

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD: 29 JANUARY 2015

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 8.55pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Ashcroft (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Atherley	J Hodson
S Bailey	Jones
Barron	Kay
Mrs Blake	O'Toole
Bell	Pendleton
Furey	Savage
Gagen	Wilkie

In attendance:

Councillors: Forshaw (Portfolio Holder Planning)
Mrs Houlgrave (Portfolio Holder Housing and Transformation)
Westley (Leader of the Council)
Mee

Officers: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration (Mr B Livermore)
Borough Solicitor (Mr T Broderick)
Deputy Borough Treasurer (Mr M Kostrzewski)
Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager (Mr P Richards)
Housing Operations Manager (Mrs L McGarry)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

73. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

74. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2, Members noted the termination of Councillors Blane and Oliver and the appointment of Councillors Mrs Blake and J Hodson for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Groups. The notification of permanent appointment of Councillor Barron in place of Councillor Owens was also noted.

75. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. Councillors Ashcroft, Mrs Atherley, Bell, Mrs Blake, J Hodson, Jones and Kay declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 10 (Medium Term GRA Capital Programme), in relation to Parish Council matters, arising from their membership of a Parish Council.

2. Councillor Bell's non-pecuniary declaration in relation to agenda item 9 (Yew Tree Farm Final Masterplan Adoption) arising from his membership of Burscough Parish Council, was noted. As previously advised, prior to becoming a Councillor he and his wife had made representations on the Local Plan Preferred Options in relation to Yew Tree Farm but he did not consider himself to have predetermined issues in this regard.
3. Councillor Pendleton, declared a non-pecuniary interest during consideration of the Agenda Item 7 (Relevant Minutes of Cabinet 13 January 2015) – Minute 59 (192-198 Ennerdale, Skelmersdale (former Tanhouse Office) arising from his association with the Tanhouse Community Enterprise.

77. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a Party Whip.

78. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2014 be received as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

79. RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Cabinet held on 13 January 2015.

Questions and comments were raised in respect of the following item:

Minute 59 (192-198 Ennerdale, Skelmersdale (former Tanhouse Office) – Deferred decision.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 2015 be noted.

80. CALL IN ITEMS

There were no items under this heading.

81. YEW TREE FARM FINAL MASTERPLAN ADOPTION

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director Planning as set down at pages 665 to 1038 and also page 1095 of the Book of Reports, that sought the views of the Committee on the Yew Tree Farm Final Masterplan document, prior to its publication, following consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 13 January 2015. Appendix H (Minute 61) details the decision of Cabinet. The views of the Planning Committee, following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 22 January 2015, Appendix I (Minute 63), were circulated at the meeting.

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager attended the meeting and provided a summary of the processes involved to bring the documentation forward and the amendments / additions that had been made as a result of the widespread consultation process that had taken place. He also provided clarification in response to the views of the Planning Committee.

Members raised comments and questions in relation to:

- Revised Safeguarding Plan – clarification of revised safeguarded land (north-west corner) and use of the label “protected views”.
- Drainage System – impact of surface water flooding; wider flooding concerns in Burscough; issues related to the introduction / use of man-made drainage systems.
- Highway issues – responses to residents’ concerns; reassurance proposals adhered to; impact of traffic on surrounding roads; management of traffic through the site.
- Affordable Housing – allocation within the residential development.
- Local Plan – Large site applications -‘open’ site visits.

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager provided clarification on issues raised referencing details set down in the report.

The Portfolio Holder Planning and Development, who was in attendance, with the permission of the Vice Chairman (Chairman of the meeting) responded to questions put to him and made an undertaking, that when future Borough high density planning applications come forward, the Chairman of the Planning Committee would be asked to issue an invitation to arranged site visits to all Members.

RESOLVED: That, as a consequence of consideration of this item and the documentation, the following agreed comments be referred to the Assistant Director Planning for consideration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Planning and Development:

1. “The final paragraph in the Council Response on Traffic, Highways and Transport (Consultation Summary Report – Draft Masterplan Yew Tree Farm, Burscough, page 7) to read:

The Council is satisfied that the principles set out within the Final Masterplan, along with the additional detailed work required at planning application stage, will ensure measures are delivered to help mitigate the impacts of traffic on the local highway network and where possible, to improve the current impact of traffic, whilst encouraging greater use of alternatives to car use such as cycling, walking and public transport.

2. That the term “protected views” (as indicated on the ‘Revised Safeguarding Plan’) be removed or reworded and, for consistency, a reassurance that the principle, related to it, is adequately reflected within the documentation.”

82. MEDIUM TERM GRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer as contained on pages 1039 to 1047 of the Book of Reports which set out a number of options for determining the medium term capital programme.

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The Deputy Borough Treasurer attended the meeting, provided an overview and clarification, referencing details as set down in the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

83. HOUSING ACCOUNT - REVENUE AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration that provided a summary of the budget position in relation to the Housing Account for the next financial year and a basis for consultation prior to consideration and agreement of a budget by the Council at its meeting to be held on 25 February 2015.

Members raised comments and questions in relation to:

- Lancashire County Council (LCC) Supporting People Grant – impact of anticipated reduction next year – additional / replacement / alternative funding streams.
- Impact of Welfare Reform – staffing arrangements; resources to provide Officer help/assistance within the community to tenants.
- Right to Buy (RTB) – downturn in sales (reasons).
- Garages – proposals relating to garage strategy.
- Rent & Money Advice – reasons relating to reduction in budget for 2015/16.
- Lifts – Marlborough and Evenwood Court – proposals.
- Estates – budgeting for environmental improvements (landscaping; opportunities to up-lift areas).
- Painting Programme – future years programme.

The Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration provided clarification on issues raised, detail in relation to the consultation process and responded to questions.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2015-2016

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer as contained on pages 1071 to 1078 of the Book of Reports which provided a summary of the current General Revenue Account (GRA) Budget position and sought the views, of the Committee, prior to consideration of the budget for 2015-2016 at the Council meeting on 25 February 2015.

The Deputy Borough Treasurer attended the meeting, provided an overview and clarification referencing details as set down in the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

85. ORGANISATION RE-ENGINEERING REPORT - LANDLORD SERVICES - PROJECT UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration, as contained on pages 1079 to 1093 of the Book of Reports, that provided an update in relation to the implementation of the recommendations, as set down in the OR (Landlord Services (Voids & Allocation; Estates Management & Rent and Money Advice) Management Report (OR Report – Landlord Services), previously approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 September 2014 and following a request by this Committee, for further information in relation to it.

In discussion comments and questions were raised in relation to:

- Housing Advice – Methods of communication; specialist advice from housing teams..
- Self-service system – moving service to the web-site; assistance to tenants and customers in the use of the technology, particularly in relation to UC (access to the electronic service within the community; Officer support); future investment.
- Customer Contact Centre – response times; training.

The Housing Operations Manager – Public Sector Housing attended the meeting and gave an overview and provided clarification in relation to the implementation of the recommendations as set down in the OR Report – Landlord Services.

The Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration responded to questions making reference to the challenges facing future service delivery.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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Chairman