

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 10TH JANUARY, 2022 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Chittock (Chairman), Amos (Vice-Chairman), Chapman BEM, Clifton, Davidson, Miles, Skeels and Steady
Also Present:	Councillor Honeywood (Portfolio Holder for Housing)
In Attendance:	Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Peter Russell (Executive Projects Manager - Housing), Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)
Also in Attendance:	Richard Priest (Social Housing Consultant, Priest Property Consultants) and Gavin Cowling (Team Manager ((Essex)) Peabody Floating Support)

[Note: Tim Clarke (Assistant Director (Housing and Environment)) and Ivan Briggs (Operations Manager at Anglia Care Trust) were able to contribute to the meeting remotely through the use of the Microsoft Teams platform]

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An Apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Codling (no substitution).

30. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday 8 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Councillors in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting.

32. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

On this occasion no Councillor had submitted notice of a question.

33. HOUSING ISSUES IN THE DISTRICT - EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Further to the decision of Council on 13 July 2021 (Minute 53 refers), the Committee undertook an enquiry into "Housing issues in the district - how it impacts residents, socially, mentally and financially." The enquiry was looking at the struggle of finding somewhere to live on low or no wages.

As part of the Committee's enquiry, the Committee was provided with a written report from the Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing. The report referenced the Council's Housing Strategy (approved in October 2020) and how the Council was working with statutory and non-statutory partners to deliver homes to local people, tackle

homelessness, make best use of the Council's housing stock and to support residents in their homes and communities. The Committee was given information on the how the strategy focussed on external partnership working to achieve its priorities.

As part of the enquiry, the Committee heard oral submissions from three external partners.

Ivan Briggs, Operations Manager at Anglia Care Trust.

Ivan gave a short presentation to the Committee on their organisation's work with vulnerable rough sleepers in the district and those at risk of sleeping rough. He addressed the need for accommodation for those most vulnerable individuals who were rough sleeping.

Richard Priest, Social Housing Consultant, Priest Property Consultants.

Richard gave a short presentation to the Committee on his work to secure investment in accommodation in the district to increase the supply of private rented accommodation for the most vulnerable and to improve conditions and management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). The vehicle he referenced for that investment was a Real Estate Investment Trust.

Gavin Cowling, Team Manager (Essex) Peabody Floating Support.

Gavin gave a short presentation on the work his organisation carried out to support clients with their housing and other related difficulties. He indicated that advice for new tenants was an area to look at opportunities to improve so that there was the best signposting of those tenants to services that could help them across a broad spectrum of issues they were facing (including debt advice).

The Committee was advised that the disruption to the lives of individuals and families going through an eviction situation (with uncertain future housing provision to go to) was great indeed and that action to avoid that eviction, where possible, could definitely improve the lot of those individuals/families.

After a short discussion the Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that it pursue with partner agencies measures to:

- a) encourage real estate investment trust investment in purchasing low quality HMO's and investing in them to produce good quality self-contained affordable units.
- b) sign posting those who apply to join the housing register to organisations to support debt management, maximising benefits, over-coming isolation and other issues they may struggle with,
- c) securing additional accommodation for those with vulnerabilities who are rough sleeping,

to continue and develop early intervention with Landlords to resolve issue rather than moving to evictions

34. FURTHERING THE COMMITMENT TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN 2020-24 - DEVELOPING HIGHLIGHT PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2022/23

The Committee considered the report submitted to the Cabinet on the 17th of December 2021 (Minute 98 referred), in relation to Council's strategic direction as set out in its

Corporate Plan. The report specifically set out initial proposals for highlight priorities for 2022/23 in support of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24 as adopted by Council on 21 January 2020 (Minute 78 refers). Consultation on those initial proposals was underway and the outcome would be reported to Cabinet on 28 January 2022; when finalised highlight priorities for 2022/23 would be adopted.

The themes of the 2020/24 Corporate Plan were:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Building Sustainable Communities for the Future
- Strong Finance and Governance
- Community Leadership through Partnerships
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy

The highlight priority actions adopted each year could not cover every separate element of the ambition of the four year Corporate Plan; nor were they intended to indicate that other projects, schemes or activities were not being pursued. They were intended to reflect imperatives across the Council and for the District and actions that it was right to focus on in that year.

After a detailed discussion the Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that, in addition to the initial priorities set out in the report, the following highlight priorities for 2022/23 be added:-

1. Delivering High Quality Services – Include a further priority around enhancing the public realm by investing in such areas as weed control and measures to improve public open space.
2. Growing and Inclusive Economy - within the existing proposed highlight priority for Town Centres in the District that the role of towns such as Brightlingsea, Frinton-Walton, Harwich and Manningtree in supporting the economic wellbeing of the District be recognised and measures to enhance those Town Centres and further improve their role in generating a vibrant local Town Centre experience be included for 2022/23.
3. Building Sustainable Communities – to include a priority for tackling homelessness within the measures discussed at the meeting (Minute 32 above refers) with the relevant milestones.
4. Community Leadership – measures to support the Sport and Leisure activities across the district and to encourage increased activity levels across a range of the population district wide.

[Note: Subsequent to the meeting, the Leader agreed that the outcome of consultation on the highlight priorities be reported to Cabinet on 25 February 2022.]

The meeting was declared closed at 9.35 pm

Chairman