



**CABINET**

**17:30 to 19:45**

**13 December 2017**

Present: Councillors Waters (chair), Harris (vice chair), Davis, Herries, Kendrick, Maguire, Packer and Stonard

Also present: Councillors Schmierer and Wright

**1. Declarations of interest**

Councillor Stonard declared an 'other' interest in items 11 and \*13, (below), 'Norwich Regeneration Ltd (NRL) business plans 2017-18', as he was the chair of Norwich Regeneration Company Ltd.

Councillor Kendrick declared an 'other' interest in item 11 and \*13, (below), 'Norwich Regeneration Ltd (NRL) business plans 2017-18', as he was a director of Norwich Regeneration Company Ltd.

**2. Public questions/petitions**

No petitions were received. There were two public questions on the rough sleeping strategy item which had been received after the constitutional deadline by the director of business services. The chair assured those members of the public who were attending the meeting for that item that whilst the questions would not be read out responses to them were incorporated within the portfolio holder's introduction to the item.

**3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2017.

**4. Norwich Rough Sleeping Strategy**

The chair moved the item forward on the agenda as members of the public were attending particularly for this item.

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment, presented the report.

He emphasised that rough sleeping was a complex issue and required a partnership response which the strategy recognised.

The figure used in the report for the numbers sleeping rough in Norwich was from one night in the year when a count took place. The count itself was a good example of partnership working with a cross section of organisations taking part including St. Martin's housing trust, the Salvation Army and three city council cabinet members. Thirty seemed a low number but this was because those seen on the streets were not necessarily rough sleeping. It also included the lonely and socially isolated who came into the city for food and company.

Most rough sleepers accessed accommodation via the hostel system, where support packages were put in place and there was a move on agreement with the council's housing options team. However, the demands on the hostel system were growing. Cuts to supported housing beds and supporting lodgings affected provision and cuts to floating support made it more challenging to move individuals on to permanent accommodation.

There were increases in people leaving prison with no accommodation and people travelling in to the city to beg. This aggregation of circumstances all compounded the issue. The strategy was developed with these issues in mind. It included a consultation with current and former rough sleepers, partners and was open to all stakeholders.

Councillor Harris as deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing addressed the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act which would be implemented in 2018. She emphasised that the council's home options team already met many of the requirements of the act. There were new legal duties required from councils within the act; everyone regardless of their priority need was to be provided with meaningful help if homeless. The definition of a homeless household was to be amended which would certainly lead to an increase in numbers asking for help from the council and numbers requiring temporary accommodation. The options for temporary accommodation were being worked on.

The council recognised that it could not work in isolation and that partnership working was valuable. However, there were factors outside the council's control such as the systematic reduction in funding by the current government.

The chair advised that he would invite Derek Player, General Manager, St. Martin's Housing Trust and Superintendent Dave Marshall of Norfolk Police to address the meeting. He invited members of the public who attended for this item to nominate a representative to make comment on the strategy.

In response to a question from Councillor Schmierer, the housing strategy officer said that the main direct access hostel in the city accommodated 220 people a year. He said the system in terms of emergency accommodation was at peak demand. During the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) period the council made extra efforts to speak to individuals who were rough sleeping to ensure they would be housed during those periods of severe weather.

Councillor Wright commented that the strategy was a step forward given the constraints on the council. He recognised that the introduction of the Homeless Reduction legislation would be challenging but consider it would be of benefit. In his role as chair of scrutiny he thanked St. Martin's for their support when they looked at

a rough sleeping item previously and suggested it was possible the strategy could return to scrutiny committee in the future.

Derek Player, General Manager of St. Martin's Housing Trust, thanked officers for listening and considering the views of hostel providers and said the strategy showed no lack of ambition or commitment and provided a framework for the future. He said it was a very tough time for single homeless people. Last year at Bishopbridge House they increased their provision to provide an extra seven bed spaces. They accommodated 37 individuals on any one night and were the largest direct access hostel in Eastern England.

He said the key was to keep pathways open, there had to be through put from supported temporary accommodation into permanent and as such they were reliant on other providers. They didn't want to see people back around and to prevent this appropriate support had to be available. Otherwise there were no beds for those that were newly homeless.

The head of neighbourhoods said much work had been completed in the last few months to understand the rough sleeping community. The council had worked with other statutory partners to try and ensure services were available.

Superintendent Dave Marshall said homelessness itself was not a policing issue; it was not an offence to be homeless. He recognised homelessness was an increasing issue and said the figures in the report reassembled the reality of the situation. He said the strategy hoped to address issues of homelessness which were multi-faceted. He welcomed the framework from a policing perspective and the tangible outcomes it hoped to deliver.

The chair asked if a member of the public would like to come forward as a voice for those who had attended for the item. Jan McLachlan, Norwich People's Assembly spoke, she said that there was a tendency to diminish the contribution of those working with the homeless such as those feeding people on the Haymarket. She said they should have been included in the consultation. She noted that Liverpool council had that day provided an empty building for homeless people to use and suggested the council could do the same. She said the figures in the strategy were inaccurate, and that there had been a huge uplift in homelessness across the country. The two points which she wished to highlight were that the groups which feed people should be consulted as they worked directly with the homeless and that emergency accommodation in the form of an empty building should be provided.

The chair suspended the meeting due to disruption from the public gallery.

After a ten minute break the meeting resumed.

The chair said it was for cabinet to vote on whether to approve the strategy and he thanked all partners and those who had been consulted including homeless people themselves for their contributions. He stated if approved the strategy would be monitored carefully to ensure effective implementation.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Norwich Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017- 22: breaking the cycle of homelessness, and its action plan.

## **5. Fit for the Future Update**

Councillor Waters, leader, presented the report. He said that whilst local authorities faced significant financial challenges the developing strategy sought to look forward rather than be on the defensive.

The chief executive said the report had to be read in conjunction with the item on the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This report set the context for the financial challenges ahead.

In response to a question from Councillor Schmierer, the leader confirmed that four elected member consultation groups would be held in the new year to consider all councillor views on the future of Norwich.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) continue with the approach previously agreed to balance future budgets within the MTFS; and
- (2) endorse the progress made to date on developing a new vision, corporate plan and Blueprint.

## **6. Emerging 2018/19 Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and HRA Business Plan**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, presented the report.

The chief finance officer, emphasised that the figures for years 3, 4, and 5 of the MTFS were preliminary as the council was awaiting confirmation on government funding.

In response to a question from Councillor Schmierer, the chief finance officer highlighted the figures for setting a balanced budget.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) approve the direction of travel currently being taken to establish robust and balanced budget proposals for the General Fund revenue budget and the MTFS including endorsing:
  - a) The principle that any general fund underspends from 2017/18 are considered for transfer to the earmarked spend to save reserve to support the delivery of the ongoing transformation programme.
  - b) The principle of creating earmarked reserves in relation to commercial property, loan interest income from Norwich Regeneration Limited, and one-off business rates growth income.
  - c) An increased drawdown of £107k from general fund reserves to balance the 2018/19 budget (subject to final budget estimates).
- (2) approve the proposed approach to extend the HRA Business Plan to 60 rather than the current 30 years.

- (3) approve the proposed approach to the setting of the General Fund capital programme, namely:
  - a) Establishing a capital programme that is affordable (looking over the 5 year MTFS planning horizon and the resources available) and achievable (i.e. better able to be physically delivered at the year-end).
  - b) That any new capital project of significant size, not included in the capital programme proposed to council in February 2018 for approval, is subject to a full business case review and subsequent approval by council within the relevant financial year.

## **7. Greater Norwich Local Plan**

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, presented the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Schmierer, the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth stated that Norwich had distinct needs and that this needed to be maintained and recognised in the plan. Norwich was an economic dynamo for wider area and a strong city economy made rural communities viable.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) approve the 'Greater Norwich Local Plan Regulation 18 Growth Options' document (attached as appendix 1) for public consultation; and
- (2) delegate authority to the director of regeneration and development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for sustainable and inclusive growth to sign off the Site Proposals and other supporting documents for publication in advance of public consultation.

## **8. Quarter 2 performance report**

Councillor Waters, leader, presented the report. He referred to a reduction in some performance figures and explained that these were due to changing methodology. The strategy manager added that new methodology contacted a broader resident base and therefore gave a more accurate picture.

In response to questions from Councillor Schmierer, the strategy manager said that target VFM8 was set based on old methodology and future data would be needed to set the target. On target SCL13% there was a data collection issue and more work was to be undertaken on understanding what the barriers to cycling were. There was evidence to show where investment had been made, as with the pedal ways, cycling had increased.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) consider progress against the corporate plan priorities; and,
- (2) suggest future actions and / or reports to address any areas of concern.

## **9. Scrutiny Committee Recommendations**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources, introduced the report and handed over to Councillor Wright as chair of scrutiny to present it.

Councillor Wright said he was pleased the report had come to cabinet and highlighted the varied work programme the scrutiny committee had covered. He emphasised one particular recommendation on city accessibility and the introduction of a city charter.

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, said officers would need to look at work around a city charter and come back with a recommendation for cabinet.

**RESOLVED** to ask officers to consider a city access charter and work with the portfolio holder for sustainable and inclusive growth to come back to cabinet with an appropriate recommendation.

## **10. Procurement of a housing structural repairs contract – Key decision**

Councillor Harris, cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the director of neighbourhoods, in consultation with the deputy leader and social housing portfolio holder, to award a contract to the best value supplier for structural repairs once a detailed evaluation is completed.

## **11. Norwich Regeneration Ltd and HCA - business plans 2017-18**

(Councillor Stonard and Councillor Kendrick had declared an 'other' interest in this item.)

Councillor Harris, cabinet member for social housing presented the report. It was noted the reported required a correction on page 323 as Councillor Kendrick and not Councillor Bremner sat on the strategic board.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Approve the Norwich Regeneration Ltd business plan including the new developments at 10-14 Ber Street, Three Score phase 3 and Hurricane Way.
- (2) Approve the business plan for 2017-18 for the Norwich and Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) strategic partnership.
- (3) Agree to dispose of the 10-14 Ber Street site and the land for Three Score phase 3 to NRL in exchange for an equity investment in NRL - as set out in paragraph 2 of the confidential appendix to this report.

- (4) Recommend to council the approval of the inclusion of the amounts to be lent to NRL in the council's capital programme - as set out in the report.
- (5) Recommend to council the approval of the inclusion of the costs of the HRA buying the social housing at 10-14 Ber Street and Three Score Phase 3 in the council's capital programme - as set out in the report.

## **12. Exclusion of the public.**

**RESOLVED** to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of items \*13 to \*16 (below) on the grounds contained in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

### **\*13. Norwich Regeneration Ltd and HCA - business plans 2017-18**

(Councillor Stonard and Councillor Kendrick had declared an 'other' interest in this item.)

Councillor Harris, cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations as detailed in the report.

### **\*14. Managing assets (housing) – Key decision (Paragraph 3)**

Councillor Harris, cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to approve the:

- (1) disposal of the freehold interest in the asset on the open market; and
- (2) capital receipt from the disposal to be reinvested in the housing capital program for improving, repairing and maintaining our housing stock or for enabling new affordable housing.

### **\*15. Managing assets (general fund) – Key decision (Paragraph 3)**

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to approve the disposal of the assets from the General Fund as described in this report.

(The chair referred to the supplementary agenda which had been circulated to members and published on the website, containing an urgent item).

### **\*16. Award of a contract for housing repairs – Key decision (Paragraph 3)**

Councillor Harris, cabinet member for social housing presented the report.

**RESOLVED** to approve the award of the contract as described in the report.

CHAIR