

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE –

PUBLIC MEETING

1100 hours on Wednesday 18 August 2021
Main Hall, Birmingham & Midland Institute

Present:

Councillor Penny Holbrook (Chair)

Councillors Roger Harmer, Mahmood Hussain, Mary Locke and Mike Sharpe

Also Present:

Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of the Council

Councillor Jon Hunt

Councillor Morriam Jan

Rebecca Farr, Development Planning Manager

Ian MacLeod, Acting Director, Inclusive Growth

Mumtaz Mohammed, Programme Manager

Guy Olivant, Business Partner – Development and Comms

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site (www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Deirdre Alden, Marje Bridle and Ken Wood.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. REQUEST FOR CALL IN: BIRMINGHAM 2022 – UPDATE ON THE PERRY BARR REGENERATION SCHEME FBC

(See documents 1, 2 and 3)

The Chair invited Cllr Jon Hunt and Cllr Morriam Jan to state their reasons for requesting the call-in.

Cllr Hunt thanked the committee for meeting in August to consider this request for call-in and set out four issues to be addressed:

- The Perry Barr Masterplan approved by the Leader in July – ward councillors want this village to be a liveable place and part of an attractive destination; the Masterplan was pleasing with innovative ideas, one of which was to retain the bus garage which has some architectural interest for indoor use, eg market or community activity. The issue in the report is that it is referred to as temporary twice and within the decision made by Cabinet.
- The Hare of the Dog public house – the business case recommends that it is used for affordable housing. The Masterplan identifies this as a potential heritage asset, so it is not clear what the business case means – is the public house to be used for affordable housing or replaced with affordable housing?
- Social housing issues – this report takes out plots 3, 4 and 5 – 57 ground level houses to BMHT. It is unclear how they will be replaced and how additional social housing is provided and the responses at Cabinet were not clear. There is a difference between affordable and social housing and there are pressures to provide social housing.
- Oscott Gardens – the proposal is that Oscott Gardens would be used for temporary housing for homeless people in line with council policy, but only for 5 years and then to be used for new housing, primarily for sale. Is 5 years arbitrary?

Cllr Jan added that the new community facility at the bus depot would be a great asset to the neighbourhood, and it is of historical value, so it would be a waste to knock it down.

The Leader responded that the regeneration taking place in Perry Barr will impact on a much wider area and the catalyst has been the hosting of the Commonwealth Games, otherwise this would not be happening.

Having spoken to Cllr Hunt before the meeting regarding the issues raised, he made the following points:

- The intention is to create in Perry Barr a place where people choose to live, work and visit – and the latter is where the bus depot is significant. It is an attractive building and there is enough space to create a number of different

attractions.

- They are consulting on the Masterplan, which is a 40 year vision, and are consulting on options, including getting an operator to run it.
- The “temporary” reference is only in relation to outline planning and it will not be demolished unless that is what residents ask for. The proposal is to make this work as a visitor attraction if that is what comes out of the consultation
- With regard to the public house, the report refers to considering the potential for more housing units because at the moment they have not managed to attract a buyer or operator to use it as a public house. The building has heritage elements and does need to be preserved and the preferred option is to use it as a public house if an operator can be found, or another option might be for it to be a restaurant.
- Planning consent for the village site makes provision for 22% affordable housing. There is a target of 35% across the city as a whole, of which 11% is required for social housing. At the moment they are looking to accommodate 22% of affordable housing within the development plots currently being constructed. They are yet to determine what will happen on the remaining plots and second and subsequent phases of development, but will ensure 35% affordable housing and seek to hit the target of 11% social housing within that.
- The proposal to convert Oscott Gardens for temporary accommodation – this is a better option than placing residents into B&B and can be for longer than 5 years if residents are comfortable with that.
- They would like to be in a situation where there is a better solution than using temporary accommodation in 5 years’ time, however it seems much more likely in the short term that there will be an increase in demand rather than a reduction, so this may be needed beyond the 5 years.

In the ensuing question and answer session the following points were raised:

- The term “affordable housing” is highly misleading in most cases and the reason there is a huge crisis with exempt accommodation is there is not enough social housing.
- The real crisis is social housing and Members were concerned about the wording used – “will hit 35%” and “will seek to hit 11%” sounds like a clear promise on affordable housing but not on social housing, where a commitment is needed.
- The Leader agreed there is a crisis, exacerbated by Right to Buy. The Development Plan identifies 35% affordable housing, broken down to 11%

social housing, and what gives greater flexibility is breaking even on the village site. On the assumption that is achieved, they can get BMHT to deliver 11% social housing on the remaining phases.

- There is no guarantee that something won't happen to take that off course, but they will deliver what they can.

Cllr Hunt requested that, in the event the decision is not called in, the Leader put something in writing, setting out the clarifications and commitments discussed, as he was concerned some of the wording used in the report was misleading.

A vote of the Committee then took place with members voting unanimously to not call in the decision.

RESOLVED: -

1. The decision was not called-in.
2. Leader to put something in writing, setting out the clarifications and commitments discussed, with a copy to be sent to this Committee.

5. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

6. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Noted.

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

None.

8. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1136 hours.