

**MINUTES  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Monday 25 April 2016**

Councillor Viv McCrossen (Chair)

Councillor Gary Gregory	Councillor Marje Paling
Councillor Bruce Andrews	Councillor Stephen Poole
Councillor Sandra Barnes	Councillor Alex Scroggie
Councillor Tammy Bisset	Councillor John Truscott
Councillor Paul Feeney	

Apologies for absence: Councillor Kevin Doyle and Councillor Helen Greensmith

Officers in Attendance: J Robinson, A Bennett and H Lee

Guests in Attendance Councillors J Hollingsworth, H Wheeler, B Miller, A Ellwood, Jason Canon, Deborah Higgins, Kandra Hourd and Paula Johnson

**110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.**

Councillor Kevin Doyle and Helen Greensmith.

**111 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2016**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

**112 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

Councillor Gary Gregory declared a none-pecuniary interest as a member of Gedling Homes' Board of Management.

**113 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

Homelessness and Housing – Overview and Scrutiny 25 April  
Alison Bennet attended the committee to discuss issues related to the housing and homelessness that fall within Councillor Henry Wheeler's and Councillor Jenny Hollingsworth's portfolio. Specific issues for discussion included:

- L1051 Average time to process homeless applications ( number of working days
- L1046 Preventing Homelessness – number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the Council, and for whom housing advice resolved their situation
- Homeless accommodation provision
- Length of time taken for new tenants to be move into empty properties.
- NI154 Net additional homes provided
- NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered
- Housing development – specifically lack of housebuilding by Gedling Homes and provision of affordable housing in the villages.

Jason Canon and Deborah Higgins from Gedling Homes also attended the meeting to support Councillor Hollingsworth.

The following points were highlighted:

L1051 and L1046 – the target for this indicator has been reduced from 25 to 19 days.

Work around prevention to keep people in their homes is preferable to putting people in temporary accommodation.

Challenges presented by the private rented market include:

- Increased demand which has resulted in rent increases putting levels above the housing benefit limit.
- Landlords are reluctant to accommodate challenging cases and prefer to let to tenants who are in work.
- The increasing a requirement to provide a guarantor and a large bond, or deposit, thus pricing some people out of the market.
- Cuts to the County Council Supporting People budget which has led to a loss of specialist housing provision for people with additional needs for example drug and alcohol issues.

In order to maintain tenancies support work has to be available. This can necessitate a great deal of time and effort to resolve issues but this may not ultimately solve the problem and the tenancy may fail. Demand is growing for rental properties and there are not enough properties for private rent. A change to rents no longer being directly paid to landlords

also exacerbates problems in the rental market. Work is undertaken to support and build links with private landlords through the landlord's forum.

The effects of the Housing and Planning Bill resulting in the loss of benefit for the under 25 year olds plus the move to Universal Credit will put additional strain on the Housing Needs section.

Changes to the definition of affordable housing in the Housing and Planning Act has broadened the definition and includes not only properties for rental with affordable rents, but shared ownership schemes, starter homes sold at a discount of at least 20% and under the Government's Home Buy scheme the purchase of a newly built home with a 5% deposit. Gedling Borough negotiates to provide a proportion of affordable housing on all new developments of 15 or more properties

When providing additional homes both urban and village locations have to be considered. For example provision of social housing in Ravenshead was not that successful as people initially didn't want to move there, and of those that did, a disproportional number then moved away.

The effect of Notts. Healthcare moving people out of supported accommodation into the community will have a knock on effect when all the intermediate housing provision has disappeared.

Currently there are 2,000 homes with planning permission with houses planned for Teal Close, Top Wighay Farm and the Gedling Colliery site. The Grove development will provide 18 new flats and two, two bedroomed semi-detached properties to be managed by Notts. Community Housing Association, and the disposal of a former play area in Netherfield will provide a further 6 houses for affordable rent.

Following questions from members the following issues were addressed: Work is undertaken to bring empty residential properties into use. Currently 38 properties for social rent are being built on the former Cavendish Pub site on Westdale Lane.

Issues around tenants presenting antisocial behaviour are addressed, initially through initiatives such as starter tenancies, which run for the first 12 months of the tenancy and give the tenant fewer rights, making it easier to evict them, if they breach their tenancy conditions, for example anti-social behaviour. People with unmet mental health needs are very difficult to evict, as they present with a range of needs, and without specialist support it is very difficult for them to maintain a tenancy. However the statutory duty for Gedling Borough Council is to provide houses and is not to be a social provider, but without a support package in place, many such tenancies will fail.

The landscape of social housing is changing, with significant changes in both the funding which is available and also the type of tenure which will be available in the future, as the focus is now on shared ownership, but few of the 1000+ applications on the Council's housing register would be able to afford shared ownership, leaving all councils in a very difficult position. As a result the authority has to make the best use of resources available.

## **114 PROGRAMME OF HOLDING THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACCOUNT**

### **Programme of Holding the Portfolio Holder to Account.**

#### **I. 2015/16 Programme of Portfolio Holder Attendance**

John Robinson provided an overview of Quarter 3 performance for the planning indicators. 80% of major planning applications met the target, 50% of minor applications and 67% of other, this includes applications for extensions. He informed members that there has been a concentration on processing major planning applications but that these performance figures are disappointing and steps are being taken to improve. Issues around the recruitment and retention of planning officers are being addressed and pay levels which match the market rate introduced. Processes used for progressing applications are not as good as they could be and it is expected that the appointment of new officers will improve this. The time taken to process an application can be prolonged by officers working with applicants to make sure applications are correct and will be approved. Processes for pre application enquiries have been tackled and this will reduce the number of speculative applications rejected on technicalities.

Councillor Hollingsworth discussed the sale of the former council offices in Carlton Square to an investment company with a change of use to residential properties, and how the redevelopment of Carlton Square should be looked at in the wider context of the regenerating the whole of the area. Plans for Arnold Market are currently under discussion and Councillor Hollingsworth will return in six months when she will be able to provide an update on progress to refresh the Arnold town centre.

#### **2. Ongoing programme of portfolio holder attendance**

Members were informed that the meeting arranged for the 16 May has been cancelled and rearranged for the 27<sup>th</sup> June. Members will be contacted nearer the date to identify areas for examination.

## **RESOLVED:**

- I. To thank Councillor Hollingsworth for the information.
- II. To receive an update regarding the regeneration of Arnold Town Centre in six months.

## **115 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE**

Kendra Hourd, District Manager – Rushcliffe, Gedling and Mansfield and Paula Johnson, Senior Officer for Gedling, Notts. County Council gave an overview of the Highway Maintenance Strategy 2016/16 – 2020/21. The following points were highlighted:

- Historically Nottinghamshire followed a ‘worst first’ short term approach to highways maintenance , with an element of preventative maintenance through surface dressing
- Roads in the worst condition are identified through technical surveys, local engineering knowledge and political input are used to develop a one year programme for resurfacing and reconstruction
- Nationally years of under investment, an increase in climate impact and a largely ‘worst first’ strategy alongside the importance of maintaining a road network in a safe and serviceable condition has led to a maintenance backlog of approximately £319million in Nottinghamshire (2014) figures. The annual funding for highway maintenance is £14 million.
- The Department for Work and Transport set out the asset management principle for all highways authorities with greater use of preventative treatments such as surface dressing/overlay methods and less emphasis on ‘worst first’ full resurfacing
- All highways authorities must demonstrate compliance with this implementing a strategy over 6 years and the DfT will rank the efforts at 3 levels. Over the 6 years if a highways authority meets the top level every year they will not lose any funding. If an authority ranks lower it will keep losing advancing amounts of funding over the 6 years ending at receiving nothing in the final year for the lowest ranking. NCC anticipates it will achieve either the middle level or top level in the first year.

- Road maintenance funding will be split 3 ways between A roads B/C roads and unclassified roads. The Pothole Challenge Fund is not included in this and is spent on larger patching areas or pot holes only.
- The new approach assumes that 20% of the unclassified network and nearly 10% of the classified network will remain in need of repair. The backlog of work will only reduce very gradually and may even increase if funding levels are reduced or remain the same. It is hoped that preventative measures will reduce demands on the 'worst first' programme over time.
- Horizons is the maintenance data base which holds engineering data on road conditions. It is made up of scanner survey data, SCRIM survey data; these are both automated road condition survey machines, and visual surveys. This provides a draft programme of works which is put forward to full council for approval.
- Roads are chosen for repair using 'deterioration modelling' which predicts the relative condition of the highways network over the coming years and helps decide where resources should be channelled at the optimum time to treat roads in the most cost effective way.
- A large proportion of pothole repairs are undertaken with proprietary hand-laid material that is specifically designed for the purpose and sets in water as necessary. Pot hole repairs are cost much less than resurfacing treatments and repeated patching in this manner does not amount to anywhere near the funding needed to resurface.

Following questions from Members the following issues were addressed:

- The material commissioned for the repair of pot holes was chosen after an 18 month trial which considered both efficacy and price. When repairing the material can be left proud to allow for flattening over time.
- Pot hole repairs cost approximately £30-40, resurfacing a road is much more expensive.
- The condition of A, B and C roads are satisfactory in Gedling, local roads are not so good.
- When considering roads to be included in the repair programme traffic flow, recreational use including walking, cycling are taken into account.
- Use of the reporting system is effective. Members were reminded that if they want to raise individual issues they can

call the County Council Customer Contact Centre on 0300 500 8080 or register the details themselves online at :  
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/roads/report-road-problem>

**RESOLVED:**

- I. Note the information presented.
- II. To thank the officers for attending the meeting.

**116**

**COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION REQUEST**

Councillor Ellwood was invited to discuss his request for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Councillor Call for Action request. Councillor Ellwood had submitted a request relating to a review of the processes undertaken by the Council for the of issuing Section 215 notices under the Town and County Planning Act, specifically those initiated by the Planning Department. This request resulted from the length of time it is taking to resolve problems relating to the untidy and overgrown nature of the derelict factory site at 72 -74 Westdale Lane. The Planning Department was initially notified in March 2013 by a local resident concerning issues relating to this site, and after numerous site visits and the issuing of a Section 215 notice in March 2015 no improvements have been made. Councillor Ellwood presented a petition from 44 local residents requesting that the Council take enforcement action, this was acknowledged in September 2015 as well as referred to in the minutes for Cabinet which stated 'further action would be taken to enforce Section 215 Notice'.

Councillor Ellwood has made the Call for Action as a last resort as he acknowledges that in the majority of cases work with the land owner usually resolves this type of problem. He raised concerns about a number of issues, including why the Planning Department initiated the Section 215 notice when they are usually undertaken by Public Protection, processes in the planning department and lack of action resulting from the petition.

After discussion the committee decided that this was a complex issue that required further investigation and requested further information for the next committee. Councillors Truscott and Paling agreed undertake this.

## **RESOLVED:**

- I. To examine the issues relating to the Councillor Call for Action.
- II. To receive information at the next committee meeting.
- III. To keep Councillor Ellwood informed about the findings of the investigation.

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## **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

### **Response to Request for additional information**

- **Quarter 3 Performance**

Members had requested additional information regarding the length of the Veolia PFI Waste contract. Members had no comments on the additional information and noted the information.

- **Colwick Vale Surgery Closure Consultation**

Members were informed that the suggestion to hold a surgery in the village hall was not an option for a number of reasons. Members noted the update.

### **Scrutiny Reviews 2014/2015**

- **Transport Links to and Within Gedling Borough**

Members noted the work undertaken by members of the Youth Council relating to recommendation 7 of the report.

### **2015/16 Work Programme**

#### **Scrutiny working groups**

- **Bonington Theatre**

After discussion additional recommendations were agreed. The report will be submitted to Cabinet and a response requested for the July meeting.



- **Obesity Working Group**

Members were informed that the working group had nearly completed its evidence gathering and a report and recommendations would be available at the next committee meeting.

**Work Programme 2015/16**

Members were informed of a change of date for the next committee and that a revised work programme and the new committee date would be circulated after the meeting. It was agreed that suggestions for scrutiny reviews would be discussed at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- I. Note the additional information requested.
- II. Note the update on the Transport Links to and within the Borough recommendation.
- III. Amend the Bonington Theatre Working Group recommendations.
- IV. Note the information regarding the Obesity Working Group.
- V. Discuss the focus for new working groups at the next committee meeting.

**118 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.**

None.

The meeting finished at 7.30 pm

Signed by Chair:

Date: