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# REGENERATION AND HOUSING PANEL

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**Monday, 19th November, 2018**

**Present:** Councillor Joyce Plummer (in the Chair), Councillors Jean Battle, Tony Dobson, Stewart Eaves, June Harrison and Dave Parkins

**Apologies** Clare Cleary

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## **22 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Cleary. There were no substitutions.

## **23 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest submitted at the meeting.

## **24 Minutes of Last Meeting held on 17th September 2018**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Regeneration and Housing Panel held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

## **25 Regeneration and Housing Capital Programme**

The Regeneration Manager submitted a report on the progress with the 2018/19 Regeneration and Housing Capital Programme. She explained how the Programme had been prioritised with the new Town Square a priority due to external funding which could be clawed back if not spent. She also explained that Disabled Facility Grant work had been prioritised because of its statutory nature.

Members were informed that the Regeneration and Housing Capital Programme had been funded at a cost of almost £5 million for 2018/19 and referred Members to appendix 1 for further details. She explained that it was anticipated that some projects would slip in 2019/20 due to a lack of staff resources and a need to address significant health and safety risks associated with Council owned buildings.

Councillor Battle expressed concern that some residents had not been able to access Disabled Facility Grants because they were means tested and did not qualify. She suggested that Council wrote to the Government to ask for rules to be relaxed to allow those in need to apply for grants and allow Council's to use the funding provided.

The Regeneration Manager explained how applicants could apply for Disabled Facility Grants and confirmed the Grants were subject to legislation and Government regulations.

Councillor Dobson suggested that consideration was given to ways of speeding up responses to applications for adaptations and requested that all Panel Members were provided with a list of criteria for applicants wanting adaptations.

The Head of Regeneration and Housing informed Members that the Council was receiving additional funding for Disabled Facility Grants and there was a need to get the message to potentially eligible people. He agreed with Councillor Battle that if the Council is given more flexibility the Council would be able to help more disabled people. He agreed for a separate item on Disabled Facilities Grants eligibility and finance at the next meeting of the Panel.

- Agreed**
- (1) That an item on Disabled Facilities Grant Eligibility and finance be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel; and**
  - (2) That Panel members be provided with a copy of the criteria of eligibility for Disabled Facility Grant applications.**

## **26 Housing and Environmental Standards**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing advised the Panel on a report submitted by the Environmental Protection Manager to update Members on actions taken by the Environmental Protection Team in relation to Land & Buildings that are detrimental to the amenity of the area and/or causing a public health nuisance, during the two month period from 1 September to 31 October 2018.

Councillor Battle referred to the continued poor condition of Hargreaves Warehouse and was informed that a pre-action letter was in the process of being sent out.

Councillor Parkins indicated that he had been on visits to a number of properties dealt with by the Environmental Protection Team and acknowledged the standard of their work and requested that Members' gratitude was passed onto the team.

- Agreed**
- (1) That the report be noted; and**
  - (2) That Members' gratitude be passed onto the Environmental Protection Team for their ongoing good work.**

## **27 Homelessness Update**

The Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager submitted a report to update and brief Members of the Panel on the current activity in relation to homelessness in Hyndburn. He explained that the Homelessness Reduction Act had been brought in in April 2018 and this had changed the way local authorities were required to deal with homelessness and he outlined the changes. He pointed out that this had meant a closer working relationship with public and voluntary organisations and from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 organisations had a 'Duty to Refer' which meant that any public sector organisation were required to refer a person(s) threatened with homelessness to the their local authority.

Councillor Battle asked what the general themes for homelessness were. The Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager reported that these mainly tended to be relationship breakdowns and debt. He reported that since April 2018 over 500 people had completed the portal and one third of these had been taken on as homeless. He reported that many of those completing the portal had not been homeless and had since been referred on to the appropriate organisation. He reported that there had been an increase in the number of rough sleepers in other local authorities and that there was an expected rise in Hyndburn; but clarifying that the numbers of rough sleeping in Hyndburn remained low. He reported that problems with Universal Credit had been found to have been a cause of increasing

homelessness mainly due to a lack of access to online services to make applications. He reported that the strategy for applying was due to be reviewed in 2019.

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

## **28 Huncoat**

The Head of Regeneration and Housing gave a presentation on the development of Huncoat. He reported that housing and employment growth were central to Hyndburn's new Corporate Strategy. He reported on the vision for the Huncoat Garden Village project and developing the masterplan and delivery strategy, timescales and steps involved in developing this.

He reported that Huncoat could deliver up to 2000 new homes due to two strategic sites within the location and due to good transport connections to major road routes and rail services. He referred to a quote from Sir Ebenezer Howard OBE defining Garden Villages stressing that Huncoat Garden Village would be holistically planned as per the guidance principles for garden towns and villages.

He reported that Arcadis and GVA had been appointed to support the Council developing the masterplan and delivery strategy. He reported that stage one of the masterplan had been completed and that stage two should be finished by January 2019 and the masterplan was due to be finished by April 2019.

Members indicated that the development would require a major link road and pointed out that it would be disaster without it. The Head of Regeneration and Housing advised that such a road was under consideration as part of the emerging masterplan.

The Head of Regeneration and Housing confirmed the aspiration of modern, futuristic housing being considered for the area and the vision for the future of Huncoat. Members were advised on delivery options and informed that governance of this was driven by a Steering Group led by Cabinet and key consultation groups. He explained that the development would be likely to start in 2022, although one land owner developer was keen to start in 2020.

Councillor Dobson questioned the amount of greenbelt being lost and the impact of 2000 houses in the environment. The Head of Regeneration and Housing advised that some green belt may be lost. He also reminded Members that the development was about aspiration and growth and a need for progress in the borough. Councillor Dobson expressed concern about the improvements being made in one part of the borough having a negative effect on another part of the borough. The Head of Regeneration and Housing recognised that there was an important issue which had to be balanced against the importance of providing housing and employment which would help retain the borough's population or attract new people to the borough.

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

## **29 Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

## **30 The Time and Date of Future Meetings**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed to be Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
At which the minutes were confirmed