



Cabinet

16:30 to 17:30

29 July 2020

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

Also present: Councillor Bogelein

1. Public Questions/Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020.

4. City centre public space plan

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth presented the report. The plan continued the council's ambition to provide good quality public space. The council recognised the impact of public spaces on the physical and mental health of residents, workers, and visitors to Norwich. Norwich had public spaces which people wanted to return to, it was a destination city and prior to the pandemic bucked the national trend achieving increased city centre footfall. Good quality public spaces were at the foundation of Norwich's success. The Norwich identity was a unique blend of culture, heritage, independent shops and a vibrant arts scene.

The plan drew together different strands of ongoing work, the recovery of the city from Covid 19, the 2040 Vision work, the Towns Fund, Transforming Cities work and the New Anglia LEP strategy.

Councillor Bogelein noted that it was a timely and welcome plan which was helpful to elected members and stakeholders. She questioned if it could be extended to incorporate the theme of green infrastructure. The director of place said the council's approach to green infrastructure assets in relation to open spaces was to look wider than the city centre as the city was fortunate to include many parks, Mousehold Heath and the River Valley.

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth said it was intended to be implicit in the document and environmental considerations permeated every strategy and piece of work the council conducted.

RESOLVED to approve the city centre public space plan.

5. Grant of Right to Buy one for one receipts

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing presented the report. The council was ambitious to build social housing and to support partners where possible to do so. The report detailed two grants to registered provider partners to deliver much needed affordable housing units in the city. The grant to Broadland Housing Association would enable the development of 10 affordable housing units to provide accommodation to offenders on release from prison. This was an excellent example of partnership working, the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had granted funds to provide wrap around support to individuals on release. This would be provided by St Martins Housing Trust and individuals would be able to access wider support in the community too. The second grant was to the YMCA and would fund the provision of two additional direct access crash beds for young people.

In response to a question the housing partnerships officer said the location of the Broadland units would be pepper potted across the city.

RESOLVED to approve:

- 1) the award of retained right to buy one for one replacement receipts to Broadland Housing Association to support the development of 10 affordable dwellings as described in the report and the exempt appendix; and
- 2) the award of retained right to buy one for one replacement receipts and S106 commuted sums held for affordable housing to YMCA to support the provision of 2 affordable dwellings as described in the report and the exempt appendix.

6. Norwich Town Deal Bid

Councillor Waters, leader of the council presented the report. In November 2019 Norwich was invited to apply with 101 other towns for a share of a £25m funding pot. Norwich was not a town but the council was happy to accept the designation in order to bid. The geographical area representing Norwich for the purpose of the bid was the built up area of Norwich as designated by the Office for National Statistics. A Towns Deal Board had been established and had met on a number of occasions since last November.

The fund supported proposals to drive economic regeneration under three objectives; urban regeneration, planning and land use; skills and enterprise infrastructure; and connectivity. The Towns Deal Board would oversee the delivery of the programme if the bid was successful. Projects had been identified following the 2040 Vision theme as detailed in the report and the initiative would be embedded in the broader council recovery plan.

The director of place said that the 2040 Vision work had agreed set objectives and priorities and provided a mechanism for engagement with a wider range of

stakeholders which had enabled the council to respond at pace to the bid and submit its Town Investment Plan application for funding within the first tranche. The two adjoining councils, South Norfolk District Council and Broadland District Council, had provided letters of support in relation to the submitted Plan and some amendments had been made to recognise the relationship of the councils within the Greater Norwich Growth Board. There was an additional advantage to being in the first tranche of applications, a further £100m had been made available by government to accelerate delivery in relation to Town Investment Plans. It was advantageous to submit a bid at the same time which would identify what could be delivered this calendar year to kick start recovery and build momentum.

In response to a question the economic development manager said the Towns Deal Board would remain in place to oversee delivery of the plan, the principles and objectives of the good economics commission were incorporated within the plan. The leader said that it aimed to generate new employment opportunities focused on tackling social mobility and deprivation.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the director of place and the leader of the council to submit the Town Investment Plan by 31 July 2020.

7. Future Housing Commissioning

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth introduced the report. The council's housing stock had diminished due to right to buy which provided insufficient funds to replace the sold stock. Home ownership was beyond the means of many individuals and housing demand historically outstripped supply. The council sought to provide more housing and to build communities but it could not do this work alone and would work with partners. The report aimed to identify a pipeline of sites which could be delivered and three had been identified as ready to go. This work would provide homes, build communities and regenerate old sites.

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing said social housing was a key priority and the council's housing commission board had identified three sites as ready to go, this represented approximately 260 homes delivered over three years. There were other opportunities to develop housing such as land purchase, looking at other smaller council owned sites and she highlighted the success achieved developing units on small disused garage sites. The work would balance the highest environmental standards achievable against the number of units able to be delivered. It was linked to the wider Covid 19 recovery plan and would boost the local economy providing employment opportunities and spend locally.

In response to a question, the interim housing development manager said that whilst the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a need for three bedroom housing, this was a false picture and an analysis of the council's housing waiting list highlighted a demand for smaller two bedroom units. He noted that factors such as the spare room subsidy which penalised those on housing benefit with a spare bedroom resulted in an increased demand for smaller units.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the appraisal for the delivery options and agree next steps:

- a) Further work to model the financial capacity of the HRA to deliver an on-going pipeline of sites; and
 - b) To procure specialist advice to assist determination of preferred delivery option and provision of tax and legal advice as needed.
- 2) Approve the outline business cases, programmes and funding required for 2020/21 for progression of three sites including:
- a) Agreeing a virement of opportunities fund for design on Three Score phase 3 and Argyle St as detailed in the exempt appendix to this report. A virement for Mile Cross design costs were approved by cabinet in June;
 - b) Recommending to Council to agree capital expenditure of £2.74m on the former Mile Cross depot and also an increase in the budget of £0.18m for design fees in order to utilise funding from business rates pooling as detailed in the exempt appendix to this report.
- 3) Appropriate the land at Three Score phase 3 from the General Fund to the HRA under the Housing Act 1985, part ii, Section 19 (1) for the purposes of providing social housing, subject to a full valuation of the land.
- 4) To approve that rents for properties developed to enhanced environmental standards are set at 5% above formula rent to assist with the additional costs of developing such properties and reflecting the savings for tenants in energy bills.
- 5) Approve the procurement of a registered provider partner to develop additional affordable homes on city council sites for a 5-year period. The first tranche of sites is expected to deliver approx. 25 homes.

CHAIR