

Contact Officer: Sheila Dykes

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 15th March 2022

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Habiban Zaman

Apologies: Councillor Harpreet Uppal

61 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Uppal.

62 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3rd February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chair provided an update, as follows:

The Corporate Safeguarding Policy, which had been considered by the Committee on 3rd February, had been approved at the meeting of Cabinet held on 8th March 2022. The policy would be included in the Council's Policy Framework and would be reviewed on an annual basis, along with the associated guidance (Minute 58).

63 Interests

No interests were declared.

64 Admission of the Public

All items were held in public session.

65 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

66 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

67 Low Carbon Housing Pilot Project

A report was submitted in respect of the development of a Low Carbon Housing Pilot Project.

A report seeking approval to move forward with the project, specifically to appoint a specialist design team, was to be submitted to Cabinet on 5th April 2022.

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Naz Parkar, Service Director – Homes and Neighbourhoods and James Hinchliffe, General Manager – Development attended the meeting to introduce the report and gave a presentation covering the following:

- The context and background to the project and the associated challenges, from both a local and national perspective. This included: fuel poverty, the impact of the rising cost of living, addressing the climate emergency, inefficient older stock, provision of healthy living conditions, the drive for sustainable standards, volatility within the energy market, and regulatory changes.
- The approach to achieve the necessary behavioural change.
- Details of the project to construct 125 homes on a site in Liversedge, with a minimum of twenty units to Passivhaus standard, one zero-carbon house and the remainder achieving a minimum 31% reduction in carbon emissions on current building regulations. There was an intention to incorporate modern methods of construction and the scheme would also allow the Council to share learning, to assist in raising design standards for the future.
- A summary of the Passivhaus approach.
- The Forward Plan; including a start on site in 2023 with completion by 2026.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- The specification for a minimum of 31% carbon savings would apply to all the units on the site other than the zero-carbon and Passivhaus units. It was anticipated that the specialist design team may be able to assist in achieving an improvement on this figure. By 2025 the Government would require all new homes to produce 75 to 80% fewer carbon emissions, however the technical guidance had not yet been published and this proposal had been put forward in anticipation of this change.
- Significant exploratory work had been undertaken through talking to, and visiting, those authorities and designers that had already undertaken such projects, in order to benefit from their knowledge and experience, and research undertaken in relation to off-site manufacturing methods.
- The sharing of information and learning, both internally and externally, was important; the ambition was to share learning with the wider market and local contractor base and to develop construction skills and techniques to support new approaches to housebuilding in the future.
- It was questioned whether the proposed numbers of Passivhaus (20) and zero-carbon units (1) would be sufficient to provide the necessary data and demonstrate the principles and benefits that the Council was hoping for. In response it was explained that the stated numbers were a minimum and it was believed that they would be adequate to test the principles. The Council would take advice from the design team, once appointed, to assess if this could be increased. The scheme was at an early stage and the Council was open to testing different technologies and approaches to achieve the goals, with the focus being on outcomes rather than accreditation.
- It was agreed that proven outputs should be the primary focus. It was questioned whether air pressure testing would be undertaken as standard, in order to ascertain how energy efficient the units were, as there was a concern about the potential performance gap between the specified build standard for a unit and

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what was actually achieved. It was explained that the specialist design team would advise on dealing with performance gaps and building-in tolerance.

- In terms of the need to build capacity to undertake such work, this project was intended as a starting point, to test the principles and the concept and get the right model and measures in place which should then allow the development of such schemes to be quickly expanded.
- The necessary expertise for this project would be commissioned, and the report to Cabinet was seeking authority to take this forward.
- External water management for a Passivhaus build would be undertaken through the use of more passive methods, such as swales, rather than traditional methods.
- In order to try and encourage active travel and reduce reliance on carbon-using transport, liaison would be undertaken with bus operators serving the site and electric vehicle charging points would be provided.
- Further thought was needed around how the excess power generated from zero-carbon homes would be used and who would benefit from this, and advice would be sought from the specialist design team.
- A scheme in Sheffield had used a community solar panel system to supply a group of homes and this sort of practice should be given consideration. Arrays of panels could achieve economies of scale.
- Work would be undertaken with the new/prospective occupiers in respect of the lifestyle changes and adaptations needed to live in these new homes.
- Reference was made to the report of the Working Group on Passive Housing and the progress since that point. It was explained that the Council had gone to the market with a proposal for a Passivhaus development in 2016 but the costs at that point in time had meant that it was not taken forward.
- The objectives in terms of addressing the climate emergency and fuel poverty aligned, for example making a house more efficient would lower bills and making a contribution to energy generation meant less reliance on other technologies.

Resolved -

- 1) That the Low Carbon Housing Pilot Project be welcomed.
- 2) That the following points be taken into account in moving forward:
 - The ambition should be to achieve more than the minimum number set out in the design brief.
 - Consideration should be given to whether the numbers of Passivhaus and zero-carbon homes proposed in the pilot will be sufficient to gather the necessary data and demonstrate the principles and benefits.
 - The alignment between addressing the climate emergency and fuel poverty should be acknowledged.
 - Clarity is needed in respect of how the data will be collected and the skills and learning shared.
 - The focus should be on the outputs achieved and outcomes should be specified.
- 3) That the proposal to consult the Ward Councillors be noted.

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Local Flood Risk Management - Annual Review

A report was submitted which considered progress against the Action Plan of the Kirklees Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, during the previous twelve-month period.

Rashid Mahmood, Flood Manager, Planning and Development introduced the report and Chris Johnson, Operational Manager, Highways was also in attendance to answer questions. The following points were highlighted:

- The delivery of works, funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Property Flood Resilience Grant, to protect properties and reduce internal flooding was progressing well.
- The £1.3 million Kirklees Culverts Project was on track for completion by 31st March 2022 and there may be potential for it to be extended into a second phase.
- A successful bid had been made for funding for a review of high-risk debris screen assets and this would commence in the new financial year.
- New software had been purchased to improve the Authority's local flood warning system by providing early intelligence of problems in the district.
- Springboard funding had been achieved for an innovation programme at regional level to increase resilience.
- The Community Flood Risk Education Programme had been completed.
- Work was progressing in respect of the development of a new Flood Risk Management Strategy, which would include a focus on nature-based solutions, community resilience, and how to manage the impact of climate change.
- The impact of, and response to, the recent storm events.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In terms of adapting to worsening conditions, the Authority was keen to pursue nature-based solutions and work was ongoing with local groups together with the National Trust, Yorkshire Water and the Peak District National Park to address leaks and slow the flow. There was a need to scale up this work and a bid had been made to allow further mapping to be undertaken. In addition, climate science continued to develop, the Government had issued new climate change allowances that would be taken into consideration when assessing planning applications and projects, and new national models were being looked at.
- Had consideration been given to the use of more community-based approaches such as flood sacks, which were filled with water, so that people did not have to wait for a response to be able to take action.
- Since the report to the Committee in 2021, sandbags had been deployed in advance to ten areas that had been identified as being at risk. Approximately 150 gullies, that were known to have caused flooding to properties, had been added to the Pre-Flood Operational Plan and the highest risk gullies had been targeted prior to the recent storm events.
- In respect of a specific incidence in Albert Street, Huddersfield, it was explained that this had been an unusual occurrence and illustrated the challenges faced in trying to predict flooding.

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- The list of priority gullies did evolve and the data was reviewed but if the list became too large it would not be possible to get to all of them in the limited time available.
- It was suggested that circumstances could be altered in an area as a result of development and checks should therefore be undertaken post-completion, in case the nature of the drainage had changed.
- The Council worked closely with the Canals and Riverside Trust (CART).
- The response during the recent storm events had been good; it was considered that the teams had been well prepared and there had been good communication with residents.
- It was suggested that if officers experienced problems with access when clearing gullies, for example due to parked cars, that contact be made with the Ward Councillors who may be able to assist.
- In respect of engagement with smaller landowners on the implementation of natural flood management, and capacity to develop business cases, it was explained that a member of the team had taken on a role as natural flood management co-ordinator and was developing a partnership approach with various partners including the Aire and Calder Trust. Business cases were being developed and submitted and the necessary skills were being developed in-house; it was recognised that this was a key area of work to generate investment into the district.
- Four thousand priority gullies had been cleared to prepare for the winter season, with approximately 150 done in preparation for the recent storm events. In respect of more regular checks of gullies; there were eighty thousand gullies on the network and the level of available resources had necessitated a move to a risk-based approach to clearance in 2018. This approach was based on the gritting routes and encompassed thirty-five thousand gullies which were cleared once per annum, with the remainder done on a reactive basis with notification being provided by members of the public.

Resolved –

That officers be thanked for the annual progress report and that consideration be given to the following recommendations:

- Ward Councillors be contacted if problems are experienced with access when undertaking gully clearing, with parked vehicles for example, to see if they can provide assistance.
- The checking of high-risk gullies on a more regular basis.
- An assessment of the area in the vicinity of a development site post-completion, to ascertain if there have been changes to the drainage that would impact on flood risk.

69 Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27

A report was submitted in respect of the Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27.

Councillor Carole Pattison, Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities, was in attendance and introduced the strategy, developed with the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership, explaining that it covered a five-year period and took a whole family approach. The breadth of this strategy had been facilitated

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by the preceding strategies, which had enabled the establishment and development of the necessary resources to address domestic abuse. She noted that the impacts of domestic abuse were felt not just by an individual or a family but the whole community and there would be a strengthened approach to dealing with perpetrators.

Jill Greenfield, Service Director Customer and Communities, Jo Richmond, Head of Service, Communities and Chani Mortimer, Service Manager Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Partnerships attended to present the report and answer questions. They highlighted the following points:

- There was a strong partnership in place and this provided a robust basis for launching a new strategy.
- It was recognised that there were still some barriers to accessing support and that navigating support could be a challenge for local people.
- The objective of the strategy was to provide a consistent, co-ordinated and high-quality approach regardless of the point at which someone accessed the system.
- Delivery of the new statutory duty linked to safe accommodation had been incorporated within the strategy.
- The delivery plan was being developed and scrutiny's input would be welcomed.
- The key themes running through the strategy included: responding to lived experience and providing feedback loops; intelligence-led resourcing, as and when needed, not just for 'hotspots' but also where there were few reports; supporting and increasing the skills of the workforce to ensure that they were equipped to respond in appropriate manner; how to support local specialist services to ensure that they are sustainable and embedded in the community; working directly with the community to understand impact and how this can be addressed; and agreeing individual partnership commitments.

The strategy was a partnership document and the Committee also welcomed Stuart Bainbridge from West Yorkshire Police and Denise Phillip, from NHS Kirklees Clinical Commissioning Group.

Stuart explained that:

- from the Police perspective the partnership approach was key, through the Kirklees Daily Risk Management Meetings (DRAMM) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and third-sector partners.
- Domestic abuse was a primary function for West Yorkshire Police and was, unfortunately, a growth area.
- The partnership approach would help support victims and direct perpetrators.
- The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chief Constable had a strong understanding of domestic abuse and how a partnership approach would support the response. Resources had been focussed on domestic abuse and safeguarding and there had been an increase in staff and the development of new areas of work, such as the domestic abuse offender management team.
- The need to work collaboratively was acknowledged and understood.
- The Partnership Intelligence Portal would increase effectiveness and assist in filling the gaps in intelligence.

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Denise explained that;

- Domestic abuse was a priority across the health organisations. It had been recognised that, during the pandemic and lockdown, it had become an increasing concern nationally, and this was reflected locally.
- Work had been done on gap analysis and how to support progression for funding streams.
- Training had been provided for GPs on how to respond and additional funding allocated to acute providers to provide appropriate support for people presenting with disclosure of domestic abuse.
- There was a strong collective commitment to work together to have a domestic abuse informed system, with all parties to the partnership having an equal voice.

Questions and comments were invited from Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government funding for the advanced practitioner roles based within a refuge had ceased but an alternative source of funding had been identified, thus allowing this service to continue.
- A key part of the work was the focus on children and young people and there were established links with education and safeguarding colleagues. A recent pilot training programme in a local school had been received positively, with students being very engaged with the subject, and there were plans to roll this out more broadly.
- There was a need to work within localities and communities to raise awareness of what is classed as abuse and its impact, and to instil the confidence to report. Work was ongoing in this regard and there was a desire to find a way of engaging with boys and men and to continue to build on work such as the White Ribbon Campaign. The partnership would be mindful of this in developing the delivery plan and this would include raising awareness about non-physical forms of abuse.
- A request was made for timescales to be established for the community engagement activity and for this work to be specifically included in delivery plans. An update would be taken to Place Partnership Board on 23rd March and further feedback could be provided. Links could also be made between Elected Members and the local domestic abuse leads on request.
- There was refuge provision within the district and also access to external provision. Within Kirklees the provision was 'women only', and consideration was being given to how a range of accommodation options might be provided, without the communal living aspect, as there were a number of reasons why this might be unsuitable in some cases.
- Meeting the need for long-term sustainable housing was a challenge and models were being developed. Although it was acknowledged that this was a significant, potentially lengthy, piece of work there was a commitment to find better options than refuge or bed and breakfast accommodation.
- In terms of accessing information outside the abusive environment and building this back up further to the pandemic, a toolkit of resources was being pulled together to share with the community. Intelligence would be used to inform the establishment of links with the places where people go, and to ensure resources were available as and when needed. There were also innovative ways that information could be shared in a discreet manner, alongside the traditional

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methods that were also still in use, the use of virtual information, campaigns and through the Community Safety Officers and partners.

- Chani participated in the West Yorkshire Board and met with counterparts from the other local authorities in the region and they considered alignment of priorities and resources and the potential opportunities for joint commissioning. The Board was also working closely with the Mayor's Office to ensure alignment with the Mayor's Policing and Crime Plan, to contribute to the development of a specific strategy focussing on violence against women and girls, and to undertake joint working on commissioning and funding arrangements.

Resolved –

- 1) That the representatives of the Police and Health and officers be thanked for attending the meeting to present the new Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-27.
- 2) That it be recommended that timescales be established for the community engagement activity around raising awareness of what is classed as abuse and its impact, and building confidence in reporting, and that officers be asked to ensure that this work is included in the delivery plan(s).

70 Appointment of Co-optees

The Committee was asked to appoint additional voluntary co-optees so that necessary preparatory work could be undertaken to ensure that they would be ready for allocation to the standing scrutiny panels in the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank all the scrutiny co-optees for their valuable contributions to the work of scrutiny, particularly those who would be retiring at the end of the municipal year.

Resolved –

That the applicants set out in paragraph 1.4 of the report be appointed as co-optees, in preparation for involvement in the 2022/23 municipal year.

71 Work Programme 2021-22

A copy of the current Work Programme had been circulated.

The next meeting would take place on 19th April 2022 with the following item scheduled for consideration:

- Employment & Skills Strategy

and an informal session to consider the possible scope for a piece of work in respect of social isolation and loneliness.

72 Any Other Business

Members recalled that the new Inclusion and Diversity Strategy had been discussed at an informal meeting held on 25th November 2021. The Chair reported that:

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- The Strategy had been considered by Cabinet, on 14th December, where it had been endorsed and referred to Council. It would be submitted to the Council meeting on 16th March.
- A number of the points and issues raised by the Committee had helped to shape the final version, such as the development of a communications plan to engage with internal and external stakeholders and the inclusion of an outcome-based action plan, with impact measures and implementation timescales.
- In terms of integrating inclusion and diversity into each Council service, Priority One of the Strategy – ‘Inclusion First’ would ensure that all services considered inclusion and diversity in everything they do. The emphasis going forward was on services regarding Independent Impact Assessments as ‘living documents’ that should be revisited and revised as service designs or changes were put into effect.
- A learning and development package was being produced to support staff in becoming culturally confident, as part of the People Strategy, and this would benefit implementation of the Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and link the two strategies.