

Decisions of the Housing and Growth Committee

16 November 2022

Members Present:-

Councillor Ross Houston (Chair)
Councillor Anne Clarke (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Richard Cornelius
Councillor Paul Edwards
Councillor Humayune Khalick
Councillor Kath McGuirk

Councillor Alex Prager
Councillor Ella Rose
Councillor Daniel Thomas
Councillor Sarah Wardle

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Zahra Beg

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Growth Committee held on 25 October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

2. Absence of Members

Apologies were received from Councillor Z Beg.

3. Declarations of Members Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor A Clarke declared an interest in relation to item 12 of the Agenda, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, by virtue of being a Member of the Greater London Authority.

4. Report of the Monitoring Officer (if any)

There was none.

5. Public Questions and Comments (if any)

The Chair reported that a series of questions had been received after the constitutional deadline had passed. These related primarily to the Brent Cross Update item and a written response had been provided.

6. Members' Items (if any)

There were none.

7. Brent Cross Update

The Chair introduced the report and asked for questions.

The Committee queried whether the allocations scheme for Whitefield Estate was on track. Officers confirmed that they were, with completion due around April 2023.

It was reported that a number of the public questions which had been received were related to planning and consultation and Members queried how issues such as access and the equalities impact would be assessed. The Officers confirmed that this would be dealt with through the Statement of Community Involvement which would form part of the formal planning application process.

With regards to the accessibility of the open space and the potential marked pitches Officers gave clarification that although some might be marked out, they would be open access for general use. This was separate from the bookable space provision.

Members of the Committee recognised the close links with Middlesex University and past partnership work and questioned the impact on this on the recent announcement of a partnership with Sheffield Hallam University at Brent Cross. Officers confirmed that they had kept Middlesex University engaged throughout the process. The catchments of the two universities were different and Middlesex University had been supportive.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee:

- 1. Noted the progress across the Brent Cross programme as detailed in the report; notably on the station works programme and the legal agreements required for the commencement of 5 development plots within the first phase of Brent Cross Town.**
- 2. Approved that home loss and disturbance payments for secure tenants of the Whitefield Estate Part 1 are to be administered by Barnet Homes for 29 properties as set out in paragraph 1.41 - 1.42 of the report.**
- 3. Delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive the authority to extend engagement of the Mace project management team to maintain the Brent Cross West programme through to Station opening, in line with the councils procurement rules as set out in paragraph 1.11 of this report.**

8. Annual Housing and Growth Committee Business Planning 2023-27

The Chair introduced the Business Planning item which would feed into the Council budget setting process. It covered a number of areas and there was recognition of the inflationary pressures, cost-of-living crises and uncertainty around Government grant income. This would go on to the Policy and Resources Committee before consideration and recommendation to Full Council.

A vote on the recommendations in the report was held.

6 votes for.

4 votes in abstention.

RESOLVED that the Housing and Growth Committee:

- 1. Considered and approved the savings and note the pressures proposals that relate to the committee as set out in Appendix A after having considered the**

initial equalities impacts and refer these recommendations on to Policy and Resources Committee.

- 2. Approved the proposed fees and charges for Housing Revenue Account Leaseholder Charges for 2023/24 set out in Appendix B that will be included in the budget proposals submitted to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and recommendation to Full Council.**
- 3. Delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of Housing and Growth Committee to make any amendments to the savings detailed in Appendix A before they are recommended to Policy and Resource Committee to form part of the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

9. Housing & Growth Forecast Financial Outturn at Month 6 (September 2022)

The Chair introduced the item and noted in particular the concerns around the viability of the Open Door Homes programme due to increased interest rates. The Barnet Group and the Council were working through potential mitigation solutions. Other areas, such as the Brent Cross programme might also be impacted.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee notes:

- 1. The current forecast financial outturn for 2022-23.**
- 2. The projected use of reserves.**

10. Fire Safety Update

The Chair introduced the item noting that this was an area where legislative changes were having an impact and that systems would need to be updated. There would need to be a further report detailing how the Council will address this, for example with the appointment of Accountable Person and Responsible Person roles outlined in the Building Safety Act.

Members of the Committee queried whether the Chair was satisfied with the speed of activity both by Barnet Council and Registered Providers. The Chair responded that whilst the council was satisfied with progress, they would not be fully satisfied until all of the issues had been addressed. The Council needed to continue to press for changes and keep the pressure on the private rented sector. Officers confirmed that resources had increased and where necessary taking enforcement action where there was no progress.

Questions were raised as to the impact on insulation due to the removal of cladding where people had not been decanted. Officers responded that they were working with residents and had put mitigations in place to reduce condensation and provide additional support.

In light of the recent national reports about the health impact of mould Members queried whether there were any known issues. Officers responded that the stock acquisitions were always checked and they undertook surveys with the existing stock. Where an issue was identified they looked to get a repairs team in and had a number of processes but it was an ongoing piece of work.

There was a general desire from the Committee to invite Registered Providers to the meeting to provide feedback but recognition that it would not be possible to require their attendance. Members noted that the properties in question housed public workers from the

NHS, police service, Council and others who contributed to society and that the landlords should be held to account.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee note the Fire Safety Update.

11. Quarter 2, 2022/23 performance report for Re and The Barnet Group services

The Chair introduced the report noting that the backlog caused by COVID-19 was being tackled and that the number of households in temporary accommodation had reduced although the demand for properties still outstripped supply.

There were no questions from the Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee noted the Quarter 2 (Q2) 2022/23 performance for the contracted services delivered by Regional Enterprise (Capita) and Barnet Homes (The Barnet Group) that fell under the remit of the Committee.

12. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

The Chair introduced the report and highlighted that the time period for the use of right to buy receipts had been increased. The Chair noted that the Council had an investment programme and continued to use this on new properties as well as works to improve the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) standard of properties. There were a number of unknowns awaited due to proposed rent caps and due to other changes in the economy.

Councillor A Clarke declared a non-pecuniary interest due to being a member of the Greater London Authority which was referenced in the report.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee approved the updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan as attached in Appendix 1 of the report.

13. Full Business Cases for GLA 'Building Council Homes for Londoners' funded housing schemes

The Chair introduced the report for the three schemes which were at the final stages. The permissions the recommendations granted would allow the funding to be accessed and works started.

It was noted that the old ward boundaries had been used in the report but this did not have a material impact.

Members of the Committee noted that with some of the applications concerns had been raised by neighbouring residents. For example, access to the sites which had Highways implications. Officers confirmed that they had met with some of the potential contractors to look at how concerns could be mitigated. The Chair and Vice-Chair asked Officers to contact them if they needed support lobbying on access issues with the Greater London Authority.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee:

1. **Noted and approved the Full Business Case for the Broadfields HA8 (GLA87), project.**
2. **Delegated authority to the Director of Growth to agree the appointment of the preferred contractor at Broadfields once they are identified. This is dependent on the final contract value sitting within the approved budget and satisfactory financial due diligence checks being undertaken.**
3. **Noted and approved the Full Business Case for the Coppetts Road, N10 (GLA 87)project.**
4. **Delegated authority to the Director of Growth to agree the appointment of the preferred contractor at Coppetts Road once they are identified. This is dependent on the final contract value sitting within the approved budget and satisfactory financial due diligence checks being undertaken.**
5. **Noted and approved the Full Business Case for The Grange, N2 (HRA 250) project.**
6. **Delegated authority to the Director of Growth to agree the appointment of the preferred contractor at The Grange once they are identified. This is dependent on the final contract value sitting within the approved budget and satisfactory financial due diligence checks being undertaken.**

14. Large Panel System Block Analysis Strategic Outline Case

The Chair introduced the report noting that there were further details held in the Part 2, Exempt Report.

Members queried whether all options were being considered. The Chair responded that the report would need to look at all options and report back to Councillors for a decision, nothing had been ruled out.

A Member of the Committee questioned whether work and inspections had continued on properties which had “zig zag staircases”. Officers confirmed that in some cases these areas had been sealed off to prevent inappropriate use for storage and that works had been undertaken at some of them separately.

The Housing and Growth Committee agreed to take additional questions during the exempt session.

During the exempt session the Housing and Growth Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the agenda papers.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee:

- 1) **Noted the issues with the Large Panel System blocks.**
- 2) **Approved the options appraisal and resident engagement strategy.**
- 3) **Noted that the options appraisals work is budgeted for and included in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.**

15. Outline Business Case for the Regeneration of Grahame Park North East

The Chair introduced the item and noted that the project had been split in to two stages and that this was a positive application in general. It was supporting regeneration which would

improve things for the existing residents. The Housing and Growth Committee were supportive of the application.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee:

1. **Noted and approved the Outline Business Case, including the progression of the design to planning submission stage for the land identified on the plan in appendix 3.**
2. **Noted that the budget was subject to approval by Policy and Resources Committee in December 2022.**
3. **Noted that the request for approval of the procurement and development delivery strategy would be presented to Housing and Growth Committee at a later date.**
4. **Noted that the Full Business Case would be presented to Housing and Growth Committee ahead of planning submission at a later date.**
5. **Delegated approval to the Director of Growth for the decant strategy including the offer to the leaseholders.**
6. **Delegated approval to the Director of Growth for the variation of the Principal Development Agreement with Choices for Grahame Park, to remove the area of land in Appendix 3 of the report.**
7. **Delegated to the Director of Growth the approval of the appropriation of the site, if required, from the Housing Revenue Account to Planning purposes.**

16. Committee Forward Work Programme

The Chair noted that the Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Strategy that had originally been scheduled for the January 2023 meeting had now been moved to March. This was to allow more time for consultation with Members before approval.

A Member of the Housing and Growth Committee requested a briefing on mould be brought to the January meeting. The Chair stated that he had discussed this prior to the meeting with colleagues and that it was agreed that this should happen. This should cover information from Barnet Homes and social housing providers to provide a headline summary on mould looking at the number of complaints and how they had been dealt with. The Committee agreed that this would be an area of interest.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Work Programme.

17. Any other Items that the Chair decides are urgent

There were none.

18. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

The Committee resolved – that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

19. EXEMPT: Brent Cross Update

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee noted the information contained in the Exempt report.

20. EXEMPT: Full Business Cases for GLA 'Building Council Homes for Londoners' funded housing schemes

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee agreed the recommendations that were contained in the Exempt report.

21. EXEMPT: Large Panel System Block Analysis Strategic Outline Case

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee agreed the recommendations that were contained in the Exempt report.

22. EXEMPT: Outline Business Case for the Regeneration of Grahame Park North East

RESOLVED unanimously that the Housing and Growth Committee agreed the recommendations that were contained in the Exempt report.

23. Any other exempt Items that the Chair decides are urgent

There were none.

The meeting finished at 8.12 pm