



HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY,
9TH MARCH 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor A. Whitcombe - Chair
Councillor Mrs C. Forehead - Vice-Chair

Councillors:

D. Cushing, C. Elsbury, R. W. Gough, L. Harding, A. G. Higgs, G. Kirby, B. Owen, Mrs M. E. Sargent, W. Williams and B. Zaplatynski.

Cabinet Members:

Cllr. S. Morgan (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise) and Cllr. L. Phipps (Cabinet Member for Housing and Property).

Together with:

M. S. Williams (Interim Corporate Director - Communities), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), P. Smythe (Housing Technical Manager), F. Wilkins (Housing Services Manager), K. Denman (Housing Solutions Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairperson reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded and would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click here to view.](#)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, Ms P. Leonard, Mrs G. D. Oliver and Mrs D. Price.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 26TH JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26th January 2021 (minute nos. 1 - 9) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Manager presented the report which outlined details of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the period March 2021 to September 2021 and included all reports that were identified at the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26th January 2021. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORTS

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT. SIX MONTH UPDATE 2020 (THE DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNITIES - REGENERATION)

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Enterprise introduced the report which presented the Scrutiny Committee with a copy of the Communities Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA), which is part of the Council's new Performance Framework. It was highlighted that the focus for this item would be on the Planning and Regeneration Service aspects of the DPA. The Scrutiny Committee was asked to review the document and discuss, challenge and scrutinise the information contained within.

A Member drew particular attention to the report which provided information on Customer Intelligence and raised in query in relation to public consultation exercises. In response to the Member's query it was highlighted that the Directorate Performance Assessment provides information and analysis for the first six months of the year. Members were

advised that, in terms of customer feedback, a revised household survey has been undertaken during the latter part of this year and items that have been included will come forward on future Directorate Performance Assessments.

In response to a Member's query regarding asset management, the process for the disposal of land and property including the use of delegated powers was explained to the Scrutiny Committee. During the course of the debate a request was made for the relevant Scrutiny Committee (Environment and Sustainability) to be informed before the disposal of any large buildings or major land assets. In conclusion, it was agreed that full details of the request would be e-mailed to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, who would arrange a response to the query.

Members discussed, challenged and scrutinised the information contained within the report.

8. HOUSING DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SIX MONTH UPDATE 2020

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property introduced the report to present the Scrutiny Committee with the new Caerphilly Homes Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) which is part of the Council's new Performance Framework. Members were informed that the DPA provides information and analysis for the 6-month period April – September 2020 and forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity, of which members are invited to discuss, challenge and scrutinise the information in the DPA. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property expressed her thanks to members of staff at Caerphilly Homes for their commitment and support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Points of clarification were requested on various aspects of the report and Officers responded to the points raised.

An update was requested on the revised Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) deadline. It was highlighted that although the completion of the WHQS programme remains a priority, it has unavoidably been delayed as a consequence of the pandemic. Members were advised that the WHQS programme is on track to complete all works by the target date of August 2021, pending no further delay from Covid-19 lockdowns. It was outlined that external works will be completed by the end of March or the beginning of April and internal works will be completed by August 2021.

An update was requested in relation to the sheltered housing schemes that are deemed not fit for purpose. It was explained that the development of alternative new build accommodation has not made the progress anticipated, in part due to Covid-19. The Scrutiny Committee was informed that due to delays with delivery of the alternative new build accommodation, requests will be considered if tenants from those schemes wish to be considered for a permanent move to accommodation elsewhere. Members were advised to refer tenants to the Sheltered Housing Officer and The Older Persons Housing Team, who will assist them to source alternative, suitable accommodation.

Members were provided with an update on homelessness and rough sleeping. It was highlighted that although the rough sleeping problem in the Caerphilly borough is not fully eradicated, the figures are reducing significantly. It was clarified that the directive from Welsh Government has not changed since March 2020 in that the Council has a statutory responsibility to provide anyone who is without accommodation temporary accommodation. The Scrutiny Committee was reminded of the Homelessness Seminar to be held on Thursday 11th March 2021.

Members discussed, challenged and scrutinised the information contained within the report.

The meeting closed at 6.03 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2021, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR