

COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 14 April 2021

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Mark Roberts (Chair) in the chair; Councillor John McGahan (Vice-Chair); Councillors Dickie Davies, Charles Gibson, Janet Mobbs, Tom Morrison, Adrian Nottingham, Andy Sorton and Kerry Waters.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:-

| <u>Officer</u> | <u>Interest</u> |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Paul Richards and Caroline Simpson | Agenda Item 11 – ‘MDC Strategic Business Plan 2021-2026 and Annual Action Plan 2021 – 2022’ as directors of the Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation. |

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED - That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the exempt information in Agenda Item 11 – ‘MDC Strategic Business Plan 2021-2026 and Annual Action Plan 2021 – 2022’.

5. SAFER STOCKPORT PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL UPDATE 2020/21

RESOLVED – That consideration of this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

6. STOCKPORT HOMES DELIVERY PLAN 2021 - 2026

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposed Stockport Homes Delivery Plan for 2021-

2026 that sets out the actions Stockport Homes would take to properly and effectively manage and maintain the Council's housing stock, and how it would work to support and deliver the wider strategic objectives of the Council and the Borough Plan. The Delivery Plan had been developed in close consultation with the Council and provided the basis against which the Council could measure the progress and effectiveness of Stockport Homes.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Stockport Homes had worked with affected tenants to highlight the impact of Brexit through newsletters and direct support from housing support officers.
- A discussion took place in relation to the potential for under-utilised office-space to be converted to residential use and whether this was something Stockport Homes was going to consider. In response, it was stated that there were significant difficulties with converting existing office space into residential use, and some of the conversions undertaken in the private sector had not produced desirable outcomes. However, consideration would be given to the reuse of land on which vacant office accommodation was stood.
- Stockport Homes was working closely with the NHS and the Council to reduce health inequalities and worked closely with a number of Stockport schools.
- It was suggested that a greater emphasis and profile could be given in future reports in relation to social value.
- A number of members expressed their thanks and gratitude to Stockport Homes and its staff on their work throughout the pandemic.
- It was noted that there had been a significant level of online engagement from tenants on the customer facing objectives within the Delivery Plan following the circulation of a YouTube video and survey.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. THE ANNUAL FLOOD RESILIENCE PLAN AND HIGHWAY DRAINAGE ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the first Annual Flood Resilience Plan which sets out the various roles and responsibilities of the council with regard to flooding and flood resilience including its roles as the Lead Local Flood Authority, highway authority and landowner both of greenspace and working with Stockport Homes its significant housing assets. The work in this area supports the council's overall approach to climate change via Stockport CAN strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- In response to a question in relation to the impact of flooding on businesses at Welkin Mill, Lower Bredbury it was stated that the Council had spoken with businesses and tried to provide practical support. Flood warnings were issued on the day which included the area in which Welkin Mill is situated, and investigations were taking place on what additional measures could be taken.
- Discussions would take place with councillors in relation to the locations for new tree planting.
- It would be useful for members to have a ward breakdown of gully cleansing and maintenance schedule highlighting the challenges of each area.
- It was noted that the brook running through Torkington Park currently does so in a concrete channel, and it was stated that prior to this manmade intervention, the brook formed a pond within the park that served to hold water during periods of heavy rainfall. It was suggested that consideration should be given to reintroducing such natural features as a means of mitigating against floods in the future.
- Gullies were assessed and graded on the context of where they were located such as hillside locations. However, the Stockport CAN Strategy aimed to reduce the water flowing downhill in the first place through measures such as tree planting schemes.
- Parked vehicles could cause obstructions that prevented gullies from being cleaned, and in some circumstances it was necessary to ask residents to move those vehicles or not park on specific days.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER – 2 WOODSTOCK AVENUE, REDDISH SK5 7HX

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the intention to purchase compulsorily a long term vacant property, being 2 Woodstock Avenue Reddish Stockport SK5 7HX. The Property is having a detrimental impact on the environment and amenity of the local area by reason of its dilapidated condition.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The thanks of the Committee was extended to those officers who had worked on this proposal for bringing about a resolution to the issues being experienced within the locality.
- Similar such CPOs had generated a surplus. Such funds were then recycled to allow for further such schemes to take place. However, due to the significant work that needed to be undertaken to secure a CPO it was unlikely that there would be any significant increase in the number that would be able to be undertaken.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. ACTIVE COMMUNITIES: CIC ESTABLISHMENT UPDATE

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an interim update to Scrutiny on the establishment of Stockport Active Community Interest Company (CIC) and progress towards transitioning leisure and active communities services into the new organisation.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was important that scrutiny committees were provided with regular updates on the progression of the establishment of the Stockport Active Community Interest Company.
- It was noted that significant levels of scrutiny had been proposed at the outset, and that this would be kept under review to ensure that this approach remained appropriate.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and any relevant Forward Plan items.

It was suggested that the Scrutiny Committee should receive a report on EPC ratings and how these stood in new developments being delivered at the moment with those built ten years ago.

It was further suggested that a report be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee with regard to 'passive houses' and whether these could be developed 'as standard' by Stockport Homes in the future.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. MDC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2021-2026 AND ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2021 – 2022

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the second full year plan following last year's five year Strategic Business Plan approved by Cabinet on 23 June 2020 and the interim Strategic Business Plan covering the period from the MDC's creation to the end of the 2019/20 financial year approved by Cabinet on 12 November 2019.

To ensure that there was appropriate democratically accountable oversight and influence over the MDC, the Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) have both formally agreed that the MDC will produce a Strategic Business Plan that specifies what activity the MDC will undertake and that that business plan will be submitted to the Council and GMCA for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was noted that the report omitted reference to an aspiration for 50% of the homes delivered to be affordable which was regrettable.
- One of the objectives in the Plan was 'responding too character' and ti was clarified that this followed the themes set out in the strategic regeneration framework and the character of the whole MDC area and those of each of the neighbourhoods within it.
- The provision of adequate amenity space was a significant consideration, the importance of which had been highlighted by the coronavirus pandemic.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.41 pm