

BUSINESS AND HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 6 October 2022

Attendance:

Councillors
Bronk (Chairperson)

Cramoysan
Isaacs

Scott

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Fern, Miller, Radcliffe and Small

Deputy Members:

Councillor Batho (as deputy for Councillor Small), Councillor Edwards (as deputy for Councillor Radcliffe) and Councillor Horrill (as deputy for Councillor Miller)

Other members in attendance:

Councillors; Thompson, Wallace, Achwal and Tod

[Audio and video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above. In addition, Councillor Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing and the representatives from Tenants and Council Together (TACT) provided apologies for not being present.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Bronk declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest concerning agenda item 5, Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy in that he owned a self-contained annexe within the curtilage of his property that was let.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2022**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 June 2021 should have recorded the attendance of Councillor Wallace as a visiting councillor.

RESOLVED:

1. That noting the above, the minutes be agreed as a correct record.

4. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson updated the committee regarding recent discussions with Councillor Ferguson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing), Councillor Horrill and officers, regarding the future work programme for this committee and the newly formed Cabinet: Housing committee and that the revised work programme reflected the current position.

The Chairperson gave an update on items discussed at the previous meeting, which included the following.

1. The Housing Services Compensation Policy.
2. The Empty Homes Strategy.
3. The Green Economic Development Strategy - Draft Action Plan.
4. The Winchester District High Streets Priority Plan - Up-Date and Progress Report.

The Chairperson informed the committee that officers had met with representatives of the University of Winchester to discuss "Global Entrepreneurship Week" and gave an update on progress made.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Wallace addressed the committee regarding both items on the agenda and a summary of the points raised were as follows:

1. Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy.

- a. That the UK had the least energy-efficient housing in Europe.
- b. That only 48% of homes in the district achieved an energy efficiency standard of C or above, only 45% of homes had any roof or loft insulation and only 35% had any cavity wall insulation.
- c. That energy costs were set to rise significantly and would especially affect those in homes with poor insulation and that improvements to energy efficiency should be a priority for the council.
- d. That the report in paragraph 2.17 described 17 referrals made under the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) which suggested there was scope for more to be done.
- e. That the action plan could contain more specific measures and targets, for example, a breakdown of the number of homes within each energy efficiency banding and a target of the number of homes to be moved from one band to another.

2. Re Findings and future plans following the Street Markets Review

- a. Regarding the Winchester City Council policy on sustainable procurement, had the guidance in this policy flowed down to the street markets, for example, matters relating to fairtrade, food procurement and single-use plastic?
- b. Would the council consider a ban on single-use plastic in its buildings and its street markets?

These points were responded to by officers and the Cabinet Member for Business and Culture accordingly. Following further discussion, the committee resolved several matters relating to these points, these are included in the lists below.

6. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY**

The Service Lead, Strategic Housing & Senior Private Sector Housing Officer introduced the report, ref BHP31 which set out proposals for the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, ([available here](#)).

The committee was recommended to:

1. Review and provide comment on the direction and priorities of an early draft of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2022-27.
2. Support the council exploring the possibility of implementing a private sector housing 'Grant Assistance Fund' targeted at providing financial assistance through grants or loans to fund essential repairs for owners and landlords who qualify under agreed criteria.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report and in summary, the following matters were raised.

1. Were landlords supportive of the council's Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing and accreditation scheme and were there sufficient resources within the council to manage the scheme?
2. Could further information and contact details be provided to members regarding the council's "Energy Officer"?
3. Could the source of funding for the proposed 'Grant Assistance Fund' be explained?
4. Had the introduction of the Article 4 in Stanmore and Winnall addressed the issues experienced by residents and how do we minimise the impact of HMOs in the future?
5. Could the section "Working with local partners", paragraph 11, page 27 be expanded to give more detail on what the council was doing?
6. Would tenants in properties that might qualify for energy efficiency measures/funding have recourse if their landlord was not supportive of the works being undertaken and did the council have powers to encourage landlords to make their properties more energy efficient?
7. Could paragraph 2.8, page 22 be expanded to give some detail on how the council would help landlords with a smaller number of properties to keep up with legislation changes?
8. Should the council be undertaking additional or selective licensing of HMOs?
9. Should the paper be referring to both Southampton and Winchester Universities?
10. Regarding the action plan, should priority 2 "Improving housing conditions in the private rented sector" become priority 1?
11. Could further information be provided regarding the links with local healthcare teams and the NHS to support tenants leaving hospital?

12. Several members were not supportive of establishing the Grant Assistance fund at a time when resources were limited, they felt that the primary responsibility was the landlords and that the council's role was to signpost and support access to other funds.
13. Was data available to compare the energy efficiency of the private sector and council properties at either a district or ward level?
14. Was there a trend in landlords selling properties that were previously rented and was there a trend for private rented sector properties moving to an Airbnb-type platform and could the reduction in the number of private sector rented properties be quantified?
15. That some references to Winchester in the document should read Winchester district.

These points were responded to by the Strategic Director, the Service Lead, Strategic Housing & the Senior Private Sector Housing Officer accordingly and were noted.

RESOLVED:

1. That officers consider the comments of the committee as part of the next stage of policy formation and in particular review points 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15 and 16 (above) and update members accordingly.
2. That regarding the grant assistance fund, the committee felt that the primary responsibility lay with the landlord or owner to fund essential repairs but that the council should provide support and signposting. That the council's primary responsibility was with its own properties and then if appropriate to private sector properties.

7. **FINDINGS AND FUTURE PLANS FOLLOWING THE STREET MARKETS REVIEW**

Councillor Thompson, Cabinet Member for Business and Culture; and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism introduced the report, ref BHP37 which set out the proposals from the report ([available here](#)).

The committee was recommended as follows.

1. To review and comment on the Winchester district street markets review 2022.
2. To note the findings and recommendations outlined in the review.
3. To support the approach to action the recommendations outlined in the review.

These included:

1. the development of branding, promotional materials and marketing activity,
2. the improvements to market appearance derived from investment in signage and street dressing, branded gazebos, pitch layout/customer flow,
3. the number of market stalls and additional themed markets.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report and in summary, the following matters were raised.

1. Had the council been advised of the level of funding awarded from its bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)?
2. Regarding the Street Markets Review 2022 Executive Summary Report and the section titled "Alresford – future", would this impact the current management of its markets by the Town Trust?
3. Could committee members receive a copy of the Street Markets Review 2022 full report?
4. Regarding paragraph 2.8, could the areas for improvement for the Winchester street market include the safety issues around the loading and unloading environment particularly the interaction with pedestrians and how this could be managed more effectively?
5. Regarding paragraph 2.14, could we understand the re-tendering process more, especially regarding the timescales and approach being taken?
6. Appropriate public WC facilities needed to be available if encouraging the public to visit street markets.
7. The methodology that determined whether a street market enhances or did not damage High Street shops' trade?
8. That on busy market days, the Winchester High Street became congested and for some people was difficult to navigate.
9. How much did recommendation number 3 rely on a successful bid to the UKSPF and if no funding was received what measures could still go ahead?
10. That the report gave some reassurance that shop holders were not negatively affected by a street market.
11. Could an updated report include a paragraph recognising an intention to explore the longer-term desire for a market presence in The Broadway in Winchester?
12. Where did the Winchester Farmers Market sit within the council's thinking and had the council considered an indoor, all-weather facility?
13. Did the council share experiences with the Cathedral regarding their Christmas market?
14. Regarding proposals for trading equipment including stalls, gazebos and tables, who would design it, own it, and where would it be stored?
15. Regarding page 39 and the opportunities to expand the number of market traders, could more information be given on the intention to grow the size of the markets?

These points were responded to by Councillor Thompson, Cabinet Member for Business and Culture and the Service Lead - Economy & Tourism.

RESOLVED:

1. That officers consider the comments of the committee as part of the next stage.
2. That further consideration is given to discouraging the use of single-use plastic within the district's Street Markets.
3. That the full "Winchester District Street Markets Review 2022" report be circulated to committee members.
4. That the safety concerns raised be considered as part of any future procurement exercise and separately with market stall holders.
5. That ease of access through the Winchester Street Market was important.
6. That the comments regarding the long-term aim of using The Broadway be considered.

8. **TO NOTE THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23**

RESOLVED:

1. That the workplan was noted.
2. It was requested that the committee undertake a review of the council's policy regarding restrictions on the installation of showers within its housing stock.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.05pm

Chairperson