

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2017, 7.30 - 9.35 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Emine Ibrahim (Chair), John Bevan, Gail Engert, Tim Gallagher, Martin Newton, Zena Brabazon and Stuart McNamara

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor: Alan Strickland, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration & Planning

28. 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'.

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for lateness had been received from Cllr Stuart McNamara.

30. URGENT BUSINESS

None

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

32. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None

33. MINUTES

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017 would be reported to the next meeting.

34. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Emma Williamson, Assistant Director for Planning, introduced the report as set out.

Ms Williams commented that during 2015/16 the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel had conducted a review of the Haringey Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It was noted that the report provided an update on the actions that had been agreed by Cabinet in May 2016 in response to the Panel's recommendations.

In accordance with recommendation 1, and as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, Ms Williams explained that work had commenced on reviewing the Haringey CIL charging schedule. The Panel was informed that a report to Cabinet, in January 2017, had presented viability evidence that supported only an increase in CIL rates in certain parts of the borough, namely, Seven Sisters, St Ann's, West Green, Bruce Grove, Tottenham Green, and Tottenham Hale wards.

During discussion a range of issues were considered in relation to land values and sale prices. The Panel queried why the CIL rate was lower in north Tottenham when compared to the south of Tottenham and asked for further information on the methodology used by BNP Paribas to identify what Community Infrastructure Levy rates would be viable in Haringey.

The Panel was advised that consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule would take place from 10 March to 21 April 2017. The Panel was informed that the findings, including comments on a revised Regulation 123 List (the list of infrastructure types the Council intended to spend its CIL on) and the Council's proposed governance arrangements, would be presented to Cabinet during autumn 2017. The process for Public Examination of the Draft Charging Schedule was also considered.

In response to questions, the Panel was informed that all Councillors would receive an email concerning the format of various consultation activities that were planned, set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

AGREED:

- (a) That the progress made in achieving the recommendations from the Community Infrastructure Levy Scrutiny Project, agreed by Cabinet on 17 May 2016, be noted.
- (b) That further information on the methodology used by BNP Paribas, to identify what Community Infrastructure Levy rates would be viable in Haringey, be circulated to Panel Members by the Assistant Director for Planning.

35. COUNCIL LED DEVELOPMENT

Dan Hawthorn, Director for Housing and Growth, introduced the report and explained that Appendix 1 provided an update on each of the Panel's recommendations, from 2014/15, on council-led development.

In terms of recommendation 1, the Panel was informed that phase 1 of the Council's infill development programme of 31 affordable dwellings would be completed by June 2017. The following points were noted in relation to phase 2:

- A competition between Haringey's Preferred Partner Registered Providers occurred in September/October 2016 to enable funding and development of this portfolio of 20 small sites on a 150 year leasehold basis.

- The successful Registered Provider (Sanctuary) would provide a mix of tenures including a minimum of 50% affordable housing and 100% nominations (including re-lets) to the borough for the rented tenure.
- Cabinet approval was obtained in January 2017 and start on site was targeted for 2017/18 where feasible.

During the discussion a number of issues were highlighted in relation to the use of right-to-buy receipts. In addition, the following points were considered:

- Questions relating to the Cabinet Member signing, from 23 January 2017, concerning the sale of Land to Sanctuary Housing Association to enable phase 2 of the Infill development programme.
- Issues in relation to maintenance/estate management standards.
- Findings from the Elphicke-House Report concerning the role of Councils in housing delivery, including financial modelling issues.
- The impact of the 1% reduction in social housing rents following changes made by the government on how rents were calculated including implications for the Housing Revenue Account.

In terms of recommendation 4, the following points were noted:

- The importance of conducting comprehensive options appraisals for key development sites. It was noted that finance options were fundamental to this part of the process.
- The fact that identifying and pursuing external funding and grant opportunities was an explicit role within the new Strategic Housing function.

In response to questions, the Panel was informed that officers from Housing Strategy and Commissioning and the Tottenham Team met regularly with the GLA to discuss details of new and existing funding streams available, both to the borough and developers operating within Haringey. The Panel was informed that the team was in the process of meeting with all major Registered Partners to discuss how they might make the most of recently announced GLA affordable housing funding.

In terms of recommendation 5, the Panel was informed that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning had recently met with the Housing Minister and had raised issues concerning restrictions on spending right-to-buy receipts and borrowing cap implications. It was noted that these issues would be raised in any response to the Housing White Paper and that Haringey was supporting joint lobbying by London Councils and the GLA to relax Housing Revenue Account rules.

In response to questions, Mr Hawthorn explained debt matters were generally dealt with as part of the Council's long term business plan for the Housing Revenue Account, which was being refreshed. It was noted that a long term Housing Revenue Account Business Plan would be provided within 2017/18 and that this would take into

account financial implications of High Road West and the Haringey Development Vehicle. The Panel discussed the Housing Revenue Account, including the capital programme, income and maintenance obligations, and requested further information on balances, borrowing headroom and the underspend.

AGREED: That the update on council-led development be noted.

36. SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE LOCAL PLANNING SYSTEM - VERBAL UPDATE

Emma Williamson, Assistant Director for Planning, provided a verbal update on work that was taking place to support engagement and involvement in the local planning system.

During the discussion a number of issues were considered, including:

- The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), adopted in 2017. The Panel was informed that the SCI set out how the Planning Service would involve local residents, local businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders in the plan-making process and in the determination of planning applications
- The aims and objectives of recent Planning Community Conferences. The Panel was informed that such events enabled local residents to meet Members of the Planning Service and to ask questions about Development Management, Building Control and Planning Policy. It was noted that these events provided opportunities for local community groups to provide feedback on their priorities and to discuss their involvement in the planning process.
- Guidance and training provided to residents in relation to making verbal representations at meetings of the Planning Sub-Committee.
- The need, especially in view of reductions in council funding, to find more cost effective ways of engaging the community while ensuring fair, inclusive and thorough consultation.
- The work that was taking place to update information online, especially in relation to planning applications, planning enforcement, the local plan, design and conservation and the community infrastructure levy.
- The importance of communicating in plain English.
- Ways to minimise the impact of construction logistics, such as noise and dust, by using tools such as construction management plans and environmental law.

In response to questions, the roles and responsibilities of planning, housing and enforcement were considered in relation to Article 4 Directions and HMOs. The Panel agreed it was important to provide clear information in order to explain who was responsible for "what, when, and how". In terms of enforcement, the Panel agreed that this was a key area of responsibility, not only for the council, but for the many local, regional and national partners it worked with. It was noted that coordinated

working practices with a clearly defined framework, setting out clear responsibilities, was central to this. In conclusion, it was noted that updates on additional, mandatory and selective licensing would be considered by the Panel during autumn 2017 while an update on strategic enforcement would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18.

AGREED: That the update on supporting engagement and involvement in the local planning system be noted.

37. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, REGENERATION AND PLANNING

The Panel received an update on the work of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning, Councillor Alan Strickland.

During discussion concerns were raised about the use of right-to-buy receipts. Due to restrictions, placed upon the use of these receipts, the Panel was informed that the Council was handing a large amount of right-to-buy money back to Government. In response to questions, the Panel was informed of a number of schemes that had recently used right-to-buy receipts, including the Sanctuary Scheme.

The policies used by other local authorities to buy back former council houses were considered. In response to questions, the Panel was informed that these placed covenants on right-to-buy sales to ensure local authorities had the option to buy them back if they came up for sale and before going onto the open market. The Panel was informed that Haringey had a similar policy in place. It was noted that this policy gave the Council first refusal to purchase homes previously sold under right-to-buy that came to market within 10 years of the original sale.

Councillor Strickland informed the Panel that he had recently met the Housing Minister and had raised issues concerning restrictions on spending right-to-buy receipts. In addition, ahead of the Spring Budget, the Panel was informed that Cllr Strickland had signed an open letter to the Housing Minister concerning London's housing crisis. The Panel was asked to note that this letter, published on 7 March 2017, included the following references to right-to-buy receipts:

- The letter asked the government to relax restrictions on the use of right-to-buy receipts, including extending the period within which they could be spent and increasing the proportion of the cost of a new home they could fund.
- The belief that there should be flexibility to spend funds across borough boundaries in order to facilitate enhanced collaboration to deliver greater quantities of affordable housing across London.

Various issues were considered in relation to the use of right-to-buy receipts by housing associations. The Panel also agreed that Cabinet should explore all options for using Haringey's right-to-buy receipts in conjunction with the Haringey Development Vehicle.

Following the publication of the Government's Housing White Paper (February, 2017), the Panel raised concerns that more homes could be eligible for sale under right-to-buy. In response to questions about arm's-length companies, the Panel was informed that there was no legislation planned that would force a council joint venture, such as the Haringey Development Vehicle, into offering right-to-buy.

During the discussion that followed a wide range of topics were considered, including:

- Consultation in relation to sites included within Category 1 areas of the Haringey Development Vehicle.
- The process for approving business plans for the Haringey Development Vehicle, including the transfer of land to the vehicle and the process for re-housing tenants.
- The work of Corporate Committee in relation to tenancy fraud, right-to-buy fraud and benefit fraud.
- Various issues in relation to temporary and emergency accommodation.

The Panel considered the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in relation to Northumberland Park School. Various issues were then discussed in relation to school and academy funding, Haringey's capital strategy, and options relating to the design and location of the school in relation to the master plan for Northumberland Park.

In response to questions about the Council entering into a 99 year lease with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club for the provision of outside broadcasting facilities during event periods on areas of the Northumberland Park School, the Panel was informed:

- That the ability to provide exclusive, secure space for outside broadcast facilities on event days was a fundamental requirement for a football club to be able to compete in major sports competitions such as the Premier League, Champions League and to host NFL games.
- That the agreement was based on the current location of the school.
- That there was no requirement to relocate the school in order to accommodate the outside broadcasting facilities.
- That further information on the lease was set out in the agenda for the Cabinet Member signing of 7 November 2016.

In response to concerns raised about the condition of properties on the Turner Avenue Estate, the Panel was informed that the site was included within Category 2 of the Haringey Development Vehicle. In addition, officers advised that Homes for Haringey had set aside a budget for 2017/18 which included money for external repair work.

AGREED: That the update from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning be noted.

38. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Christian Scade, Principal Scrutiny Officer, provided an update on the proposed work programme for the remainder of the 2016/17 municipal year.

During discussion, the Panel was informed that evidence gathering for further scrutiny of the HDV would take place during March and April. It was noted that the terms of reference, outlined below, had been agreed, on 2nd March, by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- To establish and provide recommendations on the feasibility of the proposed joint venture model of council tenants being re-housed on rent matching that of an equivalent council property and on the same terms, either on the estate or elsewhere in the borough, according to their choice;
- To establish and provide evidence and recommendations on whether the HDV can deliver a tenancy and evictions policy which protects vulnerable tenants in the same way as council tenancies do;
- To establish and provide recommendations on whether overcrowded tenants can be offered a replacement property of a size that meets their needs;
- To further establish and provide recommendations on whether the financial arrangements of the proposed HDV adequately protect the Council's interest;
- To consider the impact of the HDV on the Council's Commercial Portfolio, including the impact on current businesses and those who work in them;
- To consider the impact of the HDV on Metropolitan Open Land;
- To consider the equalities impact of the HDV;
- To further establish the risks of the venture and make recommendations on whether these risks can be adequately mitigated.

It was noted evidence gathering would be completed before the end of the municipal year to ensure the final report could be considered at the first Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 2017/18.

In addition, it was suggested that the scrutiny work programme for 2017/18 should include consideration of housing for older people, not just an update on the Supported Housing Review / Housing Support Transformation Programme.

AGREED: That, subject to the additions and comments above, the areas of inquiry outlined in Appendix A of the Work Programme Update be approved and recommended for endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

39. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

40. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the schedule of meetings for 2017/18 would be agreed by Full Council on 20 March 2017.

CHAIR: Councillor Emine Ibrahim

Signed by Chair

Date