

HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 APRIL 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at the The Old Court House, Church Street, Flint on Friday, 24 April 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Ron Hampson (Chairman)

Councillors: David Cox, Paul Cunningham, Rosetta Dolphin, George Hardcastle , Ray Hughes, Brian Lloyd, Mike Reece and Gareth Roberts

SUBSTITUTION:

Councillor Nancy Matthews for Amanda Bragg)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Alex Aldridge was in attendance as Local Member

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Peter Curtis, Ron Davies, Jim Falshaw and Hilary Isherwood

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Housing, Chief Officer (Community & Enterprise), Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager

For minute number 4 – Work of Pennaf Housing Association

Mr. Graham Worthington, Mr. Deiniol Evans, Mr. Andy Roberts and Mr. Paul Moore

IN ATTENDANCE:

Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

72. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

73. WORK OF PENNAF HOUSING ASSOCIATION (PRESENTATION)

The Chairman introduced Mr. Graham Worthington and his colleagues, Mr. Evans, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Moore to the Committee.

Mr. Worthington and Mr. Evans jointly provided a detailed presentation to the Committee about the work of Pennaf Housing Association, the key features of which were:-

- Core Principles
- Governance Structure
- Areas of Operation
- Housing Provision
- General Needs
- Care & Support
- Extra Care
- Community Activities
- Development Schemes on Site
- Yowley Road, Ewloe
- Aston Mead, Queensferry
- Flint Extra Care
- Grow Your Own
- Social Enterprise
- 2015/20 Proposals
- Statutory Partners

On the issue of Extra Care facilities, Councillor Ray Hughes asked if consideration had been given to building extra care homes in rural areas. Mr. Worthington responded that a rural model had been considered but there would be a need to determine whether such a proposal was financially viable and sustainable. Mr. Evans gave an example of a joint venture that had been developed in Llanrwst for 40 units with a doctor's surgery attached.

Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke of the flats for over 50s in her ward, which she felt were very successful, and asked if there were any plans to develop similar properties to allow the older generation to move out of their larger homes to allow families to move into them. Mr. Worthington agreed that there was a need and said that consideration would be given to what could be undertaken based on demands in areas.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Worthington and Mr. Evans for their presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received.

74. FLINTSHIRE'S STRATEGIC HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME (SHARP)

The Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) introduced a report to provide an update and an opportunity to influence Flintshire's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).

She detailed the background to the report and commented on the work that had been undertaken as part of the SHARP project, explaining that clearance of the maisonettes sites in Flint was nearing completion. The four bidders who had been invited to take part in the tender process were detailed in the report and final evaluation of the bids would need to be undertaken to allow for the contract to be awarded during May 2015, after Cabinet approval had been

obtained. It was anticipated that work on site would start in late 2015 or early 2016 and work had commenced with colleagues in Planning and other areas to ensure that the Council was as prepared as possible. The Commissioning Objectives were detailed in appendix 1 and paragraph 2.03 and included that the quality of the properties would be of a high quality and design. The Chief Officer explained that an indicative list of development sites had been provided to Bidders and the sites that had been approved by Cabinet in September 2014 were detailed in the report.

A Task and Finish Group had been established which included Members, staff representatives and tenants to look at the scheme in details and it had agreed that some of the principles of lifetime homes would be adopted. The Chief Officer explained that this would include designing properties to minimise future costs and she commented on the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme. Appendix 3 detailed the Flintshire Housing Standard which included the provision of adequate built in storage in each of the properties. A list of the sites which had already been approved and proposed additional sites were reported in appendix 2 as well as sites which required further feasibility work. The Chief Officer explained that one area where work had not been fully completed was the garage review. She reminded Members that of the 500 homes that were proposed over the five year period, 200 would be Council properties and 300 would be affordable homes.

The Chairman welcomed the exciting work that was being undertaken. In response to a comment from the Chairman, the Chief Officer said that Flintshire's procurement model had been shared at a Wales-wide Housing Group meeting; in this area Flintshire was more advanced than other Councils.

In referring to the number of sites arising from the review of the Housing Revenue Account garage sites, Councillor Rosetta Dolphin spoke of the importance of space both inside and outside of properties. She sought clarification on the anticipated size of a one bed two person flat and in response, the Chief Officer explained that the sizes shown would be a minimum and would comply with Welsh Government design quality standards. She agreed to send further information to the Committee about anticipated sizes for properties. The concerns of Members would be noted and considered as schemes were developed and finalised.

Councillor Ray Hughes commented on one bedroom bungalows that had been built in the past and suggested that these were no longer appropriate. In response, the Chief Officer explained that some bungalows would be built as part of the proposals but reminded Members that they were expensive compared to building houses and apartments. The Council currently had a large number of bungalows and extensive amendments to them were having to be undertaken to achieve the WHQS. It was possible that a scheme would need to consist of apartments and bungalows to ensure that it was sustainable and viable but the Chief Officer reminded Members that it may not be possible to provide two bedroomed bungalows.

The Chief Officer introduced Rhys Davies and explained that he would provide a 3d model of Flint to show how the town would look if all of the regeneration proposals were developed.

In response to a question from Councillor Gareth Roberts, the Housing Regeneration & Strategy Manager explained that following consultation, it was proposed that solar panels would be placed on the roof of the tower blocks rather than on the South side of the buildings. The Chief Officer confirmed that the houses would have garden areas.

The Local Member, Councillor Alex Aldridge, welcomed the work that had been undertaken to regenerate Flint. He felt that what was proposed would be a legacy for the future and he gave significant praise for the design which included off street parking. He commented on the work that was to be undertaken on the high rise flats and said that all Members should be proud of the new Council homes and the Extra Care facility that were to be provided in Flint. He also indicated that he had spoken to the Chief Executive about the possibility of putting the proposals for Flint up for a national award to highlight what could be achieved by the use of public and private funding. He added that the most important aspect was that the work, particularly the emptying of the maisonettes, had been achieved by ensuring the tenants were kept well informed. The Cabinet Member for Housing added that the scheme was two years ahead of schedule.

Councillor Paul Cunningham concurred with the comments of Councillor Aldridge and praised the concept of the regeneration of Flint and thanked Pennaf for their work. Councillor David Cox welcomed the proposals for the church.

The Chief Officer reminded Members that following the meeting, they would be able to undertake a walkabout of the town to view the regeneration area and see the work that was due to happen.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed Flintshire House Standard Design Principles and Standards be agreed; and
- (b) That the indicative sites identified for inclusion within the SHARP for further investigation and feasibility investigation work be agreed.

75. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Housing and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

The Facilitator advised that the Update on Tenant Involvement which had been due to be considered at the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 20 May 2015 would now be submitted to the 8 July 2015 meeting. It had previously been agreed that the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be invited to attend the 20 May 2015 meeting for the Welfare Reform Update. However, if the new structure of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees was agreed at the Annual Meeting, then Welfare Reform would be within the remit of this Committee and therefore there would be no need to invite the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Nancy Matthews praised the work that had been undertaken since she had previously been on the Committee. Councillor George Hardcastle asked the Chief Officer (Community and Enterprise) to thank the Housing Team for their hard work on behalf of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

76. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.30 am)

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Chairman