

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 6 March 2019 from 2.01 pm - 3.57 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Parbutt (Chair)
Councillor Anne Peach (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Glyn Jenkins
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Mohammed Saghir
Councillor Cate Woodward

Absent

Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Sue Johnson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Linda Woodings - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning
Matt Gregory - Growth Point Planning and Planning Policy Manager
Mark Lowe - Head of Regeneration and Housing Delivery
Zena West - Senior Governance Officer
James Lavender - Governance Officer

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Nicola Heaton – Work commitments.
Councillor Sue Johnson – Council business.

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

58 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan's apologies being recorded.

59 DISCUSSION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND PLANNING

Councillor Linda Woodings, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning delivered a presentation on the quarterly housing report, highlighting the following:

- (a) as part of the Council Plan there are two major aims for the Portfolio. The first is to ensure that no statutorily homeless family would be staying in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in Nottingham by 31 December 2018. This target was achieved ahead of schedule by 24 December 2018. Fifty houses have been bought by the Council as temporary accommodation with fifty more in the pipeline;
- (b) the second aim for the Portfolio from the Council Plan is to build 2,500 new homes which are affordable for Nottingham residents to buy or rent. Over 2,000 homes have been built so far, with over 500 more planned. Affordability is based on the average incomes of Nottingham citizens;
- (c) the new homes are being built based on needs, such as locality, student accommodation, sheltered accommodation, housing for those with specific needs, such as for people with disabilities, small and large families, and privately rented flats;
- (d) there has been a huge increase in the number of rough sleepers in the city. With a successful bid for national government money, Nottingham City Council has been able to buy accommodation for use as hostels for homeless people;
- (e) Nottingham City Council has assisted eleven homeless people with complex needs in getting accommodation suited to their needs;
- (f) the Portfolio Holder has met with local Housing Associations, such as Stonewater and Nottingham Community Housing Association, to discuss how they can work together to provide affordable housing to Nottingham residents;
- (g) with regards to student accommodation within the city, both universities have indicated plans to expand, but if the number of students falls below the demand for accommodation, vacant student accommodation may be released to the Council to provide for residents and to start charging Council Tax for that accommodation.

RESOLVED to thank Councillor Woodings for the information provided.

60 HOUSE BUILDING

Mark Lowe, Head of Regeneration and Housing Delivery at Nottingham City Council, introduced a report on the Council's House Building Programme, which noted;

- (a) the Council's Housing Strategy 2018-21, which was agreed June 2018, sets out a vision for all Nottingham citizens to have access to good quality accommodation;
- (b) the strategy follows the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, which aims to build 300,000 homes in England per year by the mid-2020s. In Nottingham, 6,020 new homes were delivered from 2011 to 2018, leaving 11,130 to be delivered from 2018 to 2028, which is approximately 1,391 per year;

- (c) part two of the plan involves providing family housing and protecting family homes from conversion to other uses, encouraging self and custom build housing, building appropriate student accommodation, providing a strong policy framework for Houses in Multiple Occupation, and providing homes to meet the needs of older or disabled citizens;
- (d) with the growth of Purpose Built Student Accommodation, there was a decrease in the number of students living in traditional family housing in recent years, but there has been a slight increase this year as new developments cannot keep up with demand;
- (e) as part of the Council House Building Programme, 523 new units have been completed, 44 are currently being built, and 72 are in the pipeline, giving a total of 639. The total comprises 356 family houses, 113 bungalows, 134 independent living scheme flats for older people and 36 general purpose flats;
- (f) in addition to new build provision, there is an ongoing acquisitions programme of second hand housing stock which is being undertaken as a quick and value for money way of replenishing Council housing stock. The abolition of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap means that Nottingham City Council can continue to provide Council Housing;
- (g) the Council Plan target for building '2,500 homes that Nottingham people can afford to rent or buy between 2015-2019' is on course with 2,250 due to be completed by May 2019 and a further 558 in the pipeline;
- (h) work has been taking place with private and public sector providers, such as Blueprint and Nottingham City Homes to build housing in areas such as Trent Basin, Trent Lane, and the Park Yacht Club. The purpose of providing this is to keep young couples and families in the city rather than having them move to the suburbs. Likewise, the Council are working with registered housing providers such as Nottingham Community Housing Association to build houses on council land at College Way, Bilborough;
- (i) land and properties owned by the Council which are surplus assets are being sold to private developers to build new housing units on, but they come with a specific clause which prevents land being brought and then 'banked' (kept undeveloped for a long period);
- (j) private development partners have been procured to develop sites such as the Stonebridge Estate in St Anns; Arkwright Walk in the Meadows; and Kingsthorpe in St Anns. This allows the Council to have control, over and above the usual planning control mechanisms, to request specific house sizes or certain benefits to the wider community;
- (k) purpose-built Private Rented Sector (PRS) housing is being created for sites such as Arkwright's Walk and Green Lane, Clifton;
- (l) potential sites for development have been identified in the Island Site and the Southern Gateway in the City;

- (m) specialist housing has been provided with Independent Living and Extra Care needs in mind for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities;
- (n) the challenges facing the development of housing in Nottingham include the decontamination of brownfield land and the costs incurred; land owners keeping their land un-developed in the hope of selling it for a higher price in future; contamination of land, and flood risks. There is a concern that much of the funding from Homes England may be earmarked for the south east, as well as funding and investment issues as a result of the ongoing uncertainty of Britain leaving the EU.

The Committee considered the following points in discussions about the report;

- (a) Nottingham City Council and housing partners should look for funding opportunities to help prepare brownfield sites for construction, such as decontamination funding from Homes England;
- (b) monitoring of unused land in the city and connecting land owners with interested buyers and housing providers who want to build accommodation can be way to encourage further housing development. Land can be purchased through Compulsory Purchase Orders, but the Council would need to have firm business cases in order to do this;
- (c) clauses can be put into contracts for purchasing land from the Council that if it is not developed or used for a purpose of benefit to the community within a certain timeframe, the Council can buy the land back. This prevents land banking by developers;
- (d) it may be possible for the Council to work with smaller housing developers and individual builders to encourage smaller developments and help to build new homes. A series of smaller developers are more likely to meet housing demand than relying on larger developers, so support and encouragement should be provided to smaller developers where possible;
- (e) when new Council Housing schemes are planned, demand is analysed for housing type and size, based upon the Council House waiting list for the area. The average number of bedrooms for the houses being built as part of the Council's House Building Programme is two or three bedrooms;
- (f) there has been a demographic shift of people moving to cities from the countryside, where amenities may have been cut or scaled back. This could increase demand for housing in Nottingham;
- (g) further considerations when completing the Council's House Building Programme include building Homes for Life (houses which can meet the needs of home owners as they grow older), and making sure new homes are environmentally friendly and energy efficient in order to meet the City's target of being carbon neutral by 2028. Stronger requirements from central Government on ensuring new homes are eco-friendly would be very useful in achieving this aim. Reductions in council funding is a major concern for house building in Nottingham and many councils across the country.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) consider how the Council can support and encourage smaller builders and housing developers;**
- (2) thank the Head of Regeneration and Housing Delivery for the information provided, and to note the contents.**

61 PROPERTY ASSET REGISTER - CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED to note the contents of the written report.

62 WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Zena West, Senior Governance Officer, presented a number of items suitable for consideration during the 2019/20 municipal year at Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including:

- the Citizen Satisfaction Survey;
- the Colleague Satisfaction Survey;
- homelessness;
- rough Sleeper deaths;
- review of Selective Licensing;
- Nottingham's economy building.

Suggestions from Committee members included:

- knife crime;
- customer services / complaints / Have Your Say;
- review of the implantation of the Workplace Parking Levy.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) consider the following items at future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**
 - **knife crime (at the June or July 2019 meetings)**
 - **the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, the Colleague Satisfaction Survey, Customer Services, an update from the Portfolio Holder with a remit covering customer services (at the June of July 2019 meeting)**
 - **review of the implementation of the Workplace Parking Levy, review of Selective Licensing, homelessness, rough sleeper deaths, Nottingham's economy building (to be scheduled);**
- (2) thank Councillor Brian Parbutt for his service as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a number of years.**