

MINUTES

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

2 FEBRUARY 2021

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Adeleke (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs Bassadone
England
Imarni (Chairman)
Durrant
Johnson
Hollingshurst
Freedman
Griffiths Portfolio Holder - Housing
Banks

Officers:	David Barrett	Group Manager - Housing Development
	Natasha Beresford	Group Manager - Strategic Housing
	Mark Gaynor	Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration
	Fiona Jump	Group Manager - Financial Services
	Matt Rawdon	Group Manager - People
	Linda Roberts	Assistant Director - Performance, People and Innovation
	Layna Warden	Group Manager - Tenants and Leaseholders
	Fiona Williamson	Assistant Director – Housing
	Ian Johnson	Strategic Housing - Senior Project Manager
	Kayley Johnston	Corporate & Democratic Support Officer (minutes)

The meeting began at 6.30 pm

1 MINUTES

The committee agreed that the minutes from 1 December 2020 were an accurate record.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

5 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN

None.

6 JOINT BUDGET PREP

J Deane gave an in-depth presentation to provide Members with an overview of the draft budget and provide the opportunity to scrutinise and provide feedback to Cabinet.

The recommendation is that the Scrutiny Committee review and scrutinise the draft budget proposal for 2021/22, and provide feedback, to be considered by Cabinet, for each Committee's specific area of responsibility.

Budget detail for every area of the Council has been made available to all Members.

Cllr Griffiths said that she thought J Deane said something about the minor amendments? Which he won't go through now as they only effect the two committees? She was sure he mentioned it affected this one? She asked F Jump to fill us in?

F Jump said that there are a few minor amendment to the H&C budgets that came through in December, they are picked up on page 11 of the report pack. If there are any questions from Members, she is happy to take them.

Cllr England wanted to ask a question on page 24. It looks like we are spending thirty three thousand pound less on CCTV next year, which is a large percentage drop. He asked how are we managing that, are we switching most of it off.

F Jump said that it's actually recharges that are coming in, there isn't a reduction in the service.

Cllr England referred to page 11 and the amount that is going into reserves. Instead of going into reserves, can we not accelerate the new build programme and get some rent in.

F Jump said in terms with the reserve funding this is not funding we can divert toward the house build programme.

We do have other funding sources available for the house build programme. We do divert all resources that we do have towards the programme that's been put forward for new build.

Cllr Hollinghurst was pleased to hear about F Jump's explanation on the CCTV.

He also gave members an update following an issue in Tring.

Stating they need at least two more CCTV cameras, one to the East of the high street and the other one in Pond Close along the footpath.

Approximately 3 years ago, they had an incident regarding knife crime in the dark. This finished when the person was convicted. It does highlight that there are a couple of areas in Tring, which do need better coverage.

Action: F Jump to take forward to the relevant group manager.

7 ACTION POINTS

All action points are complete.

8 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

D Barrett gave a presentation updating on the Housing Development programme which included themes around achievements, challenges, the latest programme, scheme updates, design standards and benchmark data.. He was happy to take any question.

Cllr England referred to the footpath on the Paradise Fields scheme, the one that runs around the back of the site. He asked if it will it be widened.

I Johnston said maybe a slight widening at the front end of the site to allow Clean Safe and Green to obtain access to the wildlife meadow with tractors, .

Cllr England asked if there had been any thought in preserving the view along the footpath.

I Johnson said that they have had many discussions and there are many trees in that site that have tree preservation orders on them. They have looked at what the they can keep, sadly three will have to go as they are not good quality trees anymore, this was included in the planning application. He added that when you walk between the buildings, you will be able to see right down into Aspley's and Kings Langley. There will be opportunities to keep that vision.

Cllr England referred to the road that runs around the Martindale Development. He asked if we had similar plans to have a road like this in East wick Row.

D Barrett said that there are no current plans, but they are exploring options for a temporary road for construction traffic only that will be removed on completion of the project. This is still subject to approval by HCC Highways Dept.

Cllr Adeleke asked that when we come up with a new developments, what we are doing to publicise it. He asked if they could let all Members know what is going on?

D Barrett stated that they do work closely with the Communications Team to publicise what is going on, there are various forms of media such as the Digital Digest and the website.

His team are happy to provide an update to Members as to what is going on.

F Williamson agreed and said that they could put something in Members News.

Action: FW

Cllr Imarni asked if we could, elaborated on the awards which the Development Team had won and what we were up against with other local authorities.

Also with the last few slides, (the home building scheme, as a percentage of stock) Cllr Imarni would like clarification, as her understanding is that as a Council she thought we had a much higher stock than other Council's. Hence, that percentage wise it would be skewed. For example, St Albans is on there, who have very little Council stock and when they build a small amount, their percentage is higher.

This is not a criticism but I want us to appreciate how hard you work and where we are positioned.

D Barrett agreed that Cllr Imarni's comment was accurate but said that is the only bench marking that he is able to obtain through House Mark, He will be writing to House Mark to see if they will feature more details on new builds going forwards. D Barrett clarified that our stock is much higher than a lot of other organisations.

He stated that in regards to the awards, they were national awards run by inside Housing, which is the industry's standard magazine and they are recognised awards. They have won two awards, one was for the Best Team and the second award was for the development of Kylna Court. They have also won a few local awards, the Berkhamsted citizen's award for Swing Gate Lane, which was voted for by members of that community.

M Gaynor added to that, stating that awards normally go to Housing Associations. The work put in by the Team and yourselves demonstrates that we have gone over and above and it's pretty incredible.

Cllr Imarni asked what it was specifically that lead us to get the Kylna Court award.

D Barrett said that there was a few things, the social rented scheme and the wider community benefits with the business suites. The architectural features were recognised. The project had started onsite before Grenfell had happened and we made changes very quickly to the specification and enhanced the fire strategy, which was recognised.

Cllr Adeleke asked if all the awards and details could be put in Members News so Members could have time to digest it and appreciate what you really do.

Cllr Imarni highlighted that this is why we bring updates to OSC so we are aware of what is going on. She agrees with Cllr Adeleke that its needs to be publicized to get the full picture and educate Members as a whole.

Cllr Griffiths said that she would be grateful for any more time to tell you the different things, good and bad that are going on in Housing.

Cllr Hollinghurst applauded Cllr Griffith with her success with Housing and stated that he could happy hear a lot more.

Cllr Imarni said it was lovely to hear about it and that we should schedule this in at least once a year if not more.

9 WORK PROGRAMME

For members to note: Next meeting will be on 3rd March.

Cllr England asked about climate change with Melanie Parr, which he believes should be coming to the March OSC.

Cllr Imarni said that Melanie had requested to push it back and that she is unable to get hold of her at the minute.

M Gaynor said that we will try to bring a report to you in March, likely to be a presentation on retrofitting, there is a need to report to Cabinet after it has been to yourselves.

Cllr Imarni asked what has caused hesitancy, as Melanie seemed quite confident that the report would come in March.

M Gaynor said that originally, we wanted the progress report to come to the Feb SPAE OSC but due to the deadline for the report we haven't made as much progress as we had hoped due to COVID and the Christmas period. We have moved on from that and now have a sufficient amount to report back in march.

The work programme was agreed and a Climate Change update will be brought to March H&C OSC.

M Gaynor stated that they will be making a Housing based Climate Emergency report on 3rd March.

Cllr England asked for clarity from M Gaynor, as well as the housing based element, can we look at the community element. He added there is a lot of community engagement that we need to understand.

M Gaynor stated that Cabinet had decided that the primary reporting was to be though SPAE OSC, it would be a stretch to do it at all committees and

that's not what Cabinet have decided. He stated that we won't be reporting on the community side but he said this would be a decision for the Leader to take. It's not for M Gaynor to make the decision.

Cllr Griffith added to that stating all Members can attend any meeting if they are concerned about anything being missed. She also added that this way things can be fed into to other committees.

Cllr Imarni said that this is why we have an action log to make sure things aren't missed if for any reason they need to be moved to a different month.

The Meeting ended at 7.47 pm