

BUSINESS AND HOUSING POLICY COMMITTEE

22 September 2020

Attendance:

Councillors

Weir (Chairperson)

Bell
Brook
Clear
Craske
Horrill

Hiscock
Lumby
Power
Scott

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Thompson (Leader and Cabinet Member for Communications), Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk), Learney (Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management), Ferguson (Cabinet Member for Local Economy).

[Full audio recording and video](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rutter and Councillor Clear was in attendance as Deputy for Councillor Rutter.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Hiscock declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of various agenda items due to his role as a County Councillor.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 June 2020 be approved and adopted.

4. **WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21**

The Chairperson reported that an item on the Housing Company would be brought to the December meeting of the Committee at the recommendation of the Performance Panel.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme for 2020/21 be noted and that an item on the Housing Company be brought to the December meeting of the Committee.

5. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairperson reported that TACT representative Mr Michael Fawcitt had sadly recently passed away and members of the Committee and the Chairperson paid tribute to him and the work that he had carried out on behalf of TACT.

6. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present to make representations.

7. **BRIEFING ON RESTORATION WORK – ECONOMY AND HOUSING - PRESENTATION**

The Service Lead Economy and Tourism and the Corporate Head of Housing gave a presentation on the Covid restoration work.

Councillor Ferguson introduced the presentation on economy restoration work.

Monica Gill on behalf of TACT commented that some TACT members living in rural areas were finding difficulty in joining on-line virtual meetings with the council due to poor digital connectivity. She added that the repairs service had been good during lockdown and the provision of hot meals had continued through the good work of the contractors.

Members asked questions and raised comments which were responded to by officers and the Cabinet members accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

8. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY – PRESENTATION**

The Housing and Social Inclusion Manager gave a presentation on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, which included the Empty Homes Strategy.

At the invitation of the Chairperson, Monica Gill on behalf of TACT commented that TACT supported the content of the presentation. Mrs Gill asked if there were incentive schemes to help with the cost of renovating privately owned dwellings to bring them back into housing use if the owners could not afford the repair costs, such as by means of a loan and to subsequently recoup the cost through the rent.

Members asked questions and raised comments which were responded to by officers and the Cabinet members accordingly.

At the conclusion of questions and debate, the Committee considered how it wished the Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) work to be prioritised. It was commented that it was a balance with the limited resources available to provide safe accommodation for as many people as possible and to provide good accommodation. A member commented that the EDMO route was very costly in terms of resources and should be used sparingly. A Member also expressed a view that pursuing an EDMO was important when they impacted on a community.

The Chairperson concluded that Policy Committee members should give this consideration outside of the meeting and express their views either directly to the officers or at a future meeting

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted and that Members should give consideration to the priority to be given to EDMOs outside of the meeting and express their views either directly to the officers or at a future meeting

9. UPDATE ON A DIGITAL WINCHESTER DISTRICT AND HOUSING FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (BHP016)

Members asked questions and raised comments which were responded to by officers and the Cabinet members accordingly.

At the conclusion of questions and debate, the Committee agreed to widen the remit of the digital Winchester district exercise to ensure that the focus and the balance was reflective of the wider district. It was also agreed that the digital needs of TACT also be taken into consideration and that a Member Briefing be organised to enable councillors to improve their understanding of mobile communications and particularly 5g. In respect of the Housing for Younger People Group it was agreed that housing tenure be included to understand what young people were seeking to find in respect of housing provision.

RESOLVED:

That the progress on the formation of the Housing for Younger People and A Digital Winchester District Task and Finish Groups be noted.

The virtual meeting commenced at 6:00 pm and concluded at 8:30 pm

Chairperson