

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 1 at East Pallant House Chichester West Sussex on Thursday 11 September 2014 at 10:00am

Members (15)

Mrs C M M Apel (Chairman)
Mr R J Hayes (Vice-Chairman)

Mr P Clementson	Mrs J A E Tassell
Mrs P Dignum	Mr N R D Thomas
Mr S Lloyd-Williams	Mrs B A Tinson
Mr G V McAra	Mr M Woolley
Mr H C Potter	

were present (11)

Overview and Scrutiny Members Absent

Mr A D Chaplin
Mrs N Graves
Mrs E Hamilton
Mr G H Hicks

Chichester District Council Members Present as Observers or Contributors

Mr A J French
Mrs E Lintill
Mr S Oakley
Mrs C Purnell

Officers Present for All or Specific Items

Mr R Dunmall – Housing Operations Manager
Mrs L Grange – Housing Delivery Manager
Mr S Hansford – Head of Community Services
Miss L Higenbottam – Member Services Assistant
Mrs B Jones – Principal Scrutiny Officer
Mr T Whitty – Development Management Service Manager

211 Chairman's Announcements

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr A D Chaplin, Mrs N Graves, Mrs E Hamilton and Mr G H Hicks.

212 Approval of Minutes

Minutes of 3 July 2014

Mrs Dignum asked it be noted that minute 199, paragraph 11 referred to the state of the River Lavant by the railway station; minute 199, paragraph 11 referred to the Canal Basin area doing well rather than the Canal; minute 199, paragraph 11 referred to visitors coming from the station rather than incoming groups; minute 202, paragraph 6 referred to the plans to have a cafe not the reorganisation of a cafe.

Mr Lloyd-Williams clarified minute 202, paragraph 3, line 5 should read 'Mr Lloyd-Williams suggested it would cost £3.5 million over five years which was a difficult figure to sell to the rate payers'.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) meeting held on Thursday 3 July 2014 are approved as a correct record subject to the amendments indicated above.

That the minutes of the OSC meeting held on Tuesday 22 July 2014 are approved as a correct record.

Accordingly, Mrs Apel signed and dated the official versions of the minutes.

213 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items to be considered at this meeting.

214 Declarations of Interest

Mrs Apel declared a personal interest in reference to item 9 as Governor of Parklands Primary School.

Mr Hayes declared a personal interest in reference to item 9 as a Governor of Southbourne Junior School.

Mr Lloyd-Williams declared a personal interest in reference to item 9 as his wife teaches at Bosham Primary School.

Mr McAra declared a personal interest in reference to item 9 as Governor of Midhurst Rother College.

Mrs Tassell declared a personal interest in reference to item 9 as a Governor of Compton Primary School.

Mrs Tinson declared a personal interest in reference to item 9 as a Governor of the Academy Selsey this term.

215 Public Question Time

No public questions had been submitted for this meeting.

216 Development Management Service Performance Review

Mr Whitty introduced the report (copy attached to the official minutes). He clarified the three development management teams, a Minors team, a Majors and Business team and a South Down National Park Authority (SDNP) team, each led by a Manager and Principal Officer.

Mr Whitty referred to the tables set out in sections 5.5 and 5.8 of the report. Table 5.5 showed a significant increase in the handling of pre-applications within target dates from 32% to 75%. Table 5.8 showed a significant increase in Major applications determined within the requisite period from 67.3% to 100%. He explained that the SDNP were happy with the approach of a dedicated team at the council and that due to the success of the post, Cabinet had agreed to make the Pre-Application Senior Officer permanent.

Mr Woolley asked for clarification of the staffing levels within the planning teams. Mr Whitty replied the newly permanent Pre-Application Senior Officer role was in addition to the team allocations. The Minors team have a Technical Officer, five Planning Officers, a Senior Officer, a Principal Officer and a Manager. The Majors and Business team have two Senior Officers, two Principal Officers and a Manager. The SDNP team have a Technical Officer, two Planning Officers, one Principal Officer and a Manager. There are currently two vacant Planning Officer posts in the SDNP team. An Arboricultural Officer, a Senior Pre-Applications Officer and two Team Support Officers work across all three teams.

Mr Woolley asked if there had been difficulties in recruiting. Mr Whitty replied that junior posts in the SDNP team were harder to fill, however two new members of staff would be joining in the next few months.

Mr Thomas asked if paper copies or another solution would be put in place for wards such as Plaistow that had been struggling to download long planning applications. Mr Whitty replied that most Parishes were able to download the documents and issues with downloading speeds at the council's end had now been resolved. He explained the Plaistow issue had been noted and sending data by USB and additional training were being considered as possible solutions. Mr Potter noted that in exceptional circumstances paper copies should be made available.

Mrs Tassell noted the table in section 5.8 of the report showed no major applications in the SDNP from April-July 2014 and asked if this was ever likely to happen. Mr Whitty explained there were fewer major applications in the SDNP but the figure was only across a four month period.

Mrs Tassell asked why the council had 25 days to determine pre-applications but 20 days for SDNP pre-applications. Mr Whitty explained this was a service standard of the SDNP which the council implemented. Mr Whitty confirmed the Senior Pre-Applications Officer was Mr Robert Sims.

Mrs Apel asked how the recommendation from the Planning Task and Finish Group to reduce the Members of the Planning Committee to 15 would work if there were absentees. Mr Clementson explained that the reduction in numbers would still leave a large Committee.

Mr Hayes asked if ward Members could still speak first on planning applications at Planning Committee. Mrs Purnell was invited to answer the question. She explained that as the Planning Committee no longer had full ward representation there would not

necessarily be a Committee Member to fulfil this role. Ward Members would still be allowed to speak just not necessarily starting the debate (which had been the previous tradition).

RESOLVED

1. That the revised staffing structure implementation be noted.
2. That the improved performance of the Development Management teams be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

3. That the new Planning Committee structure be reviewed by the corporate task and finish group one year after implementation (May 2016).

217 Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2013-18 Review

Mrs Grange introduced the report (copy attached to the official minutes). She explained that detailed targets had been adopted by Council last September and would be reviewed annually by OSC. She noted that in appendix 1 of the report all milestones were either on target, delayed due to circumstances beyond the council's control or no longer deemed relevant. She explained that a more extensive review of the strategy would take place following the 2015 elections.

Mrs Grange acknowledged that in his absence Mr Chaplin had asked for clarification of appendix 2 paragraph 2.1 and why there was a presumption that no government grant would be available to deliver affordable housing on market sites. Mrs Grange explained the policy had been set by Government.

Mr Thomas asked in reference to appendix 2 paragraph 3.3 what sales the council could look forward to. Mrs Grange explained that the sale of Hyde Martlet stock under the right to buy had been profiled and was expected to decline. However government policy had recently increased the discounts available and more social housing stock had been sold at a loss to the district social housing stock.

In reference to appendix 1 priority 2.5 Mrs Tassell asked why the estimated adoption of the Gypsy and Traveller site would not take place until 2020. Mrs Grange referred to the appendix 1 comments in bold, explaining that a Development Plan document was being progressed overriding the Housing Strategy. Mrs Tassell noted this was still a long time (five years) for her ward of Funtington. Mrs Grange to ask Planning Policy and come back with a response. Mr Hayes asked Southbourne be included in a response. Mr Hansford suggested clarifying whether the five years was for delivery of the plan or content of the plan.

Mr Woolley asked why the objective of 110 affordable houses per year had only realised 91. Mrs Grange replied these are affordable homes, provided on market housing sites which over the last few years had stalled due to slow sales. She explained if the market housing is not delivered then affordable housing is not achieved, however next year would see delivery of 342 affordable units due to a large number of stalled market sites being built out.

Mr McAra asked the relationship between SDNP as planning authority with the council as housing authority. Mrs Grange explained she was on a working group with other local authorities which fed into new SDNP policy and the relationship at officer level was good.

Mr McAra asked the likelihood of SDNP affordable housing over the next five years. Mrs Grange explained that there was no figure but SDNP were keen to deliver affordable housing over market housing.

Mrs Dignum asked for clarification of appendix 1 priority 1.7, whether there were enough affordable homes for people wishing to downsize and whether priority 4 would achieve its aims. Mr Dunmall replied that the prevention team at West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) had successfully worked to get 16 and 17 year olds back in the family home, consequently the council had seen fewer presentations in the age group. He explained the allocation scheme gave preference to downsizers, with a general supply of one or two bed properties. Mrs Dignum asked the average time to downsize if applying today. Mr Dunmall explained if the applicant was in band A for downsizing by two rooms then it is likely the process would only take a couple of months. He noted that rent arrears could prevent moves, however Hyde Martlet made allowances if arrears were based on bedroom tax.

Mr Lloyd-Williams asked if the 37 pitches in appendix 1 priority 1.5 were identified in the development plan. Mrs Grange explained that the nine pitches referred to was now only five pitches. Mrs Purnell was invited to respond. She explained there were different types of pitches but currently no transit pitches in the district. Mr Hansford to find the exact number of pitches. Mr Hansford explained that WSSCC have fixed sites and there are gypsy and traveller assessments to decide on how best to cater for community growth. He clarified that transient issues were a different agenda for WSSCC and this topic was addressing provision for the settled community.

Mr Clementson asked if there was demand locally for houses or demand from outside of the area. Mr Dunmall explained that changes to the allocation scheme last July meant that you could only apply for the housing register if you were a resident or had worked in the district for more than a year, therefore the properties available next year would get filled.

Mr Potter asked if one to two bed properties could be achieved by using less land and building apartments. Mrs Grange replied that she had shown Members examples of apartments with front doors on different sides of the building to give an appearance of large houses.

RESOLVED

1. That the delivery of milestones in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan be noted.
2. That the new Housing Strategy Delivery Plan dates be endorsed.
3. That the housing delivery achievements during 2013/14 be noted.

218 The adoption of new models of affordable housing delivery including shared equity

Mrs Grange introduced the report (copy attached to the official minutes). She explained the framework was in line with supplementary planning guidance. Previous intermediate housing had been delivered in the form of shared ownership. However there are a number of limitations and restrictions with this model. The new proposal would seek to deliver intermediate affordable housing on all market sites with greater options for delivery.

Mrs Apel asked on behalf of Mr Chaplin whether the housing need would be met and what an affordable rent was. Mrs Grange explained that any scheme within the government's affordable housing programme must charge either 80% of market rent or the local housing allowance whichever is the lower. If the council were to fund affordable housing through its reserves it would only produce a minimal number of units so it was better to work together.

Mr McAra asked what had been considered in terms of Community Land Trust (CLT). He asked if self-build could be a lower cost option. He suggested that CLT should be encouraged and promoted. He had approached SDNP to find out the response to a self-build settlement in Midhurst and the idea had not been dismissed. Mrs Apel asked if there were any CLT's in the district. Mrs Grange replied that Kirdford had set up a CLT. She explained that CLT's required a commitment from the local community. Registered providers such as Hyde were less inclined to be involved because of their resource intensive nature. She informed the Committee that self-build was more difficult in the south east region due to the very high land values. Mr McAra replied that registered providers may not hold the solution as small groups with the correct legal support could work cheaper. Mrs Apel noted that when MP Nick Boles had visited the council he had suggested CLT's were a way forward. Mrs Grange clarified that CLT's had been more popular in rural areas though there was nothing to stop them being developed in more urban areas. Mrs Jones suggested a briefing paper be circulated to Members. Mrs Tassell noted that CLT's could be of interest to some Church communities she knew. Mrs Grange suggested she worked with Kirdford to give the support they need and utilise additional support from Action in Rural Sussex and bring a paper back based on the initial experience.

Mr Oakley was invited to comment. Mr Oakley asked whether officers were confident that there was demand to take up the shared ownership housing as required by the Local Plan, 30% affordable housing of which 30% is shared ownership. He asked if a Neighbourhood Plan wanted to vary the proportion of intermediate housing to 40% would this be possible. Mrs Grange replied that currently the council require 40% affordable housing of which 30% is required to be provided as intermediate housing, with 70% as rented. She explained there had been no issues in the sale of shared ownership housing in the district. Last year 54 units had been delivered and there had been no problems with selling them to local people. The Strategic Market Housing Assessment provided the objective evidence base and if the intermediate housing element on a site were to be increased this would need to be supported by robust evidence.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

That the proposed Intermediate Housing Policy be approved.

RESOLVED

That a paper on community land trusts be brought to OSC in March 2015 for consideration.

219 Overview and Scrutiny work programme

Mrs Jones outlined the following topics scheduled for the November 2014 meeting:

- Tourism Task and Finish Group final report;
- Education Task and Finish Group final report;
- Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group final report;

- Homelessness strategy;
- Midhurst community leisure facilities;
- Careline business plan.

Education review – scope and outline plan

RESOLVED

1. That the OSC confirms Mrs Graves, Mr Hayes and Mrs Tassell as members of this task and finish group with Mrs Tinson as Chairman.
2. That the proposed scope and outline plan be approved.

Corporate Plan – mid-year progress review – scope and outline plan

RESOLVED

1. That the OSC confirms Mr Cherry, Mr Lloyd-Williams and Mr Potter as members of this task and finish group with Mrs Dignum as Chairman.
2. That the proposed scope and outline plan be approved.

Feedback from the meeting of District and Borough Members of the WSCC Health and Social Care Select Committee (HASC) and their officers with the Chairman of the Committee – 3 September 2014

Mr Hansford gave feedback from the meeting which had been called by WSCC as a project day for HASC.

Mrs Dignum explained there were representatives from two other district councils present. The meeting aimed to help make a smooth path forward after times of different approach. WSCC were re-commissioning their Assistive Technology contract and beginning to look into tele-health, but taking a different approach to partnering with the other District and Borough services like Careline. At HASC's meeting in June other district councils expressed concerns about WSCC's approach.

Mrs Dignum outlined the topics covered including an overview of what HASC does, roles and responsibilities, HASC as a critical friend and working with others. The meeting covered the relevance of topics such as provision of health services.

Mrs Dignum reminded the Committee of their invitation to the HASC meeting on the stroke service on 2 October 2014 at WSCC, County Hall.

Mrs Dignum informed the Committee she had been asked about the council's OSC work programme and had told them that a review of health covered by the council had taken place in July and the Members Bulletin from May had detailed the success of the Wellbeing Hub. Mrs Dignum explained the leaders of HASC were impressed, as were other councils with such good results.

Mr Hansford explained that concerns had been raised but not listened to regarding the direction of WSCC Assistive Technology commissioning policy.

Mrs Apel asked if there was evidence of partnership. Mr Hansford explained the provision of Health and Wellbeing services and support of vulnerable people in the

district worked in partnership, but the approach was different when commissioning was involved.

Mrs Tinson asked if any announcement had been made at the meeting regarding the dermatology and muscular skeletal services. Mr Hansford explained it was not in HASC's work programme. Mrs Jones to make an enquiry of HASC's involvement.

Mr McAra asked if WSCC were setting up a rival to Careline. Mrs Dignum answered yes, which was within their rights.

RESOLVED

That the feedback from the WSCC HASC project meeting of 3 September 2014 be noted.

WSCC HASC meeting 2 October

Members of the Committee were reminded of the invitation to attend the next meeting of HASC on Thursday 2 October 2014 at 10.30am at County Hall regarding the Committee's concerns over stroke services.

WSCC Children's Services

Mrs Apel reported that WSCC Children's Services were out of special measures and the Director of Children's services had moved on. Mrs Apel suggested the new Director and portfolio holder be invited to attend a future meeting of OSC.

Mr Lloyd-Williams asked for the name of the new head of child protection and assurance Chichester District was not facing the same issues as Rotherham. Mr Hansford explained the new head of child protection was Mr Kevin Peers, a recent appointment. He explained that the WSCC Safeguarding Children Board and the Community Safety Partnership were both vigilant to all manner of child protection issues including online safety. Mr Hansford informed the Committee that the Police and Crime Commissioner had sought additional funding for Sussex Police to establish a team to deal with missing children, particularly those missing from care. Mr Hansford explained there were no known cases like Rotherham in the Chichester District.

RESOLVED

That the newly appointed WSCC Director of Children's Services and the portfolio holder be invited to attend a future meeting of the OSC.

220 Late Items

There were no late items considered at this meeting.

221 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED

That in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (the Act), the public and the press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items on the agenda for the reason that it is likely in view of the nature of the

business to be transacted that there would be disclosure to the public of 'exempt information' being information of the nature described in Paragraphs 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and 5 (legal professional privilege)) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

222 Community Advice Services – joint scrutiny review

Mr Hansford introduced the report and the overall findings of the review (copy attached to the official minutes). He clarified that West Sussex County Council would lead the procurement process and though the draft report suggested using a single tender process there was still discussion between the legal and procurement officers as to the exact process to be followed. He explained the council could currently meet the recommended uplift of funding from base budget subject to the level of future Government funding. The Committee commented on the importance of Community Advice Service's and making sure the provision gets maintained.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

1. That the current community advice service be continued.
2. That the required uplift to funding be granted.
3. That a legally advised procurement process be followed.

Any Other Business

Mr Clementson asked for a proposal for a paper to come to the committee on replacement of the Committee's microphone system. Mrs Apel seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED

That a report on the microphone system be considered by the committee.

[**Note** The meeting ended at 12:35]

CHAIRMAN

Date _____