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Working Plymouth

Wednesday 25 September 2013

PRESENT:

Councillor Murphy, in the Chair.

Councillor Ball, Vice Chair.

Councillors Darcy, Michael Leaves, Morris, Mrs Nelder, Nicholson, Dr. Salter, Singh, Tuffin (substitute for Councillor Haydon) and Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Councillors John Smith and Haydon.

Also in attendance: Paul Barnard (Assistant Director for Planning Services), Nick Carter (Housing Delivery Team Leader), David Draffan (Assistant Director for Economic Development), Chris Grace (Head of Economy, Enterprise and Employment), Patrick Knight (Economy and Employment Manager), Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance), Gill Peele (Lead Officer), Helen Rickman, (Democratic Support Officer) and Annie Singer (Senior Leadership Advisor).

The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 5.15 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

12. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance in the code of conduct.

13. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of 3 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

14. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

15. **MARKET RECOVERY SCHEME**

Paul Barnard, Assistant Director for Planning Services, Nick Carter, Housing Delivery Team Leader, and Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance provided the Committee with a concise update on the Market Recovery Scheme.

The Committee was informed that –

- (a) the Market Recovery Action Plan was launched on 22 October 2008; the Market Recovery Scheme replaced the Action Plan in January 2009;

- (b) market recovery measures were developed as a means of responding to the downturn in economic circumstances;
- (c) as at August 2013, of 115 planning permissions, 40 sites were completed delivering 429 homes; 18 homes were currently under construction and expected to deliver 296 homes;
- (d) the Market Recovery Scheme played a vital role in keeping momentum for regeneration going during challenging economic circumstances;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) it was considered that 51 sites had still not started construction, despite having planning permission, because of economic circumstances; officers had undertaken an analysis of these sites and were proactively working with land owners and developers in order help to make progress where possible;
- (f) officers would provide the Committee with more detail regarding reasons for large or inward investment sites stalling in Plymouth;
- (g) officers had been shortlisted for the National Silver Jubilee Cup as a result of the market recovery initiative;

The Chair commended officers for their report and thanked them for their attendance.

Agreed that officers would provide the Committee with more detail regarding reasons for large or inward investment sites stalling in Plymouth.

16. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY**

Paul Barnard, Assistant Director for Planning Services, Nick Carter, Housing Delivery Team Leader, and Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, provided the Committee with an update on Affordable Housing Delivery.

The Committee was informed that –

- (a) the demand for affordable housing increasingly outweighed supply; there was a range of housing demand in the city and officer were working with partners, developers and landowners to help secure funding and deliver affordable housing across the city;
- (b) a target to deliver 3,300 affordable homes in Plymouth had been set to be achieved by 2021; officers confirmed that since 2006, 2,003 affordable homes had been delivered therefore officers were confident that they were able to exceed the set target;

- (c) in comparison to other housing family groups and cooperative housing groups, Plymouth City Council compared well with regards to affordable housing delivery; Plymouth was seen as a top quartile performer;
- (d) photos contained at the end of the Affordable Housing Delivery report attached to the agenda sets out illustrations of schemes that had been completed;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) the Affordable Housing Delivery team were also responsible for bringing empty properties back into use; two compulsory purchase orders had been undertaken. Thelma Cunningham was the project lead on empty homes across the city and should be contacted if ward members wanted progress on an empty homes issue;
- (f) the council tax for empty homes had been increased to 150% in order to act as an incentive to bring these properties back into use;
- (g) officers monitored housing completions, developments and demolitions and confirmed that the estimated net figure for additional homes was 700;
- (h) a mixture of different types and size of home, including general needs accommodation for single people and families, supported housing projects for vulnerable households and specialists housing projects for people with a range of disability were required to meet the needs of the city; officers confirmed that the exact number of mixed and special needs accommodation was not available at the meeting however a figure would be provided to the Committee detailing a breakdown of need and number as well as a projection of new types of schemes coming forward;
- (i) the eco house 'slice' positioned outside the Civic Centre had created a lot of interest in the project; the zero bills scheme at Bickleigh designed to deliver 92 homes was considered to be 45% sold; construction was expected to start in March 2014;

The Chair thanked Councillor Lowry and officers for their attendance.

Agreed that the exact number of mixed and special needs accommodation was not available at the meeting however a figure would be provided to the Committee detailing a breakdown of need and number as well as a projection of types of new schemes coming forward.

17. **GET PLYMOUTH BUILDING**

Paul Barnard, Assistant Director for Planning Services, Nick Carter, Housing Delivery Team Leader, and Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, provided the Committee with an update on the Get Plymouth Building Initiative.

The Committee was informed that –

- (a) the Get Plymouth Building Initiative was launched in August 2012; the initiative contained eight initiatives to accelerate housing delivery;
- (b) 231 homes had already been completed, 1,097 homes were currently under construction; projections indicated that more than 1,659 further homes would be brought forward under this initiative in the next 2/3 years;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (c) three sites were currently at planning applications stage and could yield six dwellings; a further 168 dwellings were expected to be delivered at other sites across the city;
- (d) mortgage availability, the state of the economy and financial pressures were possible reasons for affecting the development of lapsed sites across the city;
- (e) Amy Luxton, a Housing Delivery Officer for Plymouth City Council was nominated as the self-build champion;
- (f) the Colin Campbell Court development would be looked at by officers through the Plymouth Plan process; it was important that city centres provided a balance of use;
- (g) land banking was not considered to be a major issue in Plymouth as there were a variety of reasons as to why construction had not yet started on sites granted with planning permission;
- (h) Plymouth City Council had an 83% rate of planning applications having been dealt with in 13 weeks; this was one of the highest performance levels in the country;
- (i) there was considered to be a shortage in skilled workers able to work on construction sites;

Agreed that the report is noted.

(Under this item Councillor Michael Leaves declared a personal interest)

18. **PLAN FOR HOMES**

Paul Barnard, Assistant Director for Planning Services, and Councillor Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, provided the Committee with an update on the Plan for Homes.

The Committee was informed that –

- (a) the Plan for Homes was a work in progress initiative aimed at facilitating a transformational step change in housing delivery;
- (b) Plymouth's population was increasing by 1000 every year as a result of more births than deaths and an ageing population;
- (c) several thousand young people moved to Plymouth every year taking up the educational offer; the 18-24 age-group was the only age-group increasing in Plymouth;
- (d) the recent Census showed that there was a deficit of people in Plymouth aged in their 30s;
- (e) between 2002-2009 there was a net influx of 352 people, with 294 leaving Plymouth;
- (f) there were only 10 properties in Plymouth that had a Council Tax Band 'H';
- (g) officers were carrying out a Strategic Land Availability Assessment in order to help provide more affordable housing across the city;
- (h) provisions could be placed on development sites to ensure that the types of housing, numbers of housing and quality of housing was appropriate;
- (i) officers were encouraging investors to invest in Plymouth;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (j) significant purchases of land would have to go through full council;
- (k) the Plymouth Plan would contain information regarding the future development of land and the process by which developments would take place;
- (l) the Plymouth Plan would cover the period 2014 to 2031;
- (m) it was anticipated that some areas of currently undeveloped land would need to be developed in order to help meet the housing need in Plymouth;
- (n) a mix of homes was required and planned to suit the different needs of people in Plymouth;

- (o) officers noted concerns raised that the initial plan to 'waive S106 requirements' to unlock stalled sites would need to be carefully managed and should instead say 'negotiate'; officers noted that Councillors considered there should be more of an attempt made from the Council to get a S106 contribution in order to help communities and local infrastructure;
- (p) officers noted comments regarding the importance of the neighbourhood plan process influencing future policy and development;
- (q) the Plymouth Plan would be consulted upon and a convention would be held to engage with communities;
- (r) research was currently taking place regarding the Density Bonus and how a bonus arrangement could to incentivise developers yet not affect the quality of homes being built;
- (s) 320 homes at the Sherford Development were within the border of the city; Plymouth would benefit from the new homes bonus for these houses. officers were still in discussions regarding the nomination rights to the affordable homes in the entire Sherford development;
- (t) commercial land and development was also important; Government had introduced a provision where converting commercial property to residential use would not need planning permission; concerns had been expressed by many authorities that this could impact on jobs;
- (u) the strategic needs assessment would identify the size, requirements and number of properties required;
- (v) there was a 15 year life expectancy difference between the PL1 and PL9 postcodes in Plymouth;
- (w) officers confirmed that all Councillors would have access to the Strategic Needs Assessment once it was ready; it was confirmed that it would be uploaded to the Council's website and the Members' Room webpage;
- (x) officers confirmed that more information on the neighbourhood planning process would be submitted to Committee Members;

The Chair commended Councillor Lowry and Paul Barnard for their hard work in producing the Plan for Homes report and thanked them for their attendance at the meeting. The Committee welcomed the initiatives and strategy being pursued in the emerging Plan for Homes.

Agreed that –

- (l) all Councillors would have access to the Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment once it was ready; it was confirmed that it would be uploaded to

the Council's website and the Members' Room webpage;

- (2) further consideration is given to the Neighbourhood Planning process;
- (3) that a report detailing progress with the Plan for Homes is submitted to a future meeting following Cabinet.

(Councillor Darcy left the meeting during the discussion of this item).

19. **YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

David Draffan, Assistant Director for Economic Development, Annie Singer, Senior Leadership Advisor, Chris Grace, Head of Economy, Enterprise and Employment, and Patrick Knight, Economy and Employment Manager provided the Committee with an update on Youth Unemployment.

The Committee was informed that –

- (a) youth unemployment was an important issue as it could create misery in those affected as well as have an adverse impact on self-esteem and long term earning ability;
- (b) there was an impact from youth unemployment on wages, even ten years later in life;
- (c) since an update to scrutiny in 2012 in which it was recognised that there was a gap in evidence around the issue of young people with special needs (including disabilities) officers confirmed that a review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) / Learners with Learning Difficulties (LLD) was undertaken by a task group;
- (d) the Special Education Need and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy Steering Group established a working group, analysing 16-25 year olds assessing educational needs and emotional challenges;
- (e) officers were working with City College Plymouth and helped to support the application to the Skills Funding Agency for capital funding;
- (f) Plymouth City Council set up a project with key partners, including City College Plymouth, to develop education and training packages for young people with Autism; a self-contained building was refurbished making it fit for purpose allowing eight people to receive skills and vocational training;
- (g) the Post-16 Transition panel comprising of representatives from City College Plymouth, Prince's Trust, Plymouth College of Art and Careers South West worked with 16-18 year olds who were ready to work but needed support in achieving suitable provision;

- (h) the scale of youth unemployment in Plymouth was currently at 1590, 18-24 unemployed; this had reduced by 20% since last year but still remains an issue;
- (i) 1000 club was a successful club in getting people into work; the figures had increased from those listed in the agenda pack. There were now 500+ members, 374 full time and part time jobs created through this programme and 372 apprenticeships;
- (j) Plymouth City Council had won the South West National Apprenticeships Service Large Employer of the Year 2013 award;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (k) a lot of work was going into equipping young people with the skills required to start employment;
- (l) employment and skills were now both connected in the Council with input from both the Assistant Director for Economic Development and the Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Families;
- (m) there were approximately 40,000 students in Plymouth; officers noted that many graduates were forced to leave Plymouth in order to progress their career. The CityDeal would help to tackle this issue by providing opportunities for graduates;
- (n) officers would provide the committee with an update on the implementation plan, graduate retention figures and forecast growth;
- (o) intensive courses were available to provide training for skilled workers; support was in place, via the Urban Enterprise Programme, to provide coaching and revenue funding;
- (p) employability was integral to creating a healthy economy; work was required in shifting the economy to new sectors;

The Chair thanked the Officers for their report and attendance at the meeting.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Committee would be provided with a report on the Skills Plan during the current year's work programme;
- (2) the Committee would be provided with information regarding the Local Procurement Strategy and how this is supporting youth unemployment;
- (3) officers would provide the committee with an update on the implementation plan and graduate retention;

20. **REQUEST FOR A COOPERATIVE REVIEW: ON STREET PARKING REVIEW: RATIONALISATION OF CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES REQUEST**

The Committee noted the Review Request Form. The Democratic Support Officer informed the Committee that a scoping meeting would be arranged shortly to plan the review meetings.

21. **PLYMOUTH PLAN REVIEW**

Gill Peele, Lead Officer for Working Plymouth, and Helen Rickman, Democratic Support Officer, provided the Committee with an update on the Plymouth Plan Review.

The Committee was informed that the Plymouth Plan Review was initially on the Working Plymouth work programme however this issue would now be scrutinised by various scrutiny panels with an overarching lead from the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.

22. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND UPDATE FROM THE COOPERATIVE SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Chair informed the Committee that the majority of information on the tracking document was greyed out as complete.

With regards to the Hoe Foreshore, Gill Peele, Lead Officer for Working Plymouth, confirmed that a risk assessment had taken place and no red risks were found. It was confirmed that other aspects of the Hoe Foreshore including social activity and the importance of its economy for Plymouth would be detailed in the Plymouth Plan.

The scrutiny approach, with regards to the Amey Contract item on the tracking document, still required clarification however the Lead Officer confirmed that this item would stay on the work programme and clarification would be provided on current operations.

Agreed that –

(I) the Hoe Foreshore Risk Assessment is circulated to Committee Members.

23. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Work Programme and had discussions around the North Plymouth Area Action Plan Inspectors Report and the requirement for Clive Turner, Plymouth Community Homes Chief Executive, to attend the Committee's November business meeting.

Agreed that –

(I) Clive Turner was still required to attend the November business meeting to discuss Plymouth Community Homes;

- (2) a request is submitted to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board for the North Plymouth Area Action Plan Inspectors report to be added to the Working Plymouth work programme.

Under this item Gill Peele, Lead Officer for Working Plymouth, confirmed that the Youth Unemployment report discussed earlier in the meeting referred to two scrutiny panels – the report may therefore need to go before both panels in the future.

24. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.