

MINUTES

CABINET

15 OCTOBER 2019

Councillors: Williams (Leader)
Griffiths (Deputy
Leader)
Elliot
G Sutton
Anderson
Banks

Officers:	Farida Hussain	Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services)
	David Barrett	Group Manager - Housing Development
	Natasha Beresford	Group Manager - Strategic Housing
	James Deane	Corporate Director - Finance and Operations
	James Doe	Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration
	Mark Gaynor	Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration
	Sally Marshall	Chief Executive
	Fiona Williamson	Assistant Director - Housing

Also Attendance:

Councillor Adrian England

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

CA/89/19 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 were agreed by Members present and signed by the Chair.

CA/90/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CA/91/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA/92/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

CA/93/19 REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet.

CA/94/19 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan was noted with the following changes:

To move Strategic Sites Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document to December

CA/95/19 HOUSING STRATEGY

Decision

For members to review and provide comments on the new draft Housing Strategy.

Corporate objectives

Building strong and vibrant communities. Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need.

Deputy Monitoring Officer

Following the Deregulation Act 2015, there is now no legal requirement to have a Housing Strategy (although there is to have a Tenancy Strategy, Allocations Policy and Homelessness Strategy). However it is a useful policy document to set out the Council's approach to housing in a strategy and allows Members to scrutinise delivery.

Deputy S.151 Officer

The HRA financial business plan requirements are based on the overall housing strategy and the principles outlined in this report are funded through the approved HRA budgets and medium term financial plan.

Advice

Councillor Griffiths introduced the report and said the housing strategy has been reviewed and been to Housing and Community OSC and consultees for comment.

N Beresford said this strategy replaces the one for 2013-18 and is linked to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. It outlines visions for the service and sets out the key issues faced, has climate provisions in place and the commitment for housing condition improvements.

Councillor England said climate change was raised at Housing and Community OSC but can't see any reference to it in the document.

N Beresford said the document had been updated and reflects the commitments made. The revised version will be distributed to members.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/96/19 TRING CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that:

- 1) the Tring Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be adopted as:
 - a) Technical guidance for use in development management and to inform the Dacorum Borough Local Plan.
 - b) A material planning consideration for use in the determination of planning applications.
- 2) Delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Planning, Development & Regeneration to undertake all steps required for the completion of the 'Locally Listed Buildings' section of the Appraisal, to be attached as an Appendix. This includes the assessment, consultation and adoption of this Appendix.

Corporate objectives

Creating a clean tidy and safe environment.
Informing and consulting our communities and stakeholders on local issues.
Promoting civic pride and an active community.
Committing to excellence and best conservation practice.

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S.151 Officer

The implementation of the Tring conservation area and the support required to deliver the appraisal of this concept are to be funded from within approved budgets.

Advice

Councillor G Sutton introduced the report and said this was part of ongoing conservation review process across the borough. This has followed a full consultation process and an exhibition in Tring Town Council last year and Historic England has been impressed with the work.

J Doe said if this is adopted by council, it will become a material planning consideration. The other recommendation is to delegate authority to the Assistant Director to complete a "Locally Listed Building" appendix.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/97/19 HRA BUSINESS PLAN

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that:

- 1) The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved
- 2) The revised development programme budgets as set out in Section 8.3 of the Cabinet report be approved

Corporate objectives

Delivering Affordable Housing

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

A local housing authority must maintain a housing revenue account in accordance with section 74 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Further to section 76 of the 1989 Act, local housing authorities must formulate and implement proposals to ensure that for each financial year the Housing Revenue Account does not show a debit balance.

The annual review provides a robust mechanism to monitor the business plan to ensure that it takes account of changes in government policy, law and the economy and therefore meets the Council's statutory requirements

S.151

Officer:

There are a number of inflationary assumptions inherent within the Business Plan which are liable to change over the planning period, and which could therefore pose a risk to delivery. These assumptions are kept under constant review, and in the event of any significant changes the model will be updated and the implications reported to Members. An updated report is presented to Members at least annually.

Further borrowing to deliver the programme outlined in this report is not required until 2020/21. The way in which the Council structures its borrowing will influence the amount of funding available in future years, and the borrowing options, together with any implications for the programme, will be presented to Members in advance.

Advice

Councillor Griffiths introduced the report and said the HRA Business Plan is a five year plan that is reviewed annually. She ran through key highlights of the report and said that DBC have a good record of improving homes and have a decent homes standard. On page 163, it states that we only have 96 properties identified as 'non-

decent'. The five year plan for the building programme has been impacted by the 1% rent reduction. This will be finishing this year and rents will increase from April.

F Williamson said the business plan takes into account the additional borrowing capacity. There is a desire to continue to deliver more social rent properties.

J Deane added that the majority of public borrowing comes from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and can be accessed at a low rate. PWLB have increased borrowing rates to local authorities by 1% and the government is approaching its cap on borrowing, currently set at £85 billion. Borrowing will become more expensive in the future and there could be a problem with the HRA plan if PWLB borrowing rates go over 4%.

Councillor Elliot asked if the 1% borrowing increase was to stop councils from borrowing for the wrong reasons.

J Deane said this announcements was made last week with no advance notice which could have cause a rush on extra borrowing. They do not look at a business case when lending money.

M Gaynor said the risk factor in developing new build council houses is non-existent. The homes are developed, rent is received on the homes, and building an asset.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/98/19 NEW BUILD UPDATE - APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACT FOR GADDESSEN ROW SITE

That the main contract to construct 3 x social rented units at Land Adjacent 35-36 West Dene, Gaddesden Row be awarded to Modplan Building & Refurbishment Contractors

Decision

1. That the main contract to construct 3 x social rented units at Land Adjacent 35-36 West Dene, Gaddesden Row be awarded to Modplan Building & Refurbishment Contractors Ltd.
2. That the appropriation by the Housing Revenue Account of the General Fund land, set out in Part II of the report referenced MV2, for Council house new build purposes, be approved.
3. That an increase to the grant funding payment to Thrive Homes from £1,417,000 to £1,512,883 (Increase of £95,883) for a development known as Two Waters, Westside, London Road, Hemel Hempstead be approved

Corporate objectives

Delivering Affordable Housing

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

1. Officers should ensure that a JCT Design and Build Contract is completed before building works commence at land adjacent to 35-36 West Dene. Appropriate warranties should also be sought.
2. Further to section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972, a principal council has a general power to appropriate land that satisfies the following conditions:-
 - i) The land belongs to that council
 - ii) The land is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held
 - iii) The land is being appropriated to any other purpose for which the council is authorised by statute to acquire land

The land meets the above requirements and is currently waste land.

The current agreement to spend retained Right to Buy receipts to fund no more than 30% of the development cost of affordable housing units is made under Section 11(6) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council has discretion to fund developments using right to buy receipts provided the limit of 30% is not exceeded.

Deputy S.151 Officer

The award of the contract to Modplan is the outcome of an open and transparent procurement process with tender submissions evaluated for value for money.

The land at Coniston Road has a red book valuation as outlined in part II of this report and the appropriation value is in line with this valuation.

The increased provision for the Two Waters development will be met by one of one receipts that have already being received by DBC and are specifically dedicated to development of affordable and social housing.

Advice

Councillor Griffiths introduced the report which is an update on the progress of new build council houses with the financial information contained in part 2.

Recommendations agreed.

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5. That the appropriation by the Housing Revenue Account of the General Fund land, set out in Part II of the report referenced MV2, for Council house new build purposes, be approved.
6. That an increase to the grant funding payment to Thrive Homes from £1,417,000 to £1,512,883 (Increase of £95,883) for a development known as Two Waters, Westside, London Road, Hemel Hempstead be approved

The Meeting ended at 7.50 pm