



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY**  
**HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Wednesday, 3 April 2019

**Time:** 12:30 pm to 13:09 pm

**Present:** Councillors Ryan Fuller, Richard Johnson and David Oliver and Charles Roberts (Chairman),

**Apologies:** Councillors Denise Laws and Bridget Smith

**9. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Denise Laws, Councillor David Oliver attended as her substitute and Councillor Bridget Smith, and Councillor Richard Johnson attended as her substitute.

**10. MINUTES – 21 NOVEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The action log was noted.

**11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None received.

**12. AGENDA PLAN**

The agenda plan was noted.

**13. CAMBRIDGESHIRE QUALITY CHARTER**

The Committee received a report seeking approval to recommend that the Combined Authority Board adopted the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth principles to guide the Combined Authority's work in supporting new developments across the Combined Authority area. The report also sought approval to adopt a strengthened set of principles covering the topic of cohesion, and to request that the Land Commission explored how these principles would be implemented in the context of strategic sites.

In presenting the report Officers highlighted that the review had been commissioned to examine what new evidence might have shaped quality principles over the last ten years, and particularly how issues around inclusive growth and social cohesion were reflected. Officers explained that the review was supported by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review that had called both for a review of the Charter, and an audit of how completed developments had performed against the Charter principles. Officers clarified that the review had been completed and concluded that the four sets of principles remained as relevant.

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In discussing the report Members:

- Welcomed the report and commented that it was a charter of cohesion and growth that was sustainable and inclusive.
- Noted that the charter would be refined further and that the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel would explore how the additional principles on cohesion would be implemented.
- Noted that it was clear from the report where the Combined Authorities responsibilities sat and that there would be no unnecessary duplication.
- Questioned whether there would be viability issues with Developers. Officers explained that it was a voluntary process and that there would be a difference of views across different developers and the work of the panel was about cohesive and inclusive design. The Director of Housing commented that a message would need to go out to the development community to showcase the benefits of the panel and how they could support them. Officers explained that work was ongoing with the Land Commission to reinforce this approach and this would be picked up in future communications to the development community.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) recommend to the Board that it adopt the Quality Charter for Growth principles (including additions in Appendix 1) to guide its work on new developments across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough;
- (b) recommend to the Board that it adopt a strengthened set of principles on cohesion as set out in Appendix 2
- (c) request the Land Commission to explore how the principles can be implemented on strategic sites;
- (d) explore with the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel how the additional principles on cohesion can be implemented in the Panel's work and;
- (e) work with the Quality Charter Steering Group to publish a refreshed Charter

### **14. £70M CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME: UPDATE**

The Committee received a report providing an update on the £70 million Affordable Housing Programme led by Cambridge City Council as part of the Devolution Deal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The update was based on the report 'Update on the Programme to Build New Council Homes Funded through the Combined Authority' presented to Cambridge City Council Housing Scrutiny Committee on 12 March 2019.

In presenting the report Officers explained that schemes on site and on track included Nuns Way and Wiles Close, Mill Road Phase 1, Anstey Way and Ditchburn Day Centre

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with a net gain of 132 homes. Officers clarified that schemes targeted to start on site in 2019/20 with planning submissions made included Ventress Close, Tedder Way, Kingsway Medical Centre, Mill Road Phase 2 and Clerk Maxwell Road. Officers explained that the Meadows and Buchan Scheme had been delayed due to a planned public consultation which had been launched in March 2019 and that more detail on the Campkin Road Scheme would be provided at July Committee as detailed pre – planning work was still ongoing. Officers reiterated that all planning approvals were on track to be completed by December 2019, with 132 starts on site out of 134 forecast for 2018/19, and that the forecast number of starts for 2019/20 was 311. In concluding Officers explained that all schemes were on track for practical completion by September 2022.

In discussing the report Members:

- Welcomed the reported progress on the schemes and noted that they were well on track currently, to be delivered by 2022.
- Queried whether there would be any impact on the schemes due to the uncertainty of Brexit. Officers explained that contingencies had already been built into schemes that were currently on site and bricks had already been imported from Holland. There was no space to import everything for the full three years of the schemes. Officers clarified that at this moment in time it was business as usual. Officers explained that the Council had a strong relationship with the developers and that they were confident that this would help to manage any future impacts including skills issues.
- Congratulated the City Council on work to deliver a successful bid for investment from Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) in respect of Cambridge Northern Fringe East.
- Noted that the confirmation of the 2019/20 budget for the £70 million Affordable Housing Programme would be going to the Combined Authority Board for approval on 29 May 2019.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) note the report on spend and outputs for the £70 million Affordable Housing Programme, and the detail of schemes as provided within Cambridge City Council's programme update 12 March 2019.

## **15. £100M AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee received a report that provided an update on the £100 million Affordable Housing Programme being led by the Combined Authority.

In presenting the report Officers explained that the programme currently had 14 schemes / projects approved by the Combined Authority Board, the most recent being for a £440k affordable housing grant to Clarion Housing Group for eight homes for

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Social Rent in March, approved by Board on 27 February 2019. Officers gave and update on the Affordable Rent issue that had been discussed at November's Committee meeting. Officers explained that since November, the Mayor and Combined Authority Directors had met with Government Ministers and officials to seek new legislation, and this had been prepared ready for consideration and that officials were seeking a window in April 2019 to make the Statutory Instrument, however this could still be impacted by EU Exit matters taking priority in Parliament. Due to the ongoing issue, up until December 77 units had been withdrawn from the programme and had sought funding directly from Homes England. Officers reiterated that no one had been made homeless as a result of the ongoing issue and that there had been one further withdrawal since the New Year. Officers would update on progress in relation to the legislation at the July Committee.

Officers explained that Mare Fen was due to be contracted imminently and CPCA would be funding 540 homes which would make a big difference to the programme's outputs. Two schemes had been completed to date and there were a number of schemes coming up for completion in the summer including the scheme in Willingham. Once the statutory instrument had been laid in Parliament Officers hoped then to consider new applications on to the scheme, from the end of April onwards

In discussing the report Members:

- Discussed the tenure split of schemes. The Director of Housing explained that the tenure split was not currently fixed and there was a mixture in the majority of schemes. Affordable Rent was the most popular. He explained that the Combined Authority would probably see more social rent coming through if grant was no object. Brexit and general market uncertainty had meant that Shared Ownership had not been as popular in recent months. He explained that the programme had the band width to cope with the extremities of the market and he hoped that the Combined Authority would be able to accelerate the programme in due course, when market conditions had improved.
- Questioned if there was resistance from some housing providers on social rented housing. The Housing Director explained that the cost to the programme for social rented housing could be as much as triple for the current programme average grant per unit and much longer term financing was required to enable authorities to meet all the requirements of housing waiting lists. He clarified that current work on housing needs analysis would provide clearer information on this for the future.
- Queried the issue identified in the report in relation to the providers being able to seek alternative sources of funding – primarily Homes England. Officers explained that the current Homes England Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme ended in March 2021 and Providers were keen to take up and deliver on their full obligations within that programme, as their performance would impact on future funding allocations. Officers acknowledged that this was a potential risk to the Combined Authority programme and that they were meeting Homes England in April 2019 to discuss respective programmes, including the current and future implications of the Homes England programme on the ability of the Combined Authority to fund new affordable homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and would report back to Committee in July 2019. Officers were also looking to hold

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workshops with Housing Providers in the Combined Authority area to ensure that they understood the application process for the Combined Authority Programme.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) note the report on spend and outputs for the £100 million Affordable Housing Programme. (including Appendix 1)
- (b) Note the forward pipeline of sites with affordable housing (Appendices 2 and 3 – both confidential).

### **16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted the date of the next meeting as 10 July 2019. The Chairman of the Committee announced that he would be stepping down as a Councillor in May 2019 so would no longer be Chairman of the Committee. He had welcomed being Chairman and thanked the Members of the Committee for their support and input into the work of the Committee so far.

**Chairman**