

Time Commenced – 6:00pm

Time Finished – 8:20pm

## **Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Review Board 18 October 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Roulstone (Chair), Councillor Testro (Vice Chair)  
Councillors M Holmes, S Khan, Lindsey, Pandey and West

**In Attendance:** Dawn Deakin, Service Manager Housing Standards  
Stephen Broderick, Senior Environmental Health Officer  
Robert Leverton, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Joanne Lowndes, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Ian Fullagar, Head of Strategic Housing  
Mike Kay, Head of Environmental Protection, Housing  
Standards, Licensing and Emergency Planning  
Sue Li, Compulsory Purchase and Enforcement Officer  
Jonathan Sayer, Principal Regeneration Projects Officer  
Paul Old, Chief Operating Officer SmartParc  
Paul Simpson, Chief Executive, DCC  
Catherine Williams, Head of Service Regeneration Projects  
Emma Dann, Principal Regeneration Officer

### **06/22      Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Maria Murphy, Director of Derby Homes

### **07/22      Late Items**

There were no late items

### **08/22      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **09/22      Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

### **10/22      High Rise Residential Building Safety in Derby JAIT Project**

The Board received a report and presentation on the High-Rise Residential Building Safety Joint Audit and Inspection Team Project which was presented by the Service Manager Housing Standards.

The Board heard that after the Grenfell disaster of 2017, the Secretary of State issued Directions under Section 3(3) of the Housing Act 2004 to all local housing authorities in England to:

- Identify and then actively ensure all building owners of high-rise residential buildings with potentially unsafe cladding are taking appropriate measures to guarantee their buildings are safe and residents feel safe.
- Take all appropriate steps to identify and notify the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) of all high-rise residential buildings over 18m in their area with a view to identifying any action they should take in accordance with their duties under the Act, including carrying out inspections and assessments of hazards

The officer explained that a report was taken to the Corporate Leadership Team who approved the creation of a Joint Tall Building Audit and Inspection Team at a total cost to the Council of £210,346 over a two-year fixed term period from February 2020. It was highlighted that partnership working arrangements were established with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service (DFRS) who provided Fire Safety Officers and Engineers at no extra cost.

The aims and objectives of the project were detailed by the officer one of which was to produce a list for DCC Planning and Development Control to compile a Tall Building Register for Derby City. Initially 29 buildings were identified as being 18m or higher. Eighteen of these buildings were identified to be in scope. In 13 out of the 18 buildings, DFRS identified some form of fire safety issue that needed remedial action and one formal enforcement notice was issued under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. However, no significant hazards were identified during the Inspection Programme and no formal enforcement was necessary under the Housing Act 2004 in the flats/units of accommodation.

DCC and DFRS have a shared Fire Safety Protocol, the joint working partnership built on this and better working together principles were established. The Project enabled a specific set of buildings to be audited and inspected in line with central government directives. It was identified that there was no Aluminium Composite Material (ALM) or High-Pressure Laminate (HLP) cladding found on the 18m buildings in Derby City.

A councillor asked about the additional targeted inspection programme for 5 storey buildings where 18 residential buildings had been identified as being in scope. In 10 of the buildings some form of fire safety issue were identified which needed remedial action and she was interested in the issues which had been identified. The DFRS officer explained the process of an Audit under a Fire Safety Audit and that issues identified could be both large and small, an example of arrangements for fire extinguishers was given. It was explained that specific information about the individual premises could not be provided to the Board, but the Board were reassured that a second inspection of these 13 premises would take place as they are now in a rolling programme to ensure there was no deterioration.

The Housing Standards Team and DFRS were thanked for all their work on the project.

**The Board considered the presentation and had no further comments or recommendations following discussion.**

## 11/22 Empty Homes Update

The Board received a report and update presentation on the Empty Property Strategy which was presented by the Compulsory Purchase and Enforcement Officer.

The current situation regarding the number of long-term empty homes in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham was highlighted and compared. The strategy 2021 – 2026 adopted by Derby City was detailed. The various schemes in operation were explained:

- Bring Empty Homes into use by voluntary assistance and enforcement action
- Increase the affordable housing supply by buying empty homes, or leasing via a housing provider
- Tackle Climate Change by improving thermal efficiency of housing, energy level C being the minimum requirement for landlords.

The Board learnt that the current operational Team was down by 25% one full time post had been removed and another member of staff was on maternity leave. The strategy and targets had been based on the previous composition so there were capacity issues. However, the service had been reviewed and processes had been streamlined and standardised. There were service improvements outstanding including “Green Homes Grants” where funding stream had been removed, the service was looking for alternative funding to help homeowners improve thermal efficiency in their homes. The website and cost calculator for costing improvements to homes needed to be updated. More work needs to be done with Adult Care planning for the future, ensuring a property could be managed correctly if a person enters social care.

The service delivery including current caseload and enforcement work of the team was explained. The Board heard that 82 properties had been brought into use overall, 5 of the properties had been bought by the council for affordable housing. The income generated by the team was highlighted, there had been £8,000 additional council tax, a £104,000 new home bonus and £27,000 of debt had been collected, £200,000 Empty Homes Loans had been approved. A councillor asked how easy it was to apply for loans. It was explained that it was a simple application process open to anyone with a vacant property to apply and funding was still available.

A councillor asked about the reported empty property figures. It was explained that the figure was based on Council Tax information and did not always reflect information from the community, it did not include properties in the probate process. The councillor asked if there was an easy way to report concerns about empty properties in wards. It was explained there was a section on the DCC Empty Homes Web Page for people to email the Empty Homes team’s Inbox direct, a team member would contact them.

**The Board considered the presentation and had no further comments or recommendations following discussion.**

## 12/22 Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Board received an interim update report on Houses in Multiple Occupation which was presented by the Head of Strategic Housing.

The Board were informed that full Council on 21 September 2022 resolved that Officers should investigate the potential introduction of an Article 4 directive, under the town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for the removal of permitted development rights for the change of use of dwelling houses (C3 Use Class) to small houses in multiple occupation (C4 Use Class). Article 4 would ensure smaller HMOs have to seek planning permission.

In accordance with the motion officers are currently receiving evidence that could potentially justify in law the introduction of an Article 4 directive. The call for evidence will continue until the end of 2023 and officers should report back to Members in 2023. Two Cabinet reports are due at Cabinet before Christmas 2022.

It was reported that small houses in multiple occupation do not need to be licensed by the local authority but larger HMOs do. There are currently 558 large HMOs in Derby City, and approximately 100 smaller HMOs the exact number of smaller HMOs is not known as they are unlicensed. The total number of large and small HMOs in Derby is approximately 658.

A small HMO is a shared house or flat occupied by up to four unrelated people as their main residence. A large HMO is a shared house or flat where 5 or more people live as their main residence. The main benefits of HMOs are that they are affordable private rented accommodation, they provide a stepping-stone for young people moving out of the family home. Some HMOs provide high-quality short-term accommodation for professional workers in the city.

HMOs can present problems for occupants and surrounding residents. Among issues raised are the number of HMOs in an area, that they are poorly managed resulting in anti-social behaviour from tenants, that they are poorly maintained resulting in poor living conditions and in some cases lack of support for tenants.

Small HMOs do not need to be licensed under Housing Legislation so can be set up without oversight or inspection by the Housing Standards Team. Larger HMOs do have to be licensed so the layout and condition of a property as well as the fit and proper status of the landlord or managing agent to be a landlord must be assessed. However, it does not consider the number or closeness of HMOs in one area.

In Derby there's a growth of Supported Exempt Accommodation (SEA) for vulnerable people who have both housing and support needs. If the appropriate support is provided with the accommodation, it is exempt from

Housing Benefit caps which means a higher rent can be charged this is met by the Housing Benefit System. SEA can be provided by registered social landlords who are regulated but it can also be provided by community interest companies established by private individuals where there are little or no checks or regulation.

The officer explained the next steps for the city to improve the regulation in relation to HMOs. As described in the report Cabinet members have commissioned a study into housing conditions in Derby, a report has been drafted and will progress to Cabinet before Christmas 2022 identifying issues around poor housing in the private sector, that report will consider Selective and Additional Licensing Schemes.

A councillor highlighted that HMOs are often perceived as a cause for concern by many people, but they are not always negative, there was a need for HMOs which provide a stepping-stone for young people as affordable private housing.

Another councillor thanked the officer for this report which highlighted the concerns of members. The two Licensing Schemes options were welcome along with better accommodation and landlords, and less saturation of certain areas. He asked that this item be kept on the Work Programme and that regular update reports are received. There are many services affected by the location of HMOs which impact on the everyday life of people living in the area.

## **Resolved**

- 1. That the Board have been updated in relation to the positive and negative issues currently arising from HMOs in the City and the next steps being considered in response to these**
- 2. That an update report should be brought to the Board in early 2023**

## **13/22 SmartParc Update**

The Board received a presentation which gave an update on SmartParc the presentation was provided by Principal Regeneration Projects Officer, The Chief Executive DCC and Chief Operating Officer SmartParc also contributed.

The officer reported that SmartParc had been built on the old Celanese brown field site in Spondon. The importance of the bringing a new type of employer and industry to Derby was highlighted and that a key part of Derby's strategy was to diversify the local and regional economy and generate significant growth in jobs. Another objective was making the city to be as green as it could be given the challenges of the Climate Agenda. The project demonstrated strong partnership working between the public and private sector, and harnessed private sector expertise and investment with public sector support and investment.

DCCs role in the project was explained, in July 2021 £12million of Getting Building Funding (GBF) was sourced from D2N2 and was invested in site remediation works. Cabinet agreed to a further £5.5million investment to progress. The benefits of the site were a significant creation of up to 5,000 jobs for Derby and an opportunity for new industry to be based in Derby.

SmartParc Derby provides a means for the food industry to collaborate and meet the challenges of sustainable production and tackles the need for efficient, direct routes to consumers. It has been built in the style of a campus hub with flexible spaces ranging from starter units at 3,500sq ft to manufacturing units up to 400,000sq ft. It was planned to home a “Food Manufacturing Technology Centre of Excellence” which will future-proof the food industry, by offering education and career opportunities to both local and global food supply chains. The site will house the first low-carbon food manufacturing community and offer a shared distribution hub and services and work to improve sustainability and reduce costs.

The building on Plot 1 at SmartParc was completed in April 2022. “Hello Fresh” moved in during May 2022, 200 jobs were created with 60% from Derby a further 200 jobs are planned. The building on Plot 8 was progressing and should be completed in spring 2023. The delivery of an Energy Centre to create carbon savings is planned for summer 2023.

A councillor asked whether there was a transport plan for the site, it was confirmed there was, nine bus routes pass just north of Spondon with buses every six to seven minutes, 2 routes run pass the commercial park end. It was planned to put in a cycle path to connect north and south. There was cycle route running alongside the Derwent which was a vital connection to the city. Trent Barton was on the partnership list. As the site starts to grow staffing requirements will be analysed and monitoring would be undertaken to better target peoples travel and transport needs. There was currently 15% EV charging into the park with plans to enable the whole car park to be charged. Spondon has a railway station, and it was likely as demand grew increased provision of train services would increase.

Green credentials on SmartParc included a combined heating and chiller solution being installed, the savings in carbon will be equivalent to planting Sherwood Forest every 10 years. There was a nature reserve on the site and DCC are in early conversations with Derbyshire Wildlife to discuss opening it up as a managed nature reserve with public access. DCC were thanked for all their support with SmartParc.

A councillor requested more detail about the £2.82m expenditure to be invested. The Officer explained the money would be used to target an SME Tech Centre to give an opportunity for innovation and creating the chance for smaller business to grow through the site. The feasibility of this option was currently being worked on.

A councillor asked if there was need for more funding to be invested in the site understanding that this would be dependent on who comes forward to use the site in the future? It was explained that in terms of the council’s commitment authority was given for £17.5m to be used to kick start this project. So far the site had been remediated and jobs had been created. Segro have taken on

the vision they've seen the opportunity and are now investing heavily in the project.

Investment Zones give an opportunity for more support for SmartParc, the key attractions for businesses were the incentives on offer such as savings on national insurance, Derby was in a global market competing with cities in the UK, Europe, and the World. Major multi-national brands are looking to invest. The city has decided to put forward an expression of interest for an Investment Zone in Derby with SmartParc as the preferred option. This would supercharge the ability to attract large well-known brands to SmartParc.

A councillor stated that SmartParc was one of the legacy projects of Derby and will be remembered for many years to come. It was a real benefit to the city.

**The Board resolved to note the presentation**

## 14/22 Becketwell Programme Update

The Board received a presentation which gave an update on the Becketwell Programme the presentation was provided by the Head of Service Regeneration Projects and the Principal Regeneration Officer.

The background to the Becketwell Regeneration site was described, it was a priority regeneration site in the city centre, there had been decades of market failures and a progressive decline, several proposals for the site had been unsuccessful. The public sector intervened in 2017/2018 to break the cycle of decline and build confidence. St James Securities (SJS) were selected as the DCC's long-term partner, SJS created a masterplan and obtained outline planning consent. The vision was to create a destination with a bold new identity and attract footfall, economic activity, and vibrancy to the area. DCC unlocked the site and secured £8m LEP funding there has been over £37m private sector investment, DCC invested £52m. The public sector has funded acquisitions and disposals, site clearance and demolition, a new public square, and a new Performance Venue.

The benefits of the development of the Becketwell Site were detailed, the Board heard that the perception of the site had been changed for residents and visitors which had resulted in increased footfall. The performance venue and public square would contribute to a more vibrant economy. New employment opportunities had been created and apprenticeship opportunities, local skills were being developed in the construction and hospitality industry, there was a programme to work with schools.

A progress update was given on Phase 1, The Condor building was started in May 2021 completion is planned for spring 2023, it is a build to rent scheme with 1 & 2 bedroom 259 apartments and will be operated by Grainger plc, the UK's largest listed provider of private rental homes. The Public Square, next to the Condor building has just been started. It will be a new public open space which will connect the city centre with the new Performance Venue. It is due to be completed in September 2023.

An update on Phase 2 progress was also provided, this was the Performance Venue, it was 3,500 capacity venue with flexibility to rapidly change capacity (down to 800). It would be a multi-purpose venue for events and business conferencing. It had a planned completion date of the end of 2024. The timescales are subject to change due to the nature of the construction process. A long term agreement for the lease had been exchanged with ASM Global to operate the venue

The future phases of the Becketwell Masterplan were described, it was planned to build a new high quality premium brand hotel on the site, if a £15m Levelling Up Bid which had been applied for was successful. Other future phases included a multi storey car park, a student village and more residential development.

A councillor recognised the positive developments for the Becketwell site and asked if the Board had any questions. A councillor asked if there were any plans for the Guildhall Theatre given that plans in 2017/18 had the expectation of building a performance venue on the old Assembly Rooms site. She also asked what impact the new Performance Venue would have on the Guildhall Theatre, and if there were any plans for the this and the Assembly Room Car Park.

The Chair asked if officers were able to provide an update on the Guildhall or Assembly Room Car Park queries of if a report could be brought to a future meeting. The officer was unable to respond to the queries as she was not involved in the project. However, she reported that the Becketwell Performance Venue was very much conference driven and was run by an international operator, the Guildhall Theatre was a different but equally important venue being community focused. The officer would ask for an update on the Guildhall Theatre and Assembly Room Car Park to be brought to a future meeting.

**The Board resolved to note the report and asked that an update report on the Guildhall Theatre and Assembly Room Car Park be brought to a future meeting**

## 15/22 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 remainder of the 2022/23 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.

The Board members discussed the year's work programme. It was noted that the year for the January and March meetings should be amended to 2023.

The Board members were asked to suggest any items for the Work Programme for the coming year. The following were suggested:



- An update on the Guildhall Theatre and other plans for that area – to come to the March meeting as part of the City Centre and Regeneration of High Street update
- An Update report on HMOs – to come to the March meeting

The Board then discussed the Topic Review “Social Value an impact assessment on all elements of regeneration and housing work and benefits brought to Derby City. A councillor asked if further detail could be provided as promised at the last meeting.

The Chair would check progress and provide an update by email. A councillor asked for meeting to discuss the before the January meeting. The Chair suggested a Working Topic Review meeting to take place before the January meeting.

The Board also asked for an extra meeting in February 2023, officer availability would need to be ascertained.

### **Resolved**

- 1. To agree the proposed work programme for 2022/23 which was discussed at the meeting**

MINUTES END