

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Remote meeting using Microsoft Teams on TUESDAY, 21 JULY 2020

Present: Councillor D Harrison (Chairman)

Councillors B Harrison-Rushton, C C Benfield, A J Bridgen, T Eynon, J Geary, G Houlst, K Merrie MBE and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors

Portfolio Holders: Councillors A C Woodman

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mr T Delaney, Mr J Knight, Mr C Lambert, Mrs M Long, Mr I Nelson, Mr P Sanders and Mr D Scruton

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tebbutt.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

A non-pecuniary interest was declared in relation to Item 6 - Update on Section 106 Contributions for Health by Councillor T Eynon for reasons of her being a registered medical practitioner who currently has no licence to practice and is not currently working in the area. She remained in the meeting for the debate and vote on this item.

### **3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no public questions.

### **4. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020

It was moved by Councillor Merrie, seconded by Councillor Geary and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

### **5. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman referred Members to the Committee's Work Programme and the Cabinet's Executive Decision Notice together with the item action log which enabled Members to see the progress of any items put forward prior to being placed on the work programme.

Members were invited to make requests for additional items to be included.

Councillor Wyatt asked whether an update on the Future High Streets Funding Bid could be provided at the October meeting and he was advised that Members would be updated as soon as an announcement had been made.

Councillor Eynon questioned why some of the items listed on the Executive Decision Notice had not been through the scrutiny process and gave examples of the reports on Community Involvement and the Council Delivery Plan which she would have expected to

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see at Scrutiny Committee before being considered by Cabinet. She asked whether there was scope to be able to see at a glance when looking at the Executive Decision Notice whether the items had been, or were intended to be, scrutinised and if so when and where.

Councillor Benfield referred to the motion declaring a climate emergency considered by Council almost a year ago and asked for a progress report on what measures the Council had taken in reducing carbon within the community.

The Strategic Director explained where the two items referred to by Councillor Eynon would be considered and took on board the comments about making this clear on the Executive Decision Notice so it was evident at a glance which items were being scrutinised and by which Committee.

It was moved, seconded and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT:

The Committee's future work programme be updated in accordance with the above requests from the Committee.

## **6. UPDATE ON SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS FOR HEALTH**

Ian Nelson, Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to the Committee.

The report provided an update on the Section 106 money that has been secured to be spent on health within the District and outlined monies which had been paid out to GP practices and spent during 2019/20; monies which were being held; and the steps which were being taken to ensure that the monies were spent.

The Chairman thanked Mr Nelson and invited questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Merrie asked whether the intended works in Ashby would cost the whole of the £840k which had been allocated to Ashby and was advised that clarification had been sought from the CCG as the cost it appears that what was being sought was an estimated £700k and so the CCG had been advised that more money was available if required.

Councillor Benfield asked whether the monies were for capital infrastructure programmes only and it was confirmed that this was the case. He also asked about the North Street surgery in Ashby and if there were any plans to resurrect it and Mr Nelson advised as far as he was aware there were not.

Councillor Geary expressed his concern that this level of tax-payers money was being held for improvements which were not being made. He asked whether anything could be done to help people with their travel arrangements in accessing medical facilities. He was advised that a case could be made although the monies were being held for health facilities rather than access to them. Councillor Geary also asked what Section 106 monies were being held for reasons other than health and he was advised that a report could be bought to a future meeting of the Committee setting this out.

Councillor Eynon welcomed the work being taken to encourage spend of the money and expressed gratitude to the developers for not taking the unspent money back. She welcomed the proposals for the expansion of the surgery in Hugglescote. Councillor Eynon asked for this to be a standing item on the agenda for an annual update at least until the monies that the Council is holding is reduced to a level which is less embarrassing and where it was less likely to attract the attention of the media and asked

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whether a representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) could come along to explain themselves.

The recommendation as set out on page 25 of the agenda was moved by Councillor Geary, seconded by Councillor Eynon and by affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

Members note the position in terms of S106 monies for health.

## **7. NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY STRATEGY 2020**

Chris Lambert, Head of Housing and David Scruton, Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager presented the report to the Committee.

The report set out how the Strategy had identified a number of priority actions to support the Council's ambition to increase and improve affordable housing supply.

Chairman thanked Mr Lambert and Mr Scruton and invited questions and comments from Members.

In answer to a number of questions from Members, the Committee was advised that the 'narrow' pipeline of schemes would be extended, with other schemes soon to be included but these were still at the pre-proposal stage. There is a lot of work which goes on behind the scenes to assess the sites and this results in a number that are considered that are found not to be suitable for development. Once a site has been identified as suitable for development there is then work to ensure that schemes meet planning and building regulations.

The Head of Housing agreed that it could be a good time to seek land acquisitions but care needs to be taken that we are not competing with our own partners such as Housing Associations and thus pushing up land values and paying more for sites. In terms of standards around affordable warmth, this is a key consideration in terms of scheme specifications but it was acknowledged the document could reference this more clearly.

It was acknowledged that the Strategy currently does not contain specific targets or an action plan as at this stage it was a direction of travel as opposed to a delivery agenda. A comment about smarter targets was acknowledged. It was agreed that how the strategy will be delivered will be set out when the strategy is considered by Cabinet.

In response to the comments made about the quality of the existing housing stock, it was reported that stock in low demand areas is disposed of through the asset disposal programme and there is still a lot of investment in the maintenance programme to ensure the decent homes standards are retained; and work is currently ongoing looking at how more can be done to exceed the standards.

A number of questions were asked about the relationship between the strategy and the Council's Carbon Commitment. It was acknowledged that a significant amount of carbon emission is generated by the process of building new homes and this needs to be considered as well as the lifetime energy output of the home once completed. It was agreed that further work would be carried out in terms of linkages between the carbon commitment and the draft strategy but there is a trade off between quantity and quality and any enhancements to specifications are likely to lead to a reduction in the overall amount of affordable housing delivered.

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Councillor T Eynon requested clarification regarding paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework with regard to making viability assessments publically available. It was confirmed that this new guidance would apply to planning applications when assessments are submitted by an applicant although as there has been no recent submissions this was perhaps why this had not been demonstrated.

In terms of the consultation process, effectively this meeting was the first stage of this and the Strategy will not be considered by Cabinet until 22 September; and the time between now and then will be used to have discussions with our partners and other interested parties.

Finally, it was noted that specialist housing for the elderly was an area where, in the past we have had an over- supply but the issue was around the quality of what was available. There have been some difficult decisions made in respect of some of these and considerable investment in others to ensure that they meet required standards and this is an area that will be progressed. An example of the frail elderly scheme in Ashby was given as an example of what can be achieved across the district when working with our partners.

The recommendation as set out on page 29 of the agenda was moved by Councillor Merrie, seconded by Councillor Hout and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT:

The report and the recommendations therein be duly noted and the comments made at this meeting be reported to Cabinet ahead of its meeting on 22 September 2020.

*Councillor Wyatt left the meeting at 7.15pm*

## **8. SPORT AND LEISURE PROJECT ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Chairman advised Members that there were aspects of this report which were confidential. He asked Members to keep any comments they had relevant to the part of the report which was in the public domain.

Paul Sanders, Head of Community Services presented the report to the Committee and Duncan Gibb, Everyone Active gave a detailed presentation which set out the first year's performance of the leisure partnership with Everyone Active and the implications on the business as a result of COVID-19.

The Chairman thanked Mr Sanders and Mr Gibb for the very comprehensive presentation and invited questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Eynon expressed disappointment at the lack of baseline data to assess performance. She made reference to the comment in the report which stated "the impact of the work being delivered by the partnership extends far beyond health outcomes". She also referred to the subsequent list of examples but she felt that this was very little in terms of actual data. She referred to the lack of any measures with which to ascertain the level of success in improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities. Duncan Gibb acknowledged this but added that they had just submitted to the Council a robust and detailed framework document in which the issues which Councillor Eynon alluded to had been captured. Jason Knight, Leisure Services Team Manager added that the Council was aware of the gaps and they were working closely with the Health and Wellbeing Team to address these.

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Councillor Hoult asked what was different to the swimming scheme which had resulted in reduced participation of children aged 10 and under. She was advised that the class dynamics changed with larger class sizes and different training methods which were new to customers and the wearing of swimming caps was not embraced.

Councillor Woodman, as portfolio holder, was invited to comment and he welcomed the comments of Members and advised that he would take these on board when presenting the report to Cabinet.

## **9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was moved by Councillor Geary, seconded by Councillor Eynon and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **10. NEWMARKET REFURBISHMENT CONTRACT**

Paul Sanders, Head of Community Services, presented the report to the Committee.

The Chairman thanked Mr Sanders and invited questions and comments from Members.

All comments are set out in the confidential appendix to these minutes.

The recommendations as set out on page 123 of the agenda were moved, seconded and by affirmation of the meeting

RESOLVED THAT:

The report and the recommendations therein be duly noted and the comments made at this meeting be reported to Cabinet ahead of its meeting on 23 July 2020.

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking officers for supporting him throughout the meeting; and to Members for their much valued contributions.

**Councillor M B Wyatt left the meeting at 7.15pm**

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50 am

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