proceed with CPS's to progress development;
- iv) A bid for £1.3m from the Heritage Lottery Fund has been successful which will support the development of shop fronts in Tottenham;
- v) The area in front of Bruce Grove Station has received funding for improvement;

vii) The Housing Zone bid for Tottenham Hale has been successful, with Haringey receiving the largest allocation of any London authority. This will enable the creation of an addition 1,500 planned for the site.

Housing

i) Phase 1 of the Council new build have progress through planning. The majority of these are social rented properties, with 1 property being set aside for private sale to support development costs.

ii) The panel considering future options for Homes for Haringey is continuing to meet and gather evidence. It has also undertaken a benchmarking exercise to assess performance against other social housing providers. A written briefing will go out to members ahead of Purdah with an in-person briefing planned for after the election.

iii) New Haringey Housing Strategy will be published and consulted upon for a 6 week period after Christmas.

6.3 In discussions about the Future of Housing Review (future options for Homes for Haringey) it was noted that all data collected from this work (including benchmarking data) would be published on the council intranet. The final review report would also be published, which will set out the options for Homes for Haringey to members.

6.4 The panel discussed the level of affordable housing within planned developments and the problem in reaching the new target of 40%. It was noted that viability discussions with developers presented a number of problems, particularly as there was no national planning guidance for to support these. It was suggested that developers had in some instances, paid too much for the land which meant that this needed to be recouped through private sales. Whilst some sites fell below the 40% threshold, others attained higher levels (e.g. Brook House was 100% affordable).

6.5 The panel noted that the planned development at APEX house would proceed with 40% of units being made available being affordable, though these would be at various discounted levels of market rent (e.g. 50%, 60% and 80% of market rent). The panel noted that with current level of subsidy there it is difficult to build at 30% of the market rent.

6.6 In relation to the planned development at Wards Corner, the panel noted that residents adjacent to the site had received notification of planned Compulsory Purchase Orders for their properties. The panel sought further clarification of what had been sent by whom, and what support would be available to those who may lose their homes.

Agreed: AD for Tottenham Regeneration to provide a brief note to the panel regarding the CPO of adjacent properties to the APEX House site.

6.7 The Cabinet member, Director of Regeneration and Planning and AD for Regeneration all visited MIPIM (international real estate event in Cannes) to promote the borough to future developers. The purpose of this visit was to generate interest in development opportunities in Haringey. It was noted that whilst there may not be any concrete results from this visit in the short term, greater interest among

developers in the long run can help to drive up quality and bring down costs within prospective development bids.

6.8 The panel discussed the Well London project to support development programme in North Tottenham. Panel members reported that front line shop to provide services was in a poor state of repair and did not project a good image for the planned development work or the image of the council generally. It was also suggested that better use could be made of resources as a) there were alternative sites owned by the council nearby b) some services offered here were duplicated by other established local providers (e.g. smoking cessation services by Tottenham Hotspur Foundation).

6.9 It was reported that the Well London project was recently established and would be making links with established projects to make sure there was little duplication of services. A shop front was also chosen over more traditional sites as this presented a more accessible route to health and well being services.

Agreed: That Assistant Director for Economic and Social Regeneration would attend the next meeting of the panel with the Cabinet member to discuss social regeneration plans for Tottenham.

6.10 The panel noted that plans were also being finalised for the regeneration of Wood Green and would be happy to share these plans with the panel at a future date.

Agreed: That Assistant Director for Regeneration would attend the next meeting of the panel with the Cabinet member to discuss regeneration plans for Wood Green.

6.11 The Panel raised a number of issues concerning local Registered Housing Providers including problems with joint-estate management, failure to provide Councillor estate walkabouts and installation of unsightly security grills on properties. It was noted that there was a future meeting of the Housing Association Forum and these issues will be raised there with relevant RHPs.

Agreed: Managing Director for Homes for Haringey to raise RHP issues at next Housing Association Forum.

6.12 The panel noted that there were problems with the full completion of Decent Homes work where access could not be obtained to specific properties. A number of examples were discussed including those in Lordship Lane. The panel noted that those properties which fail to be updated within DH work are passed to Tenancy Management Officers, who already have heavy workloads. It was suggested therefore that alternative process should be adopted to ensure that access is obtained and properties updated.

6.13 The panel discussed the current problems with temporary accommodation, in particular, the increased costs associated with the nightly accommodation. It was noted that Haringey had breached the London Councils agreement not to exceed agreed bid levels, but this happened infrequently and in exceptional circumstances (particularly when homeless families present late on a Friday afternoon where there

may be few options and urgent action is required). To ensure transparency, the Council reports such breaches to London Councils when these occur.

- 6.14 The panel noted that there was a contraction in the volume of properties available to local authorities as landlords were increasing letting properties on the open market where higher rental levels can be obtained. Consequently, this had given rise to increased nightly accommodation prices and increased local demand for services. The panel noted that on one day this week (w/b March 16th), the housing service had dealt with 16 homeless families.
- 6.15 The panel noted that the Corporate Development Unit were investigating how temporary accommodation costs could be reduced, and that there were plans set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan to assist (including the quicker processing of homelessness applications). The panel noted that in any reconfiguration of services, there was a desire to move to open plan offices, and this was being negotiated with staff and Unions. The panel noted that they wanted to visit APEX House to assess demand for housing services and the pressures that this was placing on customer services.

Agreed: HRSP to visit APEX House.

- 6.16 The panel noted that the Council had very little scope to support temporary accommodation needs through homes under its management, as fewer than 700 homes become available each year (from an estate of 17,000), of which almost half are 1 bedroom properties. In this context, the Council would seek to use those properties which were becoming vacant within estate regeneration programmes (such as Love Lane), as there would be a time-gap between decanting of existing residents to final demolition.
- 6.17 The Chair thanked the Cabinet member and officers for attending for this item.

7. Tottenham Regeneration

- 7.1 A report was received on plans for the regeneration of Tottenham. This report contained a summary of key achievements to date in addition to future project milestones. The panel noted that this was a 20 year programme and that there were two key documents which outlined the work to regenerate Tottenham both of which were agreed by Cabinet in 2014:
- The Strategic Regeneration Framework for Tottenham
 - Delivery Plan for Tottenham regeneration.
- 7.2 The panel noted the scale of the ambition and the need to invest in a support team to deliver on corporate ambitions. In accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan, 4 additional project workers have been recruited to support local area managers.
- 7.3 The panel also noted that it was important that Tottenham Regeneration Team were based in Tottenham, and as a result, the team would be moving to Tottenham (639 High Road) by the end of May 2015.

- 7.4 The Chair thanked officers for the preparation of the report and for attending for this item. Members of the panel

8. Housing Unification and Improvement programme

- 8.1 An update was received from a report that was presented earlier to the panel on 3rd November 2014. It was noted that the corporate programme 'Housing Unification and Improvement Programme' had been renamed to 'Housing Improvement Programme' to reflect the merger of Homes for Haringey with the Council's 'Community Housing Service'.
- 8.2 The panel noted that the 'Housing Unification and Improvement Programme' was being implemented in 5 phases:
- I. housing unification;
 - II. housing strategy;
 - III. housing innovation and transformation;
 - IV. Align with Customer Service Transformation and Business Improvement Programme;
 - V. Future housing delivery.
- 8.3 The panel noted that phase i) and phase ii) will be complete when the housing strategy is published and consulted upon in early summer 2015. Extensive work was being undertaken to review and improve the operation of the service and to streamline business areas. The panel noted that £9million of savings was needed from this area, £3million of which was from the Housing Revenue Account and £6million from the general Fund.
- 8.4 The panel noted that an interim report, with some initial appraisal of the housing options for Homes for Haringey will be available in May 2015. It was agreed that this initial options paper may also be presented at a future meeting of the panel in the next municipal year.

9. Selective licensing update

- 9.1 An update was presented to the panel, further to the successful appeal against the introduction of Selective Licensing in Enfield. It was noted that the successful appeal in Enfield was the result of an inadequate consultation process (10 weeks instead of 12 weeks) and not in relation to the principles of the proposed scheme. It was noted that dispersal a likely result, consultation should have been conducted in a wider area.
- 9.2 The panel also noted that there were two additional legislative reforms were expected which would shape and inform the implementation of selective licensing in Haringey.
- 9.3 A statutory instrument is being prepared which expand the criteria under which councils can set up selective licensing. To date, selective licensing has been allowed under 2 criteria; prevalence of anti-social behaviour and low housing demand. Once implemented there will be four additional criteria:
- I. Poor condition of housing

- II. High inward migration
- III. High levels of deprivation
- IV. High levels of crime

- 9.4 Although the criteria for which selective licensing may be introduced will expand, the geographical area in which it can be applied will be restricted. Currently, selective licensing can be introduced borough wide, though new regulations will restrict this to just 20% of the geographical area of the borough (equivalent of about 4 local authority wards). If local authorities want to introduce of selective licensing in a larger area, this would need to be approved by the Secretary of State to assess the merits of the case.
- 9.5 A consultant had been appointed with specialist selective licensing knowledge to assist the Council in the preparation of its selective licensing application. The consultant is currently gathering together all the necessary evidence needed to support the application (for example, prevalence and location of poor housing and ASB). It is expected that an interim report will be available by the end of April 2015 which will set out future options.
- 9.6 It is expected that a full public consultation on the introduction of selective licensing will take place in autumn 2015. This consultation will set out clear and precise plans for the scheme (such as the licensing conditions and fees) and the anticipated impact (for example, the expected outcomes and how these will contribute to local strategic priorities). A final decision would be taken by Cabinet after the consultation had been completed.

10. Council led housing development - project update

- 10.1 An update was provided to the panel on the progress of this project. It was noted that evidence gathering had been successfully completed with officers working in the following services:
- Housing enablement team
 - Planning Policy
 - Finance
 - Legal services.
- 10.2 Evidence gathering with other local authorities had commenced with Hackney, Barking & Dagenham and Ealing all having contributed. There are plans to consult further authorities and additional evidence gathering sessions are planned for April 2015. It is expected that a final report will be produced for the first Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the new municipal year.

11. Minutes

- 11.1 The minutes from the 22nd January were agreed.