



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Housing and Communities Committee Minutes

Meeting: Friday 7 October 2022

Venue: Civic Suite, Huntingdonshire District Council

Time: 10.00am - 10.56am

Present:

Councillor David Ambrose-Smith - East Cambridgeshire District Council
Councillor John Batchelor - South Cambridgeshire District Council
Councillor Lewis Herbert - Chair and Member for Cambridge City Council
Councillor Lucy Nethsingha - Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor Tom Sanderson - Huntingdonshire District Council
Councillor Chris Boden - Fenland District Council

Apologies:

Councillor Denise Laws - Fenland District Council
Councillor Alison Whelan - Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillor Jackie Allen - Peterborough City Council

Part 1 - Governance Items

64. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest and Announcements

Apologies received from Councillors Alison Whelan substituted by Councillor Lucy Nethsingha and Councillor Denise Laws substituted by Councillor Chris Boden and Councillor Jackie Allen.

Councillor Boden declared a non-statutory pecuniary interest in item 3.3 on the agenda as he is the Leader of Fenland District Council.

The Chair updated the Committee on the proposed scrutiny review of the management of the £100m affordable housing fund. He explained that a review scoping document was taken to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2022 by the Lead Overview and Scrutiny Member for Housing, Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer and the principle of the review was supported by the Committee. The terms of reference proposed were to review the management of the £100m affordable

housing fund and to consider governance lessons and improvements for the CPCA to consider as part of its improvement framework.

He explained that there had been a recent advisory review undertaken by the internal auditors of the Community Land Trust (CLT) which would be reported to the November meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee. The Head of Governance and Councillor Van de Weyer had discussed amending the scope of the scrutiny review in order to ensure that it did not repeat the advisory review undertaken by the internal auditors and did not also examine any live planning applications as part of its review.

66. Minutes of the Housing and Communities Committee meeting on 11 July 2022 and Actions

The minutes of the meeting on 11 July 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

The action log was noted.

67. Public Questions

No public questions were received.

Part 2 – Recommendations to Combined Authority Board

68. Winding up Angle Holding & Angle Developments (East) Ltd

The Committee considered a report that proposed a recommendation to the Combined Authority Board of the winding up of Angle Holding and Angle Developments (East) Ltd.

It was resolved unanimously;

- a) To recommend to the CPCA Board for officers to undertake the actions required to wind up Angle Holdings Ltd and Angle Developments (East) Ltd and for the appointment of a senior member of the CPCA finance team as a Director of both companies in order to oversee and support the orderly closure of both companies.

69. Community Led Housing Support Funding

The Committee received a report that proposed a recommendation to the Combined Authority Board to allocate funding of £100,000 to support established community led housing groups across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Introducing the report officers updated the Committee on a number of points including:

- As part of the Community Homes Strategy as previously approved by the Housing and Communities Committee at its meeting on 10th January 2022., Eastern Community Homes had been engaging with Community led housing groups across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with the exception of East Cambridgeshire where these groups were assisted by a dedicated officer resource independently provided by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC).
- In July 2022 officers from ECDC approached the Combined Authority for additional funding to support established community led housing groups within East Cambridgeshire.
- Eastern Community Homes were consulted and confirmed that similar appetite for support funding exists across the whole of the Combined Authority's (CA) region.
- The proposal was to provide a source of follow-up funding in circumstances where it could be demonstrated that funding could provide a useful resource to address challenges and maintain project momentum.
- Applications for funding would be expected to fulfil the criteria specified at Appendix B of the report and applications would be assessed initially by the Combined Authority's community homes advisors.

In discussing the report members:

- Queried how value for money was calculated in terms of what the outcomes would be as this was not emphasised in the criteria. A member suggested that some metrics were established to give additionality on how the money was spent. Officers explained that value for money was assessed on a bid-by-bid basis. Officers explained that the difficulty in metrics would be that the groups did not produce detailed business plans and it was difficult to get any meaningful metrics until schemes gathered momentum. Officers explained that on the Community Housing Network some members did have similar schemes in place and some of those schemes did have metrics so this could be investigated further. **Action Required.** The Director of Housing and Development stated that all the schemes that are supported are tracked through the process.
- Sought clarity on if the funding of £100,000 could be increased as it was being diluted across the Combined Authority as a whole. A member explained that East Cambridgeshire District Council had sought the funding initially and there was a feeling now that this had been diluted. Officers explained that they would have to look at the funding that had been allocated so far and what East Cambridgeshire District Council were proposing to spend the money on. The Director of Housing and Development stated that that there was provision for the £100,000 in the current Medium Term Financial Plan for the Combined Authority that any decision for additional funding would need to be made as part of the budget process. He stated that there are many pressures on

budget and it would be up to leaders to agree on where the limited money would be spent. A member asked that this request was put to the Board. The Chair stated that the Committee would look at the evidence on the outcome of the first £100,000 and then consider any future funding proposals. He explained that the function of housing at the Combined Authority was currently under review including a staffing restructure.

- Questioned if applications for funding would come through committee for approval. Officers explained that applications would be assessed through Eastern Community Homes against the criteria. A report on applications received and expenditure could be brought to committee in a year's time.

Action Required

- Commented that it was unclear how many homes could be delivered through this process. A member explained that South Cambridgeshire District Council had one successful community lead project but this had been successful because they owned their own land and the availability of affordable land was at a premium. He also highlighted that there was no definition for what sort of grant would be available and there was no cap on how much funding could be applied for.

It was resolved unanimous to;

Recommend that the Combined Authority's Board allocates further funding of £100,000 to support community led housing initiatives across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Part 3 – Delivery

70. Affordable Housing Programme - Update on Implementation

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the Implementation of the Affordable Housing Programme.

Introducing the Director of Housing and Development updated the Committee on a number of points including:

- 481 units had been completed, 1,451 were on site and progressing
- Grant rates were averaging across the programme at £38,700
- Had been notified that Bretton Court at Peterborough which comprised 45 units would not now be proceeding so officers were looking at a substitution process. One of the substitution schemes was being presented today at item 3.3 of the agenda.
- Also aware of the acquisition of the scheme Northminster in Peterborough to Cross Keys Homes, a more comprehensive report to the Committee next month.

In discussing the report members:

- Highlighted that the scheme at Halo Roman Fields Phase 2, Paston, started on site 1 January 2018 yet no properties were shown as complete and was currently showing as red. A member queried whether there were any issues with the scheme. Officers explained that the scheme was near completion and that officers were awaiting pc certificates.
- Expressed disappointment that the Bretton Court Scheme was no longer going ahead. A member queried whether this was solely in relation to the issue with the planning permission or if there were additional reasons. Officers explained that Medesham Homes had notified them that the planning permission had expired and that there were also issues on the site with the pub next door.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the current position in respect of outstanding loan repayments required to fund the 2021-2022 Affordable Housing Programme.

71. Affordable Housing Programme Loans Update

The Committee considered a report that gave an update on the progress on the Affordable Housing Programme Loans.

Introducing the report the Director of Housing and Development updated the Committee on a number of points including:

- Highlighted that the MoD Ely site was showing a balance of below £10 million and the Haddenham site was now at £1.8 million.
- Officers were watching the market closely in relation to the current financial climate and they were not aware of any sales falling through as yet, but expected to see some and would monitor the situation closely.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the report

72. 24 High Street, Wisbech

The Committee considered a report detailing a substitute scheme to partially replace the Bretton Court Scheme and sought approval of the use of the funds of £210,000 (from £1,687,500 funding from Bretton Court) to provide 6 one bed affordable rented units at 24 High Street, Wisbech, Fenland.

Introducing the report officers updated the Committee on a number of points including:

- Medesham Homes had confirmed they were no longer proceeding with the scheme at Bretton Court and Combined Authority were looking to reinvest the funding.
- Fenland District Council approached the Combined Authority and applied for funding to provide 6 units for affordable rent at their site at 24 High Street, Wisbech.
- The Housing Enabling Office from Fenland District Council supported the project coming forward. Of the 1,504 households currently on the Fenland's housing register, the greatest need was for a one-bedroom accommodation with 626 households waiting for this size of accommodation.

In discussing the report Members:

- Highlighted the importance of the scheme. A member stated that the site was as a prominent site on Wisbech High Street and was an important building and its redevelopment into housing was welcomed.
- The Chair explained that officers were looking for additional substitute schemes to come forward.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the previous Affordable Housing programme 2017-2021, whereby grant was awarded to Bretton Court, Peterborough, has failed to proceed due to the planning permission expiring. The CPCA has been informed that the project would not fully start with construction and completion in the given time noted in the GFA.
- b) Approve the use of the funds of £210,000 (from £1,687,500 funding from Bretton Court) to provide 6 one bed affordable rented units at 24 High Street, Wisbech, Fenland.

73. Housing and Communities Committee Agenda Plan

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

Part 4 – Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 14 November 2022.