

# **REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

28 January 2019

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: Paddy Brown and Rob Cook

Also Present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 Councillor Tony Richardson was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Leisa Smith and Councillor Ann Marshall was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Jim Lindridge

Officers: Andy Carter, Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration  
Penny Thompson, Head of Service, Children's Hub and Partnerships  
Lynda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

#### **44. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jim Lindridge, Leisa Smith and Mike Young.

#### **45. Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **46. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2018**

Received

**47. Local Development Framework Authorities  
Monitoring Report 2017/18** *(Assistant Director (Economic  
Growth and Regeneration))*

**Type of decision**

Non-key

**Purpose of report**

To request that the Regeneration Services Committee endorse the 2017/18 Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

**Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The report provided background information to the production and purpose of the AMR which included progress made on the implementation of the policies in the 2006 Local Plan, the Local Development Scheme as well as details of how the Local Plan policies had, on the whole, been effective.

The Committee was provided with monitoring information in relation to housing and housing policies, economic activity, town centre, tourism and related policies, natural environment, waste, rural, conservation and related policies, transport, leisure routes and related policies including neighbourhood plans, community infrastructure levy and details of co-operation by the Local Planning Authority.

In the lengthy discussion that followed presentation of the report, officers responded to queries raised by Members in relation to aspects of the report. In relation to concerns expressed that housing development proposals for the Headland and Victoria Harbour had not been progressed, the Assistant Director reported on the options available to landowners and highlighted that the Council had no powers to enforce such developments.

A Member queried why the envisaged number of empty homes brought back into use had reduced. The Chair advised that this was as a result of Government funding restrictions as well as housing market factors. The Assistant Director added that a change in policy meant that the Council were able to purchase homes with a higher cost envelope than in the past as well as newly built homes.

Some concerns were expressed that the statistics provided in percentage terms in relation to unemployment figures could be misinterpreted. The Chair referred to discussions at the Finance and Policy Committee in relation to a new policy that had been introduced to support small retail businesses which would hopefully improve vacancy rates in the town. The

Chair was pleased to report the recent arrival of RML497 at the National Museum of the Royal Navy and the positive impact on tourism as a result. The Chair requested that thanks be conveyed, on behalf of the Committee, to the Economic Development and Regeneration Team for their hard work in supporting this development.

Officers were requested to explore the following queries raised and provide clarification following the meeting:-

- In relation to recycled or composted waste, why Hartlepool remained significantly below the set target.
- Whether any provision was in place to bring back into use burnt out and boarded up properties in the Dyke House area.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the 2017/18 Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR), attached at Appendix 1, be endorsed.
- (iii) That clarification, in response to the queries raised by Members, as set out above, be provided following the meeting.

## **48. Impact on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 on the Housing Advice Service** *(Assistant Director (Economic Growth and Regeneration))*

### **Type of decision**

For information

### **Purpose of report**

The report provided an update of the Homelessness Reduction Act (which was implemented on 3 April 2018) on the Housing Advice Service.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The report provided the background to the introduction of the Act and the additional duties placed on Local Authorities. The Act represented significant changes to homelessness legislation and the key measures were outlined in the report.

Details of the impact on the Housing Advice Service were provided, as set

out in the report. It was highlighted that the Act increased the opportunities available to the applicant to request a review of decisions made by the Council at various stages in the application process.

Whilst the number of customers approaching the service since April had remained consistent, the requirements introduced by the new Act had led to an increase in the length of time spent with each customer. The service had seen an increase in the complexity of cases, with substance misuse and mental health issues increasingly proving to be a significant proportion of customers. In terms of service priorities, it was the intention to work with the IT provider to create detailed reports to enable a better understanding of demand as well as outcomes of work. Members were referred to Appendix A which showed comparative data of homeless applications from 2015-2018.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which Members shared with the Committee examples of homelessness they had observed in various locations in the town. The Principal Housing Advice Officer advised that the team had responded to any reports of homelessness or rough sleepers who were encouraged to access support services. Whilst there were perceptions of homelessness in Hartlepool, it was noted that all individuals who had been seen by the Team to date were in fact not homeless but were begging for money on the streets as a means of income, the potential reasons for which were debated.

In response to concerns raised regarding support available for individuals who appeared to be sleeping in doorways, given the recent adverse weather conditions, the Committee was advised of the severe weather protocol and the statutory duty upon local authorities, if it was expected that the temperature would fall below freezing on three consecutive nights, to ensure anyone living on the streets were placed in temporary accommodation. It was highlighted that officers would implement the provision of temporary accommodation before that criteria was fulfilled.

In response to further issues raised by Members and information provided regarding rough sleeping, assurances were provided that plans were in place to undertake rough sleeping audit checks of all areas where reports had been received in the past, the outcome of which would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chair highlighted concerns in terms of the impact of the withdrawal of support from the choice based lettings (CBL) system from one of the largest social housing providers in the town (Thirteen Group), the implications of which were currently under review. Emphasis was placed upon the importance of assessing the outcome of this review which would form part of discussions of a future update report.

Clarification was provided in relation to the type of advice and assistance that was provided by the Housing Advice Service and the difficulties experienced by individuals in relation to universal credit.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the contents of the report and comments of Elected Members be noted.
- (ii) That the outcome of pending audit checks in relation to rough sleeping be included as part of a future update report to this Committee.

## **49. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 6 February 2019 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 pm.

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 4 FEBRUARY 2019**

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