

REGENERATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

13 NOVEMBER 2019

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

Present:

Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Jim Lindridge, Ann Marshall and Leisa Smith.

Also Present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4;
Councillor Bob Buchan as substitute for Councillor Tom Cassidy
Councillor Tony Richardson as substitute for Councillor Lee Cartwright.

K Glew and L McDonald, Thirteen Housing Group
Paul Hardman, ARC4

Officers: Denise McGuckin, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Andrew Carter, Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration
Tim Wynn, Strategic Asset Manager
Karen Kelly, Housing Strategy Team Leader
Amy Waller, Principal Housing Officer (Place)
Paul Simpson, Principal Property, Planning and Commercial Solicitor
Chris Parkin, Head of Finance, Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and
Community Based Services
Steve Hilton, Communications Team
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

21. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Lee Cartwright and Tom Cassidy.

22. Declarations of Interest

None.

23. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2019

Received.

24. Oxford Road Older Housing Area Study (*Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Non key decision.

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the Oxford Road/Cornwall Street regeneration feasibility study completed in August 2018. The report provided background to the purpose of the study and an overview of the options appraisal and feasibility study conducted and conclusions made.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration reported that on the 17th December 2018 the Committee approved the use of funds secured through the Homes England 2016/17 Estate Regeneration fund to appoint Lichfields and IDPartnerships Consultant firms to carry out the Oxford Road Older Housing Area Study. The study commenced in January 2019 and the final report was now submitted for the Committee's consideration.

The Assistant Director indicated that the report recommended that the Council identify the preferred long-term regeneration strategy for Oxford Road. Any preferred option would need to be supported by a range of short and medium term actions identified within the study which would support the community and improve the quality of life of local residents whilst a long term strategy was implemented. A long term strategy would rely on the future availability of funding for regeneration initiatives. The short term and medium term possible actions to improve the area include improved lighting, CCTV, additional street cleansing, increased police presence and regular engagement with the Council and local residents. Funding would also need to be identified to deliver these short term measures. What was clear from the report is that some intervention was needed and the 'do nothing' approach would only contribute to the further decline of the area.

Residents present at the meeting questioned how this study would lead to any change when previous Council reports had indicated that little could be achieved. The Assistant Director stated that the aim would be to bring all partner organisations together to tackle the issues with some money coming from partners to support the Council's input. The Chair suggested that a referral be made to the Neighbourhood Services Committee for the consideration of additional funding/resources to be fed into the area to address some of the issues concerning residents.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods commented that, for example, putting additional street cleansing services into the area would simply take that resource from another area. The Director considered that the development of an action plan based on the recommendations of the study would be an appropriate way forward and would assist in the delivery of the recommendations and the gaining of external funding. The Director also stated that the action plan would be included in the new three-year Council Plan 2020-2023 to ensure there was 'traction' behind the actions.

The Chair stated that he wished to see action in the area sooner and indicated that an empty Council owned property in Jackson Street could be utilised as a satellite Community Safety Office providing a drop in facility for local residents to report problems. The Chair supported the recommendation that a strategic partners group be developed to deliver the action plan. The representatives from Thirteen stated that while they had few properties in the study area, they would wish to contribute to the action planning process. There was discussion and some concerns expressed at Selective Licencing area and the Chair stated that there would be value in a meeting with local residents on that issue.

The Chair commented that the Council should reconsider its approach to the area and potentially recommence purchasing empty homes in the area as part of its revitalisation. There had also been a scheme with Place First at The Green which had been successful and the potential of a further scheme with Place First in the Oxford Road area should be explored as a longer term ambition.

Decision

1. That the contents and recommendations within the Oxford Road Older Housing Area Study be noted.
2. That a multi discipline strategic partners group be drawn together to produce a deliverable action plan covering those actions identified in the study and the issues raised during the meeting, with a report on the action plan being submitted to Committee at the earliest opportunity, preferably by the end of December.
3. That in addition:
 - a meeting regarding the Selective Licensing zone be arranged with the Resident's Association.
 - that a longer term ambition to undertake a further redevelopment scheme with an organisation like Place First, similar to that at The Green, be explored and included in the Action Plan.
 - that Neighbourhood Services Committee be asked to review what additional / redirected resources could be utilised to address some of the environmental issues affecting Oxford Road residents.
 - that the potential of a 'satellite' Community Safety Office being located in one of the Council's empty properties in the area be explored with the property identified in Jackson Street being retained until a decision was made.

25. Hartlepool Housing Strategy 2019-2024 (*Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration*)

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework.

Purpose of report

To seek approval from Regeneration Services Committee for the Housing Strategy for 2019-2024 and the adoption of the Action Plan. The Strategy details the key housing priorities for the Council and its partners for the period to 2024. The Action Plan is the delivery plan for the priorities which have been identified.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration reported that the new strategy sets out a clear direction, for the next 5 years, as to how we would work with our partners and residents to grow, improve, support and deliver our housing offer. The ambition was to offer more housing choice by developing new homes and improving and regenerating our existing homes and communities. The Council would remain strongly committed to supporting our most vulnerable residents to access and maintain appropriate and good quality housing to meet identified needs.

A Member questioned the involvement of the Planning Committee in the consultation and development process. The Assistant Director indicated that it was this Committee's responsibility to set policy while the Planning Committee delivered planning decisions within the policy guidelines.

A Member questioned the issue around the provision of enhanced green energy facilities in developments and whether the installation of electric vehicle chargers on new homes could be made a requirement. The installation of sprinklers within new school developments and homes of multi-occupancy and buildings over four stories was also questioned. The Assistant Director stated that the Council did look to the installation of sprinklers in new school builds from the outset. This did involve policies for both planning and building control. Developers could, however, show that their building design included sufficient other fire mitigation measures that would meet building control requirements. In relation to electric charging points the Assistant Director stated that our policies in the 2018 Hartlepool Local Plan do encourage their installation but they are expensive and developers may say that because of the economic viability of the development they cannot be installed on cost grounds and the Authority could not realistically refuse planning applications on those sole grounds.

Decision

That the new Housing Strategy and Action Plan for 2019 – 2024 be approved for referral to full Council for adoption.

26. Student Accommodation Needs (ARC4)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To update the Committee on the Hartlepool Accommodation Needs Study being undertaken by ARC4.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The representative from ARC4 gave a presentation to the Committee updating them on progress with the Hartlepool Student Accommodation Needs Study and the emerging themes from the study. The presentation highlighted the consultations undertaken to date and some of the emerging themes around defining the current numbers and accommodation needs. The presentation highlighted that there was some difficulty in quantifying the actual numbers of students requiring accommodation. Projections of anticipated numbers showed an increasing demand which had led to two specific questions that would need to be addressed in the final report and they were -

1. Today – do we need any more student accommodation?
2. Future – in terms of capacity and quality does the student accommodation market need any new development?

The presentation outlined the initial considerations of the study around these two questions. It was indicated that as part of the consultation a questionnaire for students had been issued, though at this time the response rate was relatively low. Further work was being undertaken with the university and the Students Union to encourage responses.

There was general concern expressed at the quality of some of the current accommodation being offered to students in the town and the fact that for second and third year students some of that accommodation could be quite some distance from the college. There was also some concern at the lack of definition of the numbers of students in the town requiring accommodation. The Chair was concerned to ensure that students

attending university in Hartlepool had a positive view of their time here and the quality of their accommodation was key to that. The Chair reinforced that we must have high aspirations for the quality of the accommodation we offered to students coming to Hartlepool. That would require the Authority to define its strategic ambition for students and their accommodation and that would involve working with private landlords to that end. The Chair stated that he looked forward to the completed report being submitted by the end of the year.

Decision

That the presentation be noted.

27. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 30 September 2019 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and Director of Finance and Policy)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the 2019/20 forecast General Fund Outturn, the 2019/20 Capital Programme Monitoring and to provide details for the specific budget areas that the Committee is responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Head of Finance reported on the financial situation at the end of the second quarter for the Authority as a whole and specifically for the budgets controlled by the Committee. At this time, an adverse variance of £90,000 was predicted for the Committee due mainly to shortfalls in income within the Town Hall Theatre, Borough Hall, Strategic Asset Management and Planning. The report also set out details of the Committee's capital programme.

The Chair questioned when the report on the capital proposals for the Borough Hall and Town Hall Theatre would be reported to Committee. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods stated that proposals were being worked through at this time and a business case would be considered by CMT with a view to a report being submitted to Members early in the New Year. The Chair questioned if the report would include proposals for the Art Gallery and the Director stated that this would be reported to the Finance and Policy Committee.

Decision

That the report be noted.

28. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 11 December 2019 at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 22ND NOVEMBER 2019