

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING AND HOMES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1400 hours on Tuesday 14 November 2017, Committee Rooms 3&4

Present:

Councillor Penny Holbrook (Chair)

Councillors Andy Cartwright, Matthew Gregson, Roger Harmer, Des Hughes, Mary Locke, Gary Sambrook and Ron Storer

Also Present:

Rob James, Service Director, Housing

Ian McLeod, Assistant Director, Planning

Clive Skidmore, Head of Housing Development

Jayne Power, Research & Policy Officer, Scrutiny Office

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chairman advised the meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Victoria Quinn and Gurdial Singh Atwal.

3. ACTION NOTES – 17 OCTOBER 2017

(See document No 1)

Members expressed concern that they had not received a response to the outstanding actions in relation to Waste Services and requested that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:-

- Chair/Deputy Chair to write to the Chief Executive;
- The notes were agreed.

4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(See document No 2)

The following were among the main points raised:

- Members were advised that there are three types of affordable housing: Section 106, the City Council's own building and the Housing Association movement;
- The number of completions through Housing Associations (HAs) has decreased, partly due to the grant rate reduction and the reduced levels are not enough to incentivise the HAs, however it was pointed out that the recent announcement by the Government of extra funding might suggest increased grants will be made available;
- In response to a question in relation to serious concerns about homelessness and what is being done by the combined authority, Members were reminded that they would receive an update on the Homelessness Strategy as part of the tracking of the Rough Sleeping & Prevention report at the December meeting and in terms of the combined authority, there is a housing offer in development but it is in its early stages;
- With regard to the 38% target, when the Birmingham Development Plan was prepared, a strategic housing market assessment was undertaken to assess affordable housing requirements across Birmingham, based on the needs of the city and tested by public inquiry.
- In terms of the viability tool, developers can argue on a number of issues, e.g. that a particular site is difficult to remediate, there is contamination, etc, and with most of our supply being brownfield, this brings challenges;
- Members were advised that the City Council is working closely with the LEP on a funding programme called "Unlocking Housing Sites" to develop sites which have stalled for one reason or another. A number of schemes have benefited from this funding and so far £6m has been allocated out of a total of £9m;
- Work is on-going with the Homes and Communities Agency to prioritise interventions to support regeneration initiatives;
- In response to a question about how profiling is done to determine where houses are built, officers undertook to provide a response on how this breaks down to ward/district level;
- It was suggested that a meeting be organised between the Chair, Leader, Cabinet Member and Chair of Planning to discuss policy development with regard to achieving the required level of affordable housing.

RESOLVED:-

- Response to be provided on how profiling is done to determine where houses are built and how this breaks down to ward/district level;
- Chair/Deputy Chair to discuss organising a meeting with the Leader, Cabinet Member and Chair of Planning about policy development with regard to achieving the required level of affordable housing.

5. WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18

(See document No 3)

Members discussed the items already scheduled and put forward suggestions for additional items.

RESOLVED:-

- West Midlands Mayor to be invited to the December meeting for the tracking of the Rough Sleeping & Prevention report;
- Report on the Impact of Universal Credit to be brought to the December meeting;
- Selective Licensing to be rescheduled for February to allow time for the Soho Ward Consultation to be completed;
- Councillor Harmer's request for a report on tackling social housing fraud to be discussed with the Chair;
- Response to be provided to the issue raised by Councillor Cartwright with regard to the effect of ward boundary changes on HLBs;
- Request from Councillor Gregson for an update on tackling anti-social behaviour – to be picked up when the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Equality attends Committee in March;
- The Work Programme was noted.

6. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

7. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

9. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Agreed.

The meeting ended at 1500 hours.