
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 5TH AUGUST, 2019 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, THORPE ROAD, WEELEY,
CO16 9AJ**

Present:	Councillors Skeels (Chairman), Chittock (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Davidson, Davis, King, Miles and Knowles
Also Present:	Councillor Honeywood, Steady and Wiggins
In Attendance:	Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Paul Price (Corporate Director ,Operational Services), Peter Russell (Housing Needs and Strategic Policy Manager) and Charlotte Cooper (Committee Services Officer)

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clifton, (with Councillor Knowles as substitute), and Councillor Overton, (with no substitute).

59. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 July 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Note: Councillor Davis asked, in respect of minute 53 of 1 July 2019, the information being sought in respect to Community Safety Measures in Walton could also be sent to the Ward Councillor for that area. The Committee were advised that this request would be passed on.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Skeels, with regards to agenda item 9 – Report of the Head of Democratic Services and Elections – A.2 – Scrutiny of the North Essex Garden Communities Business Plan 2018/19 and Beyond, declared as a point of interest that he is a Member of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee.

61. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

There were none on this occasion.

62. RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING REPORT

The Committee was advised that the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 24 June 2019, agreed for a new agenda item to be added for all future meetings of the Committee (later called the Recommendations Monitoring Report) whereby a report will be presented outlining the recommendations the Committee had sent to Cabinet. With the approval of the Chairman of the Committee a similar report had also been submitted to this meeting of this Committee.

After some deliberation by the Committee it was **RESOLVED** that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The report becomes a standard item on the Committee's agenda for future meetings.

63. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS - A.1 - DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2019-2024 AND THE COUNCIL'S HOMELESS SERVICE

The Committee had before it the report of the Head of Democratic Services and Elections – A.1 – Draft Housing Strategy 2019-2024 and the Council's Homeless Service, with the recommendation that the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the contents of the draft housing strategy 2019-2024 ("Delivering Homes to Meet the Needs of Local People) and determine whether it has any comments it wishes to put forward to Cabinet.

The Council's Corporate Director (Operational Services) was in attendance to answer any questions Members had about the Council's Homeless Service.

The Council's Housing needs and Strategic Policy Manager delivered to the Committee a presentation on the new Housing Strategy for Tendring which included information on National and Local Settings, Welfare Reform, Challenges, Housing Market, Tendring as a Landlord, Strategic Priorities, Needs of Local People, Reducing and Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, Making the Best Use of and Improving Existing Housing, and Supporting People in their homes and communities.

The Corporate Director (Operational Services) outlined some key implications for the Council of possible outcomes following the publication of the final report from the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (which had been commissioned by Government following the Grenfell Tower Fire)

There was also a general discussion around the changes in Government Policy for housing over recent years and what further changes were probable and the frequent changes in housing minister that was frustrating measures to address problems with housing supply and housing financing.

There was exasperation by some Councillors on the problem of empty and unfit housing remaining in the District and the lack of solutions to bringing the houses back into purposeful use and removing the blight the unfit homes had on neighbours / neighbourhoods. The Committee was advised of the efforts being made to identify owners of empty properties with a view to encouraging steps to have the homes brought back into use. The use of Compulsory Purchase orders was not an easy solution to this problem, particularly where the owner would seek to frustrate the measure.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the content of the report.

64. HOUSE BUILDING STRATEGY

The Corporate Director (Operational Services) provided a verbal update to the Committee regarding the progress made in producing a House Building Strategy for the District.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Paul Honeywood, brought to the Committees attention that; at its meeting on 19 July 2019, Minute 23 refers, the Cabinet approved for a further 200 homes to be delivered in the District over the next five years. At that meeting the proposal for 200 homes was met with a response from the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, and subsequently publicised in the press, claiming that although 200 is a good start we should be looking at a higher number and offered the figure of 500 homes. The Portfolio Holder for Housing therefore invited the Committee to consider looking into the number of homes that could be built by the Council and thereby scrutinise whether 500 homes would be feasible. The Corporate Director advised that the proposed 200 homes would be funded from the Housing Revenue Account. Scrutiny of budgets, including the Housing Revenue Account was a matter in the terms of reference of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Director advised the Committee that he had worked with the Finance department to determine, based on current known financial parameters, what would be a prudent capital investment and the s151 officer was satisfied that 200 homes was an affordable aspiration and would not place an unrealistic revenue burden on the Housing Revenue Account.

Progress with the development by this Council of 10 units in Jaywick Sands was relayed to the Committee and this was intended also to provide an impetus for others to seek to invest in the area. The Committee **RESOLVED** an update on possible private sector investment in new homes in Jaywick as part of the revitalisation scheme for that area.

After much deliberation by the Committee it was Moved by Councillor Miles, Seconded by Councillor King and **RESOLVED** that the Committee request the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the budget arrangements for the delivery of 200 homes agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 19 July 2019, and as part of that exercise to examine the financial deliverability of building up to 500 new homes, as suggested in the statement by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat group, and where this number of new council homes could actually be accommodated.

65. SCRUTINY OF PROPOSED DECISIONS

Pursuant to the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13, the Committee reviewed any new and / or amended published forthcoming decisions relevant to its terms of reference with a view to deciding whether it wished to enquire into any such decision before it was taken. The relevant forthcoming decisions were before the Committee.

RESOLVED that The Committee noted the published list of relevant forthcoming decisions.

66. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS - A.2 - SCRUTINY OF THE NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 AND BEYOND

The Committee had before it the Report of the Head of Democratic Services and Elections – A.2 – Scrutiny of the North Essex Garden Communities Business Plan 2018/19 and Beyond.

This report invited the Committee to consider the appropriate arrangements to be adopted for Scrutiny of the North Essex Garden Communities Interim Business Plan 2018-19 and the future Business Plans. This Committee's approved work programme envisaged scrutiny of the NEGC Business Plan at its meeting on 2 December 2019 and this report sought to respect the wish to undertake this scrutiny, to establish a revised timeframe for this scrutiny and address the appropriate arrangements for that scrutiny.

It was further reported that there is a legitimate rationale for both this Committee and the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the NEGC Business Plan however this might not be efficient nor effective and could unduly lead to a drain on capacity of Members of the two Committees and Officers in supporting those Committees if both operate separately on this matter. This report was therefore submitted to invite the Committee to consider whether there was value in establishing specific scrutiny arrangements for the NEGC Business Plan that span both Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Corporate Director (Planning and Regeneration) has indicated that it would be entirely reasonable to accommodate a meeting within August/September on the basis that the arrangements have been settled upon.

The Committee were made aware that a similarly worded Report was submitted to the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29 July 2019, and had before it the decisions of that Committee relating to this report. These decisions included a request to this Committee for its views on establishing a joint scrutiny panel for NEGC.

It was moved by Councillor Miles, Seconded by Councillor Davidson to endorse the decisions as put forward by the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29 July 2019. As such this Committee **RESOLVED:**

- (1) *To record that this Committee believes that the value of scrutinising the NEGC is demonstrated as it will:*
 - *The topic is of high local importance and reflects the concerns of local people about the delivery of sustainable growth/development and protection of the identity of existing settlements in the District.*
 - *There is a commitment from Members to the time to conduct the review.*
 - *The findings from the scrutiny can realistically influence and shape delivery against the business plan and future business plans.*
 - *The issue is relevant to all or large parts of the local area*
 - *The review would be in the council's interests to ensure that the investment in the scheme is independently overseen.*

- (2) *To record that the broad range of the NEGC, spanning the responsibilities of both of the existing Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) and the impact of the proposed Garden Community in the District necessitates a joint approach, unfettered by considerations as to whether the issues are internal to the Council or its partnership working. The creation of a new Joint Scrutiny Panel with a*

Membership drawn from the existing OSCs would avoid work duplication; a key consideration in good scrutiny.

- (3) *That, as proposed by the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a Joint NEGC Scrutiny Panel be established with a view to its first meeting being held within a month of this meeting and that the Chairmen of the two Committees be authorised to determine the Membership of the Joint Panel on the basis of equality of representation on the Panel from the two Committees and a broadly proportionate political representation. Such decisions will be subject to ratification by the respective OSCs.*
- (4) *That the Chief Executive be requested to identify any necessary amendments to the Constitution to facilitate the above and to submit the necessary reports to achieve this.*

The meeting was declared closed at 9.04 pm

Chairman