

## **PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday 20 May 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Richard Eglington (Chair), Cllr Jim Beall (Vice-Chair), Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Hilary Vickers and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley.

**Officers:** Jane Edmends, Alan Glew, Marc Stephenson (AH&W), Michelle Gunn (CS).

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Kevin Faulks.

### **PLA/7/24 Evacuation Procedure**

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

### **PLA/8/24 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **PLA/9/24 Minutes**

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **PLA/10/24 Scrutiny Review of (Unauthorised) Roadside Advertising**

Consideration was given to the draft final report and recommendations for the Scrutiny review of (Unauthorised) Roadside Advertising. The Chair introduced the report and thanked the Committee and Officers for their contributions to the review.

There were two recommendations from the review, regarding placing guidance information regarding planning regulations for roadside advertising on the website and reviewing the online reporting systems. The link officer noted that the information had been placed on the website and changes to the reporting systems to introduce mapping layers would be made shortly. It was agreed that the link officer would inform members once both recommendations had been achieved and an action plan was not required.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport thanked the Committee for their work on this review. It was acknowledged that roadside advertising was a difficult issue to review which involved several services within the Council.

AGREED that the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

### **PLA/11/24 Scrutiny Review of Affordable Housing**

Prior to the consideration of the draft scope and project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Affordable Housing, members received a background presentation setting out the context of the review. The presentation included:

- Definition of affordable housing
- Local housing statistics
- Strategic response
- The current challenges
- Options available to the council

The main issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- Homes England provided funding to Registered Providers to build affordable rented housing, while 106 agreements placed a requirement on private housing developers to build a proportion of affordable housing when applying for planning permission. Officers noted that the most effective way to build affordable housing under a 106 agreement was to partner with a registered provider.
- Tees Valley Home Provider was discussed, and it was noted that:
  - Registered Providers advertised either all or a proportion of their properties through Tees Valley Home Finder, i.e. Thirteen advertised 50% of their homes through Tees Valley Home Finder, and those registered were able to bid for properties as they became available. People looking to rent affordable housing were advised to register both through MyThirteen and Tees Valley Home Finder.
  - A banding system was used to allocate properties and those registered were placed in a band depending on their situation and requirements. Someone who was homeless and a priority need housing group and / or likely to be threatened with homelessness within 56 days would be assessed as a Band 1 (highest priority for rehousing). Each application was assessed based on its own unique circumstances in accordance with the Tees Valley Common Allocations Policy.
  - Members questioned whether the system allowed for people living in other areas of the Tees Valley to bid on properties within Stockton-on-Tees. Officers stated that the agreed Common Allocation Policy across the three local authorities involved gave priority to people living in the borough for a property. However, there were exceptional circumstances where someone from outside the borough would be able to successfully bid for a property in Stockton-on-Tees. Also, intermediate affordable housing i.e. shared ownership could consider applicants without a local connection.
- Members questioned whether the “right to buy” affected the number of properties available. It was explained that tenants who applied to a registered provider for affordable rented housing from 2010 no longer had the “right to buy” the property they lived in but did have a “right to acquire” which was not as an attractive offer.
- It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of Section 21 No Fault Evictions taking place in the private rent sector, as well as rising rents. This had created more demand for affordable rented housing and increased the number of people presenting as homeless.

Consideration was then given to the draft scope and project plan for the review. The key aim of the review would be to identify potential options for how the council could increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough and therefore address the housing need. The Committee noted that they wanted to understand the challenges to

the current local plan, seek evidence from a cross section of Registered Housing Providers as well as housing developers and a private letting agent, and consider how other local authorities were addressing the issue via the Local Government Association (LGA). They also wished to gain an insight to the customer experience and it was suggested that the Committee could speak to and shadow the Letting and Nominations team while taking calls.

AGREED that the presentation be noted and the scope and project plan be approved, subject to the above comments.

**PLA/12/24 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2024-2025**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The next meeting would be held on Monday 10 June 2024.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted