

COMMUNITY HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 OCTOBER 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a remote attendance meeting on Wednesday, 12 October 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Helen Brown (Chair)

Councillors: Pam Banks, Gilliam Brockley, Tina Claydon, Geoff Collett, Rosetta Dolphin, David Evans, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Kevin Rush, Dale Selvester and Linda Thew

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Glyn Banks, Marion Bateman and Jean Davies attended as observers

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Sean Bibby (Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration); Councillor Billy Mullin (Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources); Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Housing and Communities); Housing Programmes Manager; Service Manager – Housing Assets; Service Manager - Housing Management and Service Manager – Housing & Prevention

IN ATTENDANCE: Community & Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Electoral Services Officer

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

24. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration, outlining the following proposed amendment: -

- That a report on Stores Contract would be brought forward and presented at the next meeting scheduled for 16th November

The Facilitator referred to the actions arising from the last meeting and reported that the majority of the actions had been completed. For those showing as ongoing, the Facilitator explained that a briefing session for all Members had been arranged, with notification having been sent out to Members. Work was ongoing to identify a date for a site visit and Members would be notified once a date had been agreed.

Councillor Tina Claydon referred to the item on Poverty scheduled to be presented to the Committee in April 2023 and suggested that this be brought forward to an earlier meeting. The Facilitator agreed to liaise with the relevant officer on this following the meeting.

The recommendations, as outlined within the report, were moved by Councillor Dennis Hutchinson, and seconded by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

25. PERFORMANCE OF THE WHQS CAPITAL PROGRAMME - ASSURANCE REPORT

The Service Manager - Housing Assets introduced a report to provide an update on the Council's delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) through the Capital investment Programme.

The Service Manager provided a detailed presentation which covered the following areas: -

- WHQS – Explained
- WHQS - Current Position
- WHQS – Challenges
- WHQS – Decarbonisation
- WHQS 2023
- Local Labour & Apprenticeships
- WHQS - Next Steps

In response to a question from the Chair around inspections, the Service Manager advised that as part of the in-house Stock Condition Survey, all Council properties would be visited and inspected.

Councillor Dale Selvester commented on the thermal energy efficiency and asked whether the external works to replace rendering of properties had been completed on all properties or whether there were some properties outstanding. The Service Manager explained that the programme would be focussing on not also meeting the WHQS but also de-carbonisation with a survey being carried out on the energy efficiency of all properties. Where new components were required, these would be replaced to make sure the properties were as thermal efficiency as possible.

The recommendations, as outlined in the report, was moved by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin, and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Investment Programme in its next phase of compliance, as it moved towards the updated Welsh Housing Quality Standards and requirement be noted.

26. RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

The Service Manager – Housing & Prevention introduced a report to provide an update on progress with developing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The report also identified the high-level priorities contained within the Transition Plan and a draft action plan that Flintshire County Council and its partners would need to deliver in order to achieve transformation in homeless prevention and statutory homelessness services and begin the transition to Rapid Rehousing.

He commented that a TrACE agenda was being developed with regards to trauma and complex needs. He also added that a vital part was supporting the workforce through development and training to build up resilience in the service, to avoid staff burnout and in turn to help maintain the retention of staff.

The Service Manager informed the Committee that they were looking to supply a provision for a second homeless hub to serve both the North and South of Flintshire and commented on the need to increase supply of affordable housing. He assured the Committee that there was a commitment to continue helping people sustain tenancies.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration thanked the Service Manager for the detailed report. He commented on a successful case study around Rapid Rehousing which he had been made aware of for Perth & Kinross which he said he would happily share with the Committee following the meeting. He added that he would like more success stories to be presented at future meetings on the work being undertaken by the Council.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin commented that the biggest challenge was to acquire more housing stock and asked what could be done to utilize more assets for 2- and 1-bedroom flats. The Service Manager advised that they were working closely with assets to explore more stock opportunities.

Councillor Glyn Banks commented on void properties and said that whilst the Committee had previously agreed to receive an update report on void properties in six months' time, he felt that this needed to be considered at every meeting. His comments were supported by Councillor Kevin Rush. The Chief Officer (Housing and Communities) responded that the Committee, at its last meeting, had recommended an update report in six months' time, to allow for the actions within the action plan to be implemented. In the meantime, the Committee would be invited to a site visit to take part in a walkthrough of the voids process from start to finish.

The Chair asked if she could attend the meetings of the Voids Working Group, as Chair of the Committee to sit as an observer. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration explained that he would now be sitting on the Voids Working Group and welcomed attendance by Members of the Committee when appropriate.

The Chair asked if there had been any progress with identifying suitable locations for a replacement to the current Homeless hub. The Service Manager advised that there had been a potential site identified in the Deeside area. A

feasibility study would need to be undertaken and there would be engagement with local Members, prior to an update report being presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The recommendations, as outlined within the report, were moved by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin, and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress to date, as shown in the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee approve the high-level priorities and action plan ahead of the formal adoption of the Full Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan by the end of Q3 2022-23.

27. COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28

The Chief Executive presented a report on the refreshed priorities, sub-priorities and well-being objectives within the Council Plan for 2023-28 which reflected a long-term view of recovery, projects and ambitions over the period. Members were reminded that this was a high-level summary document with further detail to be reported in Part 2 of the Council Plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Rosetta Dolphin around the replacement and renewal of energy/solar panels, the Service Manager – Housing Assets explained that solar panel were regularly serviced, assessed and maintained, and would be replaced when required. He said there was no exact life cycle of the equipment but would expect it to be around the 15-year mark.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Rosetta Dolphin, and seconded by Councillor Dale Selvester.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee support the proposed Priorities, Sub-priorities and Well-being objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

28. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.26 am)

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Chair