

## REGENERATION AND HOUSING PANEL

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**Monday, 6th January, 2020**

**Present:** Councillor Loraine Cox (in the Chair), Councillors Mohammad Ayub, Jean Battle MBE, Tony Dobson, Stewart Eaves, Joyce Plummer and Dave Parkins

**Apologies** None

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**71 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

No apologies or substitutions were received at the meeting.

Councillor June Harrison attended the meeting as an observer.

**72 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were submitted at the meeting.

**73 Minutes of Last Meeting held on 14th October 2019**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Regeneration and Housing Panel held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

**Agreed - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.**

**74 Regeneration and Housing Funding Programme 2019-20**

The Regeneration Manager submitted a report on the progress of the 2019/20 Regeneration and Housing Capital Programmes. The report looked at the £1,171.88M spend up to the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019. Members were referred to Appendix 1 within the report, which listed the progress on individual projects. Some of the schemes have altered slightly in terms of spend with some additional funding being granted for individual projects.

The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Policy was updated at Cabinet on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and we are now able to use our discretionary powers in order to maximise spend on the programme.

Councillor Plummer expressed concern regarding St John's and asked if money could be allocated due to the deterioration of St John's. A comprehensive approach needs to be given to this area within Hyndburn.

Councillor Battle queried how residents would find out about available DFG and is there better ways the money can be used, especially on run down parts of the

Town. The Head of Regeneration and Housing suggested meeting outside of this Panel Meeting for a further detailed discussion on the subject.

The Regeneration Manager informed Members that the team is now fully staffed and working through the backlog of work and due to the amount of schemes coming into the Council an additional post will be added to the 2020/21 budget.

Councillor Dobson requested the dates for commencement on the Hudson Street Improvement Programme. The Regeneration Manager confirmed the contractor has started on site on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and the contract will run for 30 weeks, more up to date information will be sent to Councillor Dobson after the meeting.

The Members and Officers had a discussion around empty properties and properties that require facelifts. The responsibility is with the proprietor as well as the Council, there are options for Compulsory Purchase Orders but these demand the Council to pay the monies up front, which is not always possible.

Councillor Ayub discussed a particular property that has received several notices and prosecutions but the owner constantly ignores these, which affects the neighbour's frustrations. The Head of Regeneration and Housing replied to ensure the Members of the Panel knew enforcement action is taken seriously and it is getting the right balance of support and encouragement to uplift and invest in the neighbourhoods. He asked to meet with Councillor Ayub outside of this meeting to discuss the particular household mentioned.

**Agreed**

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That the Head of Regeneration and Housing will arrange separate meetings with the Councillors on the issues raised.**
- (3) That the Regeneration Manager will send a further update to Councillor Dobson regarding Hudson Street Facelift.**

## **75 Hyndburn's Homelessness Strategy 2020 - 2025**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing introduced the Hyndburn's Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025. The Strategy sets out our strategic aims and plans for providing and improving services for homeless households in the district over the next five years. It has a specific focus on rough sleeping and considers the effectiveness of homelessness following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018. The strategy was approved in December 2019 and will be available on the Council's website early January 2020. Members were asked to note the report.

Councillor Dobson, who is the chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), where this subject is discussed regularly, made an observation that unfortunately some people don't want to be helped or rehoused and therefore aren't making the right steps to change.

The Head of Regeneration and Housing confirmed that there is no reason why anyone should be sleeping rough in Hyndburn as there is ample accommodation.

Councillor Battle commented that many families are accessing the Citizen's Advice Bureau due to debt problems, which can then lead to homelessness. The Head of Regeneration and Housing asked Councillor Battle to ensure people know about accessing the Council's Housing Advice Team.

The Members had a discussion around Department of Working Pensions (DWP) Officers based in foodbanks to give advice and talk to residents. They also discussed the growing amount of foodbanks within the Country and that there is still a requirement to tackle mental health and addictions as this can be the root cause to accessing a foodbank.

The Chair reflected on the great work that the Maundy service offer in Hyndburn, they are open 365 days a year, they do a great job and without them and the volunteers, the service could not work so well.

**Agreed - That the report be noted.**

#### **76 Be with us Allocations Policy Review**

The Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager submitted a report to advise Members of the proposed revised B with US Allocations Policy and the consultation that has taken place between 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

The proposed changes are highlighted in Appendix 2 of the report.

The panel had a discussion around the housing related debt payments and cleared up any confusion. If a person has a housing related debt over £500 they will be disqualified from joining the housing register, however if the debt is less than £500 they will qualify to join the register but the debt will need to be cleared before an offer of accommodation can be provided.

The Chair and Councillor Battle queried the Homeowners section of the appendix relating to a person having an equity of £120K being disqualified from joining the housing register both Councillors felt it should be higher amount.

**Agreed (1) That the report be noted; and (2) That the Head of Regeneration and Housing checks the previous figure regarding a person's equity.**

#### **77 Enforcement around Fly Tipping, Littering and Graffiti**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing advised the panel of the report that went to Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2019. The report focussed on fly tipping, littering and graffiti enforcement taken by the Council in November 2018.

The panel were asked to note the report and asked for any comments.

Councillor Plummer asked for clarification on the timescales of enforcement once a letter has gone to a resident. The Head of Regeneration and Housing confirmed it is 5 days and he would circulate the Frequently Asked Questions to Panel for their perusal.

**Agreed** (1) That the report be noted; and  
(2) The Head of Regeneration and Housing send the FAQ's to the Panel.

**78 Disability Service: Specialist Accommodation Unit**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing informed the Panel Members of Lancashire County Council's intention to develop two new specialist accommodation units; one for disabled adults and one for disabled children both in Great Harwood.

A copy of the draft Cabinet report was issued for the Panel's information and to comment on, Cabinet will be invited to support a £300,000 contribution from the Council's Capital Programme towards these two accommodation units.

The Panel had a discussion regarding the report and felt Lancashire County Council should provide further detailed information before this is agreed and requested to know if Ribble Valley Borough Council had also been required to contribute from their Capital Programme.

The Head of Regeneration and Housing confirmed there is provision within the Capital Programme under the Disabled Facilities Grants income.

**Agreed** (1) That the report be noted; and  
(2) The Head of Regeneration and Housing seeks further information from Lancashire County Council.

**79 Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

**80 The Time and Date of Future Meetings:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed to be Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
At which the minutes were confirmed