

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

25TH OCTOBER 2023

PRESENT:- Councillors Brett Cooper (Chair), Jack Lenox (Vice-Chair), Martin Gawith, Chris Hanna, Abi Mills and Sue Penney

Also in Attendance:-

Councillor Caroline Jackson – Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Housing and Homelessness

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Cassidy	Chief Officer - Planning and Climate Change
Stephen Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer
Jenny Kay	Civic & Ceremonial Democratic Support Officer

24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2023 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

25 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR

There were no Items of Urgent Business to consider.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

27 UPDATE ON LGA PEER CHALLENGE REVIEW REGARDING PLANNING

The Chair welcomed the Chief Officer – Planning and Climate Change to the meeting.

The Committee was provided with the second quarterly update on the Peer Challenge Review of Planning that had been undertaken by the Local Government Association the previous year. The report contained a Red, Amber and Green system to highlight the progress that has been made to date.

It was reported that work was progressing well with most work streams being on target with only one work stream remaining red as work had not commenced yet.

Members went on to ask a number of questions relating to enforcement, communication with the local community and developer engagement.

The Committee agreed to consider the next update at its January meeting.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the Chief Officer – Planning and Climate Change be thanked for his attendance at the meeting.
- (2) That the update be noted.
- (3) That the Committee receive the next quarterly update at its January meeting.

28 DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Housing and Homelessness to the meeting.

Members of the Committee were given an overview of the Housing and Homelessness portfolio which included the Council's housing stock, major refurbishments, private rented housing, affordable housing, the provision of affordable housing within the Local Plan, Homelessness and the Housing Task Force.

It was reported that Cabinet had just approved the Homelessness Strategy for the district which had been circulated to the Committee along with the Housing Strategy. It was noted that the Housing Strategy was due to be updated.

Members were advised that there had been an increase in Homelessness due to Section 21 evictions, lack of rented properties and also the rising rent costs. The Council had introduced floating support and now had 12 bed places available and worked with other agencies to "Come off the Street, Stay off the Street."

The Committee had also received a briefing note of changes in social housing regulation with the recent passing of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act (July 2023) in light of the Grenfell fire tragedy in 2017.

It was reported that the Skerton High School development was proceeding which would see 130 new properties added to the Council's housing stock. The ongoing pressure on the Council to increase the level of Council housing stock which was impacted by the Right to Buy scheme and increasing demand for social housing, was highlighted.

An update on Mainway was provided as well as the Mellishaw site improvements and the Co-op building on Regent Road.

The Committee went on to discuss the current situation with asylum seekers in the district, the Community Safety Team and how to get the best out of the Mainway re-development.

Resolved :-

That the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Housing and Homelessness be thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

29 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Committee considered the updated Work Programme and a referral from Council regarding Fair Tax.

It was agreed, in accordance with Rule 4 of Overview and Scrutiny procedures as set out in the Council's Constitution, to request the Chief Executive for resources to progress work on the referral from Council regarding Fair Tax.

Resolved :-

- (1) That the updated Work Programme be noted.
- (2) That in accordance with Rule 4 of Overview and Scrutiny procedures as set out in the Council's Constitution, the Committee requests the Chief Executive for resources to progress work on Fair Tax.

30 FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The most recent Forthcoming Key Decisions were noted.

With regard to an earlier decision on the Customer Service Contact Centre Software that had been renewed, it was agreed to request a briefing note on how maintaining the current system would impact on the new Visitor Information system that was being established and the case management system for Members.

Resolved :-

That a briefing note on the impact of the renewal of the current Customer Service Contact Centre Software would have on the new Visitor Information system that was being established and the case management system for Members be requested.

Chair

(The meeting ended at 7.40 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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