

Time Commenced – 6:00 pm
Time Finished – 6.25 pm

Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Review Board

19 October 2021

Present: Councillor Ingall (Chair)
Councillors Grimadell, S Khan, Pattison and West

In Attendance: Ian Fullagar – Head of Strategic Housing
Sue Li – Empty Home and Compulsory Purchase
Enforcement Manager

08/21 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Evans.

09/21 Late Items

The Chair referred to the recent murder of Sir David Amess MP and the Board stood in silence in his memory.

10/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

11/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

12/21 Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2021 – 2026 – Referral from Council Cabinet

The Board considered a recommendation from Council Cabinet relating to the Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2021-2026.

In considering the report to Council Cabinet the Executive Scrutiny Board recommended to Council Cabinet that the Empty Homes Policy should make clear that Council grants or loans would not routinely be provided to support the creation of more Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMO).

The Council Cabinet had approved the adoption of the new Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy at its meeting on 8 September 2021 and referred the recommendation from Executive Scrutiny Board to the Regeneration and Housing Board for consideration.

The Head of Strategic Housing gave an explanation of how the loans relating to the Empty Homes Strategy were assessed. There was concern that if

loans were not given in relation to the creation of houses in multiple occupation then many homes would not be brought back into use. The owners tended to approach the Council at the design stage when any issues could be flagged up and interventions put in place if necessary. The track record of the owners was taken into consideration and if there was an issue the loan would not be given. With the building industry costs increasing it was becoming less viable to bring homes back into use and sometimes the only viable route was a house in multiple occupation.

A member of the Board raised concerns about the distribution of HIMO's across the city and stated that of the approx 550 HIMO's in Derby around a fifth were in the Arboretum Ward. Distribution needed to be proportionate across the city.

It was reported that the Housing Renewal Review Group considered density of HIMO's and any issues with anti - social behaviour as part of the loan approval process. It was noted that most loan applications were submitted after planning consent had been approved.

A member of the Board suggested that Ward Councillors be consulted on applications for HIMO's because they would know of any local issues in the area.

A member of the Board raised concerns about some of the wording of the questions in the 'about you' part of the survey. The comments would be fed back to the consultation team.

Resolved to note the recommendation from Council Cabinet.

13/21 Remit, Work Programme and Topic Reviews

The Board considered a report which allowed the Board to study its Terms of Reference and Remit for the Municipal Year. The report also allowed officers to inform the Board of any key work areas, issues or potential topic review subjects within the service areas for discussion or inclusion in the work programme.

Members of the Board expressed concern that the Board had identified around 10 items for consideration during the year but have only had one item for consideration at each of the two meetings held so far. This left 8 items to be considered at the two remaining meetings, whilst appreciating that some items could not be considered yet, there were already four items which potentially would slip to the next year municipal year and there were others that may also slip.

Concern was expressed that scrutiny was not effective if a lot of items slipped to future meetings.

Resolved

1. To note the work programme for 2020/21.

- 2. To raise the issue of items slipping with the Chair with a view to potentially arranging an additional meeting if necessary to allow items to be considered during the current municipal year.**

14/21 Items Referred from the Executive Scrutiny Board

There were no items referred from the Executive Scrutiny Board.

MINUTES END