



Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, East Pallant House on Tuesday 16 January 2018 at 9.30 am

**Members Present:** Mrs C Apel (Chairman), Mrs N Graves (Vice-Chairman), Mr P Budge, Mrs P Dignum, Mr S Lloyd-Williams, Mr K Martin, Caroline Neville, Mrs P Plant, Mr H Potter, Mr J Ransley, Mr A Shaxson and Mr N Thomas

**Members not present:** Mr N Galloway, Mr G Hicks and Mrs J Tassell

**In attendance by invitation:**

**Officers present:** Ms P Bushby (Community Interventions Manager), Mrs J Dodsworth (Head of Business Improvement Services), Mrs L Grange (Housing Delivery Manager), Mr J Mildred (Corporate Policy Advice Manager), Mr P E Over (Executive Director), Mr J Ward (Head of Finance & Governance Services), Mr D Cooper (Group Accountant), Mr S Hansford (Head of Community Services) and Mrs B Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer)

## 191 **Chairman's announcements**

Apologies had been received from Mr N Galloway and Mr G Hicks.

## 192 **Minutes**

The committee considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 14 November 2017.

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2017 be approved as a correct record.

### **Matters arising:**

Mrs P Dignum commented on the 'excellent' Wellbeing update report provided in the minutes. She noted the helpful support given by individual members of staff to members of the public with health needs and requested that this be recognised by congratulating the members of the team.

Mr Martin and Mr Shaxson commented on the sickness absence figures included with the minutes. They were concerned that the council's absence figures were very different to the figures in the Office of National Statistics (ONS) report which had

been circulated to the Human Resources Manager and which included private and public sector analysis. A request was made that a report come to the next meeting of this committee explaining the differences in the figures, listing the other authorities against whom we benchmark ourselves and including analysis by department (in days and percentage terms. The committee was in agreement with this request.

## **RESOLVED**

That a report be brought to the next meeting of this committee on sickness absence figures.

[Post meeting note: A response was received from the Cabinet to the committee's recommendation at its last meeting on 14 November 2017 relating to minute 190 (Forward Plan 2017 to February 2018) and this response is attached to these minutes.]

### **193 Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

### **194 Declarations of Interests**

Mrs P Dignum declared a prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 7 as she is the Council's representative on the Pallant House Gallery Trust and Company.

### **195 Public Question Time**

No public questions had been received.

### **196 Housing Strategy Update**

The committee considered the report included with the agenda. Mrs L Grange, Divisional Manager for Housing Services, presented the report.

The committee made the following comments and received answers to questions as follows:

- Funding received from Government by Community Land Trusts (CLTs) would normally be spent in the latter stages of the project when planning permission, development costs, land purchase etc. takes place. There were three CLTs in the process of drawing down grant with more expected later this year.
- There was no mention of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) in the initiatives listed in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan. Officers take every opportunity to work with the SDNP and to influence their policies and talks take place between the appropriate planning officers involved at an early stage on individual sites.
- Downsizing. Queried developing a policy to provide subsidy to encourage downsizing or the council supporting families to allow downsizing to take place. A pilot scheme was run with Hyde but with few outcomes. The current

Allocations Scheme promotes downsizing however there is no financial incentive on offer. This will be considered as part of the new strategy.

- Requested a monthly register with number of homes permitted to be developed in the district, locations, land owners and date consent granted, house types and size.
- Requested breakdown of number of affordable homes delivered in and out of the SDNP over the housing strategy period. [Post meeting note: This update has been provided and is attached to these minutes.]
- Report on the number of affordable housing units permitted but yet to be developed. To be included as we currently report these figures to Government.
- Update on affordability with average salary in the district and relation to need. This will be undertaken as part of the development of the new Housing Strategy.
- Parking issues in rural villages; this is considered when developing new rural affordable properties.
- The numbers of houses to be built by CLTs will generally be between 6-20 homes. The council has no dedicated resources to deal with home owners of empty properties to bring these back into use. Grants are available to encourage more effective use and CDC will take on the management of empty homes through HomeFinder. Enforcement action can be taken where appropriate for environmental problems. The numbers of empty homes in the district are not accurately known as there is no incentive for house owners to contact the council as council tax discount no longer applies. Could we consider the council tax paid on empty homes in order to resource initiatives to bring them back onto the market?
- The main source of affordable housing delivery is quotas from market sites then by additional properties such as Hyde's garage sites where the council helps fund by making commuted sums received in lieu of affordable housing available to registered providers through grant. The council does not generally have land available but will work with registered providers including Hyde to provide additional properties on top of market quota or properties delivered through community led housing groups.
- Affordable housing covers both affordable rent and intermediate housing; these are Government products delivered by housing providers. Affordable rent is set at 80% of market rent. Housing providers are lobbying Government about these products and it is hoped that as from 2020 there will be different products available. Hyde would like to introduce a living rent linked to salaries. A number of Hyde's tenants are existing social rents at around 55% of market rents with service charge payable on top (80% affordable rents include service charges).
- Gypsies and travelling showpeople site allocation timetable. This is set out in the Revised Local Development Scheme 2018-2021 approved by Cabinet on 9 January. (Post meeting note: Gypsies & Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) site allocation Development Plan Document put on hold – see report to cabinet 3 November 2015. Work started on new West Sussex coastal authorities GTAA Autumn 2017. GTAA due to be completed and will inform next steps April 2018)
- Accommodation for young people at the Foyer. The council is working with WSCC to consider what could be put in place in the future. There are a number local groups interested in working with young people.
- Equity loans scheme. There was no take-up of these loans. This will be revisited to compare the advantages of that scheme with existing Government schemes.

Mrs Grange confirmed that she had noted all comments and suggestions made by members for inclusion in the new strategy to be developed in the summer. The new overarching strategy would review all the various existing strategies, consider what was going on nationally, review affordability issues in the district and would be streamlined with all housing priorities in one place. The committee would be consulted prior to Cabinet making this decision. Mrs Kilby, the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, also confirmed that she had taken on board the points raised by the committee.

## RESOLVED

1. That progress made in delivering the council's Housing Strategy for the period 2013-2018, as set out in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan at appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
2. That it be noted that a new Housing Strategy would be developed as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.2 of the report taking into account the comments and suggestions made by this committee.

## 197 Cultural Grants

The committee considered the report attached to the agenda. Mr D Hyland, Community and Partnerships Support Manager, presented the report.

Mrs Dignum, having declared a prejudicial interest in this item as the council's representative on the Pallant House Gallery Trust and Company, withdrew from the room during consideration of this item.

An error in the report was pointed out - Page 52, para 6.1 fifth line should read "... Chairman of the Festival Theatre **Gallery**....".

The committee made the following comments and received answers to questions as follows:

- Both organisations had had economic impact assessments prepared to inform the review of funding which had taken place in 2017, which demonstrated that they were contributing positively to the economy of the district.
- Arts Council England funding levered in by both organisations as a result of the council's contribution was requested. **Mr Hansford advised that this was exempt information in the report considered by Cabinet and undertook to provide this to members outside of the meeting.**
- Queried the possibility of a change in Government earlier than 2022 and whether the funding organisations had considered this scenario and whether Arts Council funding would be available until 2022. Both organisations are Portfolio Organisations with funding agreements for a four year period.
- Clarification of the monitoring process. As a result of restructuring Mrs Hotchkiss would take over responsibility for Cultural Grants and Mrs Peyman would be the monitoring officer. Both organisations would need to report twice yearly to the council; a half year oral update of performance would be provided to the monitoring officer with financial information; an annual written report will also be provided from both organisations. Should there be concerns about

either organisation's performance this would be flagged up to the portfolio holder.

- Queried the Theatre's purchase of a commercial site to provide accommodation for staff and actors and whether our grant covered this type of acquisition. Both the theatre and gallery were private organisations and as such we should not be concerned with their projects; only with the outcomes we are interested in them achieving as stated in the monitoring framework.
- Concern that the monitoring framework for the Gallery was not included in the agenda report. Members were advised that they were being asked to endorse the monitoring arrangements for cultural grants, not to agree the framework agreements which were the remit of the portfolio holder. **Mr Hyland undertook to forward this to the committee for information when it became available.**

On the recommendation being put to the vote Mr Lloyd-Williams abstained with all other members in favour.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the proposed Funding Agreements for Chichester Festival Theatre and Pallant House Gallery be endorsed.
- 2) That, subject to the final agreed monitoring framework for the Pallant House Gallery being consistent with Chichester Festival Theatre's proposed monitoring framework; and subject to the portfolio holder's agreement with this document, the monitoring arrangements for both organisations be endorsed.

Mrs P Dignum returned to the meeting.

## **198 Budget Review 2017**

Mr S Lloyd-Williams, the Chairman of the Budget Task and Finish Group, gave an oral report of the deliberations of the task and finish group which had met on 12 December 2017, stating that members had concluded they were satisfied with the explanations on the projected variances on the 2017-18 budget.

Mr J Ward, Head of Finance & Governance Services, advised that the draft settlement had been received from Government the week after the review and confirmed that the figures in the draft financial model had been similar to that predicted. A change in the rural delivery grant had resulted in an additional £35,000 in our favour. The bid for the 100% business rate pilot had been unsuccessful, although West Sussex may submit a further bid in the next round next year. There was no proposal to cap parish councils next year. Members had been notified of a new IFRS9 instruction regarding the accounting treatment of certain types of investment which would mean that any gain or loss on investment had to be recognised and included in the budgets. If it went ahead it would result in the bottom line credit of £1.3m in the budget being reduced to £800,000.

## **RESOLVED**

That this oral report be noted.

199 **Community Safety Review 2018**

The committee considered the Terms of Reference and scope of the review. Mrs Bushby, Communities Interventions Manager, was available for questions.

**RESOLVED**

- 1) That the Terms of Reference for the Community Safety Task and Finish Group be agreed.
- 2) That C Neville be approved as a member on this task and finish group and that she chairs the meeting.
- 3) That three further members for this task and finish group be sought from the wider membership.

200 **Forward Plan**

The committee considered the Council's Forward Plan for the period from February to May 2018.

Members were informed that the ICT Strategy 2018-2021 was likely to be delayed due to the resignation of a key member of staff, however the task and finish group would be constituted when this was ready to be reviewed.

Mr Ransley requested that members be provided with the methodology and format of financial and viability appraisals. In particular he requested that this be made available to all members in respect of the report on the St James Industrial Estate partial refurbishment/rebuild to be considered by Cabinet in February. The committee confirmed that they did not wish to debate the issue at a formal meeting.  
**Mr Over agreed to provide this information to members when available.**

201 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED**

That the public and press should be excluded from the meeting in respect of agenda item 12 (East Pallant House Options Appraisal) on the grounds of exemption under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 namely Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) and because, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption of that information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

202 **East Pallant House Options (EPH) Appraisal**

The committee considered the report attached to the agenda. Mrs J Dodsworth, Head of Business Improvement Services and Joe Mildred, Corporate Improvement Manager, presented the report.

Mr Ransley and Mr Lloyd-Williams were concerned at the limited level of information the committee had been presented with in order to make a meaningful contribution to this options appraisal and at the narrow scope of this review.

Members were advised of further detail in the analysis of the four options presented in the report. There was support for the use of the committee rooms by the courts which would be beneficial for local residents.

Mr Mildred advised that a full business case for option 2 would be considered before it was progressed and he confirmed to members that if this was unviable it would not be pursued.

On the recommendations being put to the vote – for recommendation one (eight members were in support and two members abstained from the vote) and for recommendation two (four members were in support, three members were against and three members abstained from the vote).

### **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET**

- 1) That Option 2 be approved.
- 2) That capital costs associated with the refurbishment of office space for commercial let be funded from identified spend in the asset replacement programme.

### **203 Late Items**

There were no late items.

The meeting ended at 12.46 pm

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CHAIRMAN

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Date:

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING 14 NOVEMBER 2017

### RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET TO RECOMMENDATION MADE AT MINUTE 190 FORWARD PLAN (NOV 2017 TO FEB 2018)

#### **Recommendation:**

That Cabinet considers this committee's comments on its Forward Plan and responds by way of advising on its schedule of innovative projects planned for February 2018 to February 2019 to respond to local need for housing, wellbeing and greater housing number delivery.

#### **Response:**

Thank you for the concerns regarding housing matters raised at Overview and Scrutiny committee while considering the Forward Plan. Whilst the underlying concern about the affordability of housing in the district is shared, the Forward Plan is not the sole document where initiatives and activity of the council would be found, nor the sole means of conveying them to the public.

As you will know the Forward Plan is a list of the council's key decisions that will be made over the foreseeable future and by law Cabinet must give at least 28 days public notice before making a decision which is financially significant in terms of spending or savings or which will have a significant impact on communities in two or more wards.

Our Corporate Plan is our strategic business planning document which sets out the council's future priorities and objectives. The plan is supported by strategies and action plans which set out the detailed actions to be taken to achieve those strategic objectives. Cabinet has just approved the revised Corporate Plan which restates our commitment to affordable housing. The Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan also set out a range of initiatives. These documents are available to the public on our website and subject to review in public. Our current Housing Strategy is due for renewal at the end of this year and will be consulted on and include new and refreshed initiatives. It will of course be scrutinised by the OSC in due course and require the approval of both Cabinet and Council.

There is also the part played by the Local Plan and the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel in setting out and monitoring the strategic long term housing supply issues. We also ensure the appropriate consideration of policy decisions through the Business Routing Panel.

I hope you will agree that there will be opportunities for member input into the new Housing Strategy and that housing and long term planning matters are taken very seriously by Cabinet and this council, and that considerable work is done by our officers and with our partners to achieve our strategic Housing objectives.



# Minute Item 196

Affordable Housing Delivery in Chichester District 2013-18

Within SDNP				Outside SDNP			Total
2013-14	Midhurst	13	13	Birdham	10	91	104
				Chichester	46		
				Chidham	27		
				Selsey	8		
2014-15	Cocking Midhurst	18 25	43	Birdham	1	234	277
				Chichester	132		
				Donnington	46		
				East Wittering	17		
				Hunston	23		
				Southbourne	15		
2015-16			0	Bosham	3	184	184
				Chichester	80		
				Chidham	4		
				East Wittering	20		
				Fishbourne	10		
				Lavant	9		
				Loxwood	3		
				North Mundham	15		
				Southbourne	20		
				West Wittering	20		
2016-17	Midhurst	6	6	Birdham	12	179	185
				Chichester	24		
				Chidham	14		
				Fishbourne	20		
				Oving	11		
				Selsey	17		
				Southbourne	6		
				Tangmere	25		
				Westhampnett	14		
2017-18 (projected)	Easebourne Rogate		8	Chichester	27	214	222
				Chidham	9		
				Fishbourne	7		
				North Mundham	25		
				Oving	20		
				Selsey	27		
				Southbourne	17		
				Tangmere	57		
				Westhampnett	25		
TOTAL			70	902			972