

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2018, 6.30 - 9.00 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Dawn Barnes, Isidoros Diakides, Ruth Gordon (Chair), Bob Hare, Yvonne Say, Daniel Stone and Sarah Williams**

### **13. 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'.

### **14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence had been received.

### **15. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

### **16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

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

Tashan Bonner put forward a deputation to the panel on behalf of the TAG (Temporary Accommodation Group) Love Lane resident's group. In addressing the panel he focused on concerns that the group had relating to transparency and mistreatment.

On transparency issues Mr Bonner said that, like many of the Temporary Accommodation tenants, they were not informed when moved on to the estate that it was a future demolition site and had received no indicative or definitive answer as to where they will be housed after demolition of the site. Residents are concerned that they could be moved into the private rented sector. With regards to mistreatment, residents felt that they had no housing security. Furthermore there were a number of families living in overcrowded spaces and unliveable conditions, including in housing that have problems with damp and mould.

Mr Bonner recommended that the Council should stop the practice of moving more Temporary Accommodation residents into the estate. This is continuing to make the situation worse as it meant that more people have the same insecurity and uncertainty and will also need to be moved out prior to demolition. He added that all Temporary Accommodation residents on the Love Lane estate should receive an offer of permanent housing.

In response to questions from Panel Members, Mr Bonner said:

- That the residents had been provided with a schedule of the proposed Love Lane estate redevelopment but no definitive information had been provided of where residents would be housed in future.
- That he had personally been living in Temporary Accommodation on the estate for three years but some of the other residents had lived there for significantly longer.

Another member of the delegation, Reverend Paul Nicolson, commented that there were 4,400 Haringey families currently in Temporary Accommodation, 3,200 of which were housed within the Borough with the remainder moved out of the borough. In response to a Freedom of Information request, he had received information that 671 families had been moved into the private rented sector which results in a significant increase in the levels of rent thereby causing poverty for families.

Another resident commented that a lot of people on the estate felt emotionally drained by their experience, by not knowing where they will eventually be moved to and by bringing up children in the current living conditions on the estate. These difficult living conditions included problems with anti-social behaviour on the estate such as drug abuse and prostitution. Lifts in the blocks were often out of service and sometimes hazardous as the lift car did not always line up with the floor when the doors are open. Water sometimes leaked through internal ceilings within flats.

Cllr Ruth Gordon thanked the delegation for attending the meeting and putting their concerns forward to the panel. She informed the delegation that, as a scrutiny panel, they were not a decision making body. However, the panel was able to take up questions on behalf of residents and investigate issues further as part of their work programme.

**AGREED: That the Panel would:**

- **Consider investigating the delegation's concerns as part of the Panel's 2018/20 work programme.**
- **Raise concerns about the anti-social behaviour and the health and safety issues on the Love Lane estate with the relevant Cabinet member and invite members of the TAG Love Lane residents group to address the panel in future to ascertain whether these issues had improved or not.**

## 18. MINUTES

In relation to item 9 of the draft minutes of the panel's previous meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018, Panel members asked for further clarification about the Cabinet Member for Housing and Estate Regeneration's comments about proposed changes to Appendices C & D of the Council's existing Housing Strategy and about the consultation process for a new Housing Strategy. Dan Hawthorn, Director of Housing & Growth, commented that at a meeting of the Cabinet earlier in the week (on 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018) changes to Appendix C were approved – this does not change the percentage of affordable housing required in new developments but addresses the preferences that the new administration has for the types of affordable housing. On the Council's Housing Strategy, this has a formal planning status so the review of it requires a public consultation, which will take place over the course of 2019, and must be considered by the Regulatory Committee and Cabinet before it is then adopted by full Council. Changing the percentage of affordable housing required by new developments would have to be done through the Local Plan which is subject to an examination by an independent Planning Inspector for viability which is a time consuming process. The Mayor of London is also in the process of updating the London Plan and this is expected to include a change in the overall strategic target of affordable housing in London from 40% to 50% when it is adopted in October 2019.

Asked whether the Planning Sub Committee could begin to base its decisions on an expected forthcoming change in affordability targets, given that it could take a couple of years before the policy could be formally adopted, Dan Hawthorn commented that decisions taken on this basis could be vulnerable to being overturned on appeal. However, the further the policy went through the adoption process, the greater the weight that could be placed on it when making decisions. The Panel also queried whether discussions with developers about future planning applications would be based on the expected future affordability target. Emma Williamson, Assistant Director for Planning, (who was not present at the meeting) could supply further written information to the Panel to provide more detail on these points. **(ACTION – EMMA WILLIAMSON)**

Cllr Barnes noted that there is a discrepancy between the figure of 3,000 Haringey households in Temporary Accommodation, as set out in Item 8 of the minutes of the previous meeting, and the figure of 4,400 Haringey households in Temporary Accommodation, as described by Reverend Nicolson in the deputation that had just been received. Dan Hawthorn confirmed that 3,000 is the figure that he works with and that he does not recognise the larger 4,400 figure.

Cllr Stone noted that he had been marked as not present in the draft minutes which was incorrect. This error would be amended in the final version of the minutes.

**AGREED: That, following the aforementioned amendment to the attendance record, the minutes of the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 be approved as an accurate record.**

## 19. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - STRATEGIC REGENERATION

Cllr Charles Adje, Cabinet Member for Strategic Regeneration responded to questions on the following issues:

- With regards to the Tottenham landowners forum, Cllr Adje had chaired it once and it was used as a way of engaging with the landowners in Tottenham with regards to the Borough Plan that was being consulted on. In view of the concerns about the forums expressed by Members, officers had been asked to review both the Tottenham and Wood Green forums.
- On Wood Green High Road, Cllr Adje confirmed that the previous proposal to demolish the Sky City and Page High estates would now not be proceeding. The new Wood Green AAP would be put out for consultation soon. The Council would aim to help ensure that disused shop units are not left vacant. Cllr Adje had recently met with Collage Arts which was now using the old Post Office building in the Mall which was a good use of a vacated unit. The Council was also working with the Future Wood Green Business Improvement District on initiatives to improve the High Road. Cllr Diakides welcomed the commitment not to demolish the Sky City and Page High estates.
- On concerns that loading bays would be used by lorries on the redeveloped High Road rather than rear access for loading and unloading, Cllr Adje said that this was news to him but that he would look into it. **(ACTION – Cllr Adje)**
- With regards to the Love Lane estate, Cllr Adje said he was concerned about the issues that had been raised earlier in the meeting through the deputation. Issues like leaks and damp should have been dealt with. CCTV had recently been installed on the estate to improve security.
- On the High Road West project more generally, this project is separate from the HDV, a legal contract had already been signed with Lendlease and a significant sum of money had already been spent. The Council therefore cannot withdraw from this but is having conversations about restructuring the development, including by increasing the number of social housing units. There were other complexities relating to the project. A ballot of Love Lane estate residents was now needed to demonstrate support for the proposals, as required by the Mayor of London, and this will take place next year. In addition, Tottenham Hotspur Football Club are also a stakeholder in the process as they own a section of land known as the Goods Yard where they intend to develop a public square as part of the High Road West site. Conversations were ongoing with the owners of the properties on the Peacock industrial estate. Asked what would happen if the ballot of residents opposes the redevelopment, Cllr Adje said that this was something that was being looked at with legal advice being taken and conversations ongoing with the Mayor of London's office. Asked if the panel can see the legal agreement, Cllr Adje said that this would be a matter for the Borough solicitor.
- On the future of Northumberland Park a letter had gone out to residents from Cllr Brabazon to explain the Council's aspirations for engaging with them about future plans. Cllr Adje clarified that while he is responsible for strategic

regeneration, Cllr Brabazon is responsible for neighbourhood renewal consultation.

- On the strategic approach to town centres in Tottenham, Peter O'Brien, Assistant Director for Area Regeneration, said that the role of the different town centres had been considered as part of the last AAP. Bruce Grove and Seven Sisters are the two historic district centres, viewed as having different roles to other parts of Tottenham. For example Seven Sisters has a lot of smaller businesses such as independent shops and ethnic restaurants. Proposals for north Tottenham meanwhile have more of a focus as an entertainment and leisure destination, complemented by the football stadium. The intention for the redevelopment of Tottenham Hale is not to increase the overall amount of retail but rather to move over from the current retail park model towards a more street-based pattern over time.

## **20. BUILDING COUNCIL HOMES FOR LONDONERS - BRIEFING NOTE**

Due to time constraints, no questions were asked to officers on this report. Dan Hawthorn said that he would be happy to respond to any written questions from Members which could be conveyed via the Principal Scrutiny Officer.

**AGREED: That the report be noted.**

## **21. TOTTENHAM/WOOD GREEN LANDOWNER FORUMS**

Peter O'Brien, Assistant Director for Area Regeneration, introduced the report on the landowners forums noting that:

- The Tottenham landowners forum was founded in the early period of the Tottenham Regeneration programme alongside other groups that were established at the time such as the Joint Strategic Forum and the Programme Delivery Board.
- In time these forums became seen as part of the wider engagement process on emerging policies and projects as a stakeholder group. The Wood Green landowners forum has, for example, has been used to support the good practice of engaging with landowners as part of the development of the Wood Green Area Action Plan (AAP).

Members of the panel expressed concerns about the public perception of a lack of transparency of the forums, the potentially influential role of the forums including by potentially enabling decision making between the Council and major developers.

Responding to questions from the panel, Peter O'Brien said:

- That the instruction received by officers from the Housing & Regeneration sub-group was to produce an options report for December 4<sup>th</sup> in relation to the landowners forums in light of the forthcoming Borough Plan and its approach to business engagement.

- That the quasi-judicial role of the Council as a planning authority needs to be separate from the Council's role in development management but that strategic planning policies, such as on the future of town centres or on the number of new homes, require dialogue with a variety of different partners including those that own land in order for these policies to be delivered.
- That the forums are not decision making bodies and any action points have been on very minor issues, such as on points of communication between those present at the meeting, rather than agreeing any formal decisions.
- That no budget was allocated for these forums. In terms of staff time, officers regularly attend a wide range of different stakeholder and community group meetings.
- That Robert Evans from Argent had been the chair of the Tottenham landowners forum up until 2014. Argent were particularly prominent in this field at the time partly because of their involvement in what was seen as a good example of redevelopment at Kings Cross.
- That at the time when the Tottenham landowners forum was formed there was relatively modest investment in Tottenham and one of the reasons why it was formed was to explore how further investment for development could be brought in. There has been a significant amount of investment since then, such as in Tottenham Hale, including housing and community infrastructure. Not all of this could necessarily be attributed directly to the forum but nonetheless the overall level of investment has increased.

**AGREED: That the Panel consider this issue further when the report to the Housing & Regeneration sub-group has been produced.**

## **22. PRIORITIES 4 & 5 BUDGET POSITION (QUARTER 1 - 2018/19)**

Kaycee Ikegwu, Business Partner, introduced the report on the budget position for Priorities 4 and 5 of the Corporate Plan for Quarter 1 of 2018/19 and made the following points:

- On the Revenue Budget there was a £20k underspend forecast on Priority 4. On Priority 5 there was a break even position for the General Fund but a £231k overspend forecast for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This overspend was due mainly to reduced rental income caused by the issues on the Broadwater Farm estate where some residents needed to be rehoused.
- On the Capital Budget there was an underspend of just under £11m forecast on Priority 4 which was due mainly to various schemes being delayed. On Priority 5 there was a break even position for the General Fund but there was an underspend of £3.7m for the HRA due mainly to the costs of leaseholder acquisitions on the Love Lane Estate being met from the General Fund.
- On the savings targets from the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2018/19, the savings of £300k for Priority 4 and £50k for Priority 5 were both projected to be achieved.

Responding to questions from the panel, Kaycee Ikegwu and Dan Hawthorn said:

- That the £300k savings for the MTFs for Priority 4 were originally due to be made through changes resulting from HDV programme but although that was no longer happening the savings were still projected to be achieved through staff vacancies in the property team and some increases in the income generated through the commercial portfolio. For Priority 5 the £50k savings were made through a reduction in spending on housing related support commissioning.
- On whether the matched leasehold properties on the redeveloped Love Lane estate would be taken from the social housing allocation it was confirmed that this would not be the case but further written information could be provided on how this related to the intermediate housing allocation. **(ACTION – DAN HAWTHORN)**
- That the Quarter 2 figures were expected to be in the public domain next month.

**AGREED: That the report be noted.**

## **23. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Dominic O'Brien, Principal Scrutiny Officer, reported that High Road West would be added as a potential scrutiny review to the draft work programme. The draft work programme and the scoping document for the Wards Corner scrutiny review had been submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A site visit and evidence sessions for the Wards Corner review would be scheduled shortly. Cllr Ruth Gordon requested that the evidence sessions be recorded/broadcast where possible. She also said that she would circulate a possible list of witnesses for the review to the other panel members by email.

## **24. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

## **25. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

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

on:

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

CHAIR: Councillor Ruth Gordon

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....