



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

**Date:** 13 January 2020

**Time:** 14:00pm to 15:28pm

**Present:** Councillor Steve Allen (substitute for Councillor Irene Walsh) Councillor David Ambrose-Smith, Councillor Roger Hickford, Councillor Denise Laws (substitute for Councillor Chris Boden) Councillor Jon Neish (substitute for Councillor Ryan Fuller) Councillor Mike Sargeant and Councillor Hazel Smith (substitute for Councillor Bridget Smith)

**Apologies:** Councillor Chris Boden, Councillor Ryan Fuller, Councillor Bridget Smith and Councillor Irene Walsh.

**37. ELECTION OF THE CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

It was resolved unanimously to elect Councillor Hickford as Chairman for the meeting.

**38. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Committee noted that as of 4 December 2019 Councillor Ryan Fuller was the Member for Huntingdonshire District Council on the Housing and Communities Committee with Councillor Jon Neish as substitute.

The Committee also noted that as of 9 January 2020 Councillor Chris Boden was the representative for Fenland District Council on the Housing and Communities Committee with Councillor Denise Laws as substitute.

Apologies were received from Councillor Chris Boden (Councillor Dee Laws substituted) Councillor Ryan Fuller (Councillor Jon Neish substituted) Councillor Bridget Smith (Councillor Hazel Smith substituted) and Councillor Irene Walsh (Cllr Steve Allen substituted).

A declaration of interest was made by Councillor Jon Neish as Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning at Huntingdonshire District Council.

The Committee noted that an urgent item had been added to the agenda under 2.2 (iv) £100m Affordable Housing Scheme - Trumpington Meadows and that under Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, by reason of special circumstances, which would be specified in the minutes, the Chairman of the meeting was of the opinion that the item be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.



### **39. MINUTES**

A Member highlighted the following corrections for the minutes:

- Page 11 of the agenda the spelling of Mare Fen should be one N
- Page 12 of the agenda on the last line of the page it should read Greater Cambridge instead of Great Cambridge.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record subject to the highlighted amendments and signed by the Chairman. The Committee noted the action log.

### **40. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions received.

### **41. HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report that gave greater clarity on the Communities element of the Committees remit and outlined which bodies could make decisions on the use of the various elements of the Affordable Housing funds.

In presenting the report the Interim Monitoring Officer highlighted that the Communities element of the Committees remit included Culture and Tourism and overseeing the delivery of the Connecting Cambridgeshire Project by Cambridgeshire County Council. He explained that the table at 2.8 of the report summarised the different types of funding and the relevant decision making bodies. He highlighted that these arrangements were new and that would be subject to review in the future in terms of where the boundaries would lie as the role of the Committee developed.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Consider the clarification provided on the terms of reference of the Committee.

### **42. COMBINED AUTHORITY FORWARD PLAN**

No comments were made on the Combined Authority Forward Plan.

### **43. COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

A Member requested an update at the next Committee meeting that provided more detail on the Communities remit of the Committee including an update on the Connecting Cambridgeshire Programme. Members then to review the frequency of updates on the Communities remit. **ACTION**



#### **44. £70 MILLION CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report that gave an update on the £70 million Affordable Housing Programme being led by Cambridge City Council.

In presenting the report officers explained that the update was based on the report that had been to the last Housing and Communities Committee meeting as the next update was not available until 15 January when it was being considered by Cambridge City Council's Scrutiny Committee. Officers reported that there had been 309 starts on site to date which equated to 65% of the programme. There had been 14 homes completed and there were further completions expected in January and February 2020. Schemes that were now on site, since the last update, included Cromwell Road, Akerman Street, Ventress Close and Kingsway Medical Centre. Cromwell Road Phase Two and Campkin Road were due to start on site imminently. Cambridge City Council were confident that the 2022 deadline would be achieved.

In discussing the report Members:

- Noted that there was a phasing issue with the reporting as Cambridge City Council were reporting quarterly on the programme at the City Council's Scrutiny Committee and the Housing and Communities Committee meetings were bi-monthly. The Director of Housing and Development agreed to look at how the information and timing could be better aligned so that the information in the reports was as up to date as possible. **ACTION**
- Queried whether officers could skype into meetings if they only had a short slot on the agenda. The Interim Monitoring Officer explained that this was being looked into but that the governance position currently this was that officers were required to be in attendance at the meeting.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Note the report on spend and outputs for the £70 million Affordable Housing Programme, and the next detailed report will be provided in March 2020.

#### **45. £100 MILLION AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME SCHEME APPROVALS - MIDDLEMORE, ST MARY'S, RAMSEY**

The Committee received a report that sought approval to commit £509,000 of grant funding for 11 units (8 units at social rent and 3 shared ownership) at Middlemore Road, St Mary's, Ramsey by Chorus Housing Group.

In presenting the report officers explained that planning permission had been



achieved, and that this site was a rural exception site and therefore concealed some significant abnormal costs in relation to the adopted highway requirements and infrastructure costs. There would be 11 homes on the site including 1 two bed bungalow for social rent, 2 two bed houses for social rent, 5 three bed houses for social rent and 3 three bed houses for share ownership.

In discussing the report :

- A Member expressed his concerns that some of the dwellings were below the national space standards and that therefore he would be abstaining from the vote. The Chairman of the Committee commented that the planning permission would not have been agreed if the dwellings were not acceptable. A Member queried whether the planning permission had been granted as they commented that there had been technical issues with the drainage on site. Members requested a note on the process of how this development had gone through planning to be circulated to the Committee. **ACTION** Officers commented that it was not mandatory for local councils to adopt the space standards. The Director of Housing and Development explained that they encouraged providers to provide housing using the space standards but that this would not be made a condition on getting a grant. A Member commented that Cambridge City Council had adopted the space standards in its local plan.
- Members requested a further explanation in relation to the abnormal costs highlighted at 3.2 of the report. Officers clarified that part of the planning application was to have the highway adopted but that it had now been agreed that the highway would be unadopted. There was a requirement for a provision of an access road and services to the site.
- Members questioned who would be maintaining the highway if it remained unadopted and if this would be a management company. Officers explained that this would be part of the planning permission going forward. Members requested a report to be presented at the next meeting to brief members on standards for residential accommodation and the Affordable Housing Programme. The Interim Monitoring Officer explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also requested a report on Standard including Building regulations and their feedback would be reported at Housing and Communities Committee. **ACTION**
- Members queried why the average grant rate had increased on this scheme and questioned whether this would be a trend going forwards. Officers explained that social rented units tended to be more expensive and therefore the cost per unit on this development where higher than average.
- A Member requested further information on what Disposal Proceeds Fund (DPF) entailed. Officers confirmed that they would provide a note to Members on how this fund was used. **ACTION**



It was resolved by majority to:

- (a) Commit grant funding of £509,000 from the £100m Affordable Housing programme to enable delivery of 11 (8 social rent and 3 shared ownership) affordable homes at Middlemore Road, St Marys, Ramsey.

**46. £100 MILLION AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME SCHEME  
APPROVALS – STILTON 24-36 HIGH STREET**

The Committee considered a report that sought approval to commit £1,570,000 of grant funding to deliver 42 additional new affordable homes (10 affordable rent and 32 shared ownership) as part of a development of 70 new homes at the rear of 26-34 High Street, Stilton, Huntingdonshire, by Cross Key Homes. An outline planning application was achieved in May 2019. The scheme would deliver 70 properties and the site would be 100% affordable housing with a mix of affordable rented and shared ownership properties in accordance with the lettings policy agreed with Huntingdonshire District Council.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried what the ratings G1 and V1 stood for in point 3.7 of the report. Officers explained that this was a Department for Social Housing Rating and that it stood for Governance Grading and Viability Grading of the developer. A rating of G1 and V1 was a high rating. Members requested that the ratings be included for developers in each report as standard going forwards. **ACTION**

A Member commented that the dwellings were below the national space standards so he would be abstaining from the vote.

It was resolved by majority to:

- (a) Commit grant funding of £1,570,000 from the £100m Affordable Housing programme to enable delivery of 42 (10 affordable rent and 32 shared ownership) affordable homes at Stilton, Huntingdonshire.

**47. £100 MILLION AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME SCHEME  
APPROVALS – HEYLO**

The Committee received a report that sought approval to commit £819,800 of grant funding to enable the delivery of 17 shared ownership affordable homes in Alconbury Weald and Brampton by Heylo Housing Group.

In presenting the report officers explained that the proposal enabled 17 properties built for open market sale to be sold through shared ownership. Crest Nicholson had secured full planning consent for both sites and the sites were currently under development.



In discussing the report:

- A Member commented that figure three in the report was not in the standard layout as per the previous reports and requested that the table be set out consistently across all reports with the measurements in square meters and not feet. **ACTION.** He commented that from reading the table he assumed that the houses met the national space standards.
- A Member commented that the development boosted affordable housing in this location and was welcomed.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Commit grant funding of £819,800 from the £100m Affordable Housing programme to enable the delivery of 17 shared ownership affordable homes in Alconbury Weald and Brampton, Huntingdonshire.

#### **48. £100 MILLION AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME SCHEME APPROVALS - TRUMPINGTON MEADOWS**

The Committee considered a report that sought approval to commit £430,000 of grant funding to enable the delivery of 11 shared ownership affordable homes in Trumpington Meadows.

The Director of Housing and Development explained that this was a late report as this grant opportunity had come to the Combined Authority at short notice. The applicant had a deal where they needed to exchange on the acquisition of the units on 23 January 2020 and so the report could not wait until the next Housing and Communities Committee. He explained that the grant rates were reasonable and the Combined Authority wanted to capture this within its programme rather than the applicant going to Homes England.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether there was a trend of homes moving from the market to affordable housing. The Director of Housing and Development commented that the current market had started to see an increase in these conversions due to market uncertainty
- Questioned the timescales for making the shared ownership arrangements. The Director of Housing and Development commented there were currently no timescales attached to this at the moment and the detailed business plan had yet to be finalised.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Commit grant funding of £430,000 from the £100m Affordable





Housing programme to enable the delivery of 11 shared ownership affordable homes in Trumpington Meadows.

#### **49. £100 MILLION AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on the £100 million Affordable Housing Programme.

In presenting the report the Director of Housing and Development explained that £20.5 million in expenditure had been approved for grant funding to January 2020 with £41.1 million in expenditure approved from the revolving fund. A total of £62 million had therefore been allocated to schemes to date. He explained that the chart at 4.1 of the report outlined the number of units approved by district. He explained that in terms of starts on site there had been 202 starts on site to date with Bretton Court due to start on site in January 2020 and confirmation that in March 2020, 234 affordable housing units would start on site in Northstowe, simultaneously to the start of the Mare Fen flood remedial works. He explained that in terms of completions there had so far been 68 completions with 20 homes completed since the last report. He confirmed that at this stage the Combined Authority were confident that the programme target of a minimum of 2,000 new affordable homes would be delivered as starts on site by 31 March 2022. He highlighted that the pipeline list (the exempt appendix two of the report) expected an acceleration in starts on site, with a target of 600 by the end of March 2020. He explained that there was a healthy number of potential schemes in the pipeline with approximately 100 units. He clarified that currently that in terms of risk the programme showed as an amber risk on the CPCA register as there was currently a higher than usual market risk, with a slowdown in the market since September 2018. He explained that officers from the Housing and Development team regularly met with Homes England to discuss the market and opportunities to share intelligence.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried when the follow up meeting was due to take place with Government as detailed in 2.5 of the report and questioned whether they were happy with the progress of the revolving fund. The Director of Housing and Development explained that he was due to have a meeting with Government at the start of February and from this meeting it was anticipated that the next tranche of funding would be released. Members requested that the following information be made available in a tabular form within the report **ACTION**
  - Amount of money and number of homes and at what stages
  - How many on site
  - How many have completed
  - How much we have spent
  - What it was last time and what it is this time
- Highlighted the response to Members enquiries at the last Committee

regarding the consideration of the use of an independent company to check the viability of Grant Applications. The Director of Housing and Development explained that it was the Combined Authorities view that there was sufficient expertise within the CPCA finance and housing and development teams to review the applicant's business plans and development appraisals 'in house' without the delay and expense of appointing third party advisors every time an application was received. He explained that officers shared knowledge and cross checked schemes with District housing officers. The Chairman explained that he accepted that the Combined Authority had the expertise and had assurance that this matter would be kept under review. The Interim Monitoring Officer highlighted that the Audit and Governance Committee also had an overview of internal and external audit and that the Housing and Development Director attended this Committee.

A Member queried how additionality could be gauged in terms of whether more homes were being built in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough through the programme than if providers just relied on the Homes England Scheme. The Director of Housing and Development explained that the Combined Authority were proactive in talking to providers and that both organisations could offer funding and that more housing providers were coming in to the area.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) Note the progress of the delivery of the £100m programme.

## **50. £100k HOMES AND COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS**

The Committee received a report that provided an update on the progress and expenditure for both the £100k Homes and Community Land Trust projects.

The Director of Housing and Development introduced the Committee to Emma Grima – Director of Commercial and Corporate Services at East Cambridgeshire District Council who was overseeing the projects on behalf of the CPCA.

In presenting the report officers explained that the update on spend to date was shown in section 2.5 of the report and that the business plan for the projects was currently in development and would be presented to the Combined Authority Board on 29 January 2020.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether salary costs had been included in table of the spend to date. Officers explained that they had not been included but that they would be included in the final business plan.

It was resolved unanimously to:



- (a) Note the progress and expenditure to date on £100k Homes and Community Land Trusts.

**51. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members noted the date of the next meeting as 9 March 2020.

Chairman