

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2021**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and live streamed on the Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors A Edyvean (Vice-Chairman), A Brennan, R Inglis and G Moore

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Jones, R Mallender and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S J Robinson

26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

27 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 September 2021, were declared a true record and signed by the Vice-chairman.

28 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

29 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Brennan.

“Who are our Registered Partners and how is this decided/vetted/agreed?”

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that the terms social housing and registered provider were defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 Act. Social housing included low-cost rental, such as affordable rent properties, and low-cost home ownership. Registered providers included local authority landlords and private registered providers, such as not-for-profit

housing associations and some for-profit organisations. The largest registered provider in Rushcliffe was Metropolitan Thames Valley followed by Platform formerly known as Waterloo, which was the Council's key partner in rural exception site schemes. Given their presence in the Borough, the Council worked with those providers the most; however, it could work with any. Importantly, any proposal put forward by a registered provider to deliver additional affordable homes was carefully considered. Appropriate checks were undertaken before any Capital Grant Allocation was made, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation and its policy and regulatory framework, including the Capital Budget and the Social and Affordable Homes Policy. Registered providers of social housing in England were controlled by the Regulator of Social Housing and their functions were also set out in the 2008 Act.

Councillor J Walker asked the following supplementary questions to Councillor Brennan.

"How did the Council decide if they were a good match for our Borough and whether we take account of their records of dealing with communities, history of sustainability, and also when was it brought to Full Council to agree?"

Councillor Brennan responded to the first question by stating that providers were chosen by officers under a Scheme of Delegation, following a due diligence and value for money process. There were only so many registered providers in the Borough, and the Council choose to work with those that it had a track record with. In respect of the monitoring of their track records in the communities, Councillor Brennan advised that she would provide a written response to that question.

The Vice-chairman reminded Councillor Walker that for future reference, she was entitled to ask one supplementary question, as a follow up to her original question.

Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Brennan. Councillor Thomas was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by the Vice-chairman.

"Given that para 4.10 of the report details a number of options already available for spending the Affordable Housing Capital Budget to support the delivery of affordable housing, will the consultant's report help the Council provide more affordable housing as soon as possible?"

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that the Council had a strong track record in the delivery of affordable homes and the purpose of the consultant's work would be to explore any additional tools or options that the Council might wish to explore to further expand the routes to the delivery of affordable homes. This increase in funding offered the Council the opportunity for a more strategic response to local needs.

Councillor Thomas asked a supplementary question to Councillor Brennan, which was read out by the Vice-chairman.

“When will the report come back to Council to agree a course of action that will result in more affordable housing?”

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that if the consultant recommended that an additional option or options for the delivery of affordable homes should be pursued, that would be reported to Cabinet for consideration, with a report expected in the new year.

30 **Allocation of Affordable Housing Capital Budget Update**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change, Councillor Brennan presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods providing an update on the allocation of the Council’s Affordable Housing Capital Budget.

Councillor Brennan advised that the Affordable Housing Capital Budget, which supported the provision of additional affordable housing consisted in part of commuted funds allocated in lieu of onsite affordable housing, where local planning policies required it. Cabinet noted that significant additional funds of £2,387,500, had been received, with a further £1,392,500 expected next year, from the Chapel Lane development in Bingham, details of which were highlighted in paragraph 4.5 of the report. Prior to this windfall the budget had stood at approximately £1.6 million, which had been used for smaller scale interventions, including the Garage sites initiative and the Next Steps Rough Sleeper units.

Councillor Brennan stated that with those significant additional sums, consideration could be given to more ambitious options to intervene more strategically, to support the delivery of affordable housing, and to consider issues such as retention or partnering, to enable the Council to retain a stake in funded assets. Cabinet was advised that given the sums involved, it was recommended that a specialist consultant be appointed, at a cost of up to approximately £10,000, to examine the options available for the enhanced delivery of affordable homes in the Borough.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis concurred with the comments made and stated that the provision of more affordable housing would be welcomed by residents. Cabinet noted the importance of helping people to get onto the property ladder without having to move away from Rushcliffe, especially in rural areas where property prices were very high and out of reach of first-time buyers. In conclusion, Councillor Inglis welcomed the additional funding and the appointment of a specialist consultant and looked forward to hearing the consultant’s findings.

Councillor Moore welcomed the report and reiterated the concerns surrounding house prices in rural areas and hoped that this additional funding would encourage more ambitious affordable housing projects to be built and looked forward to hearing the consultant’s findings.

It was RESOLVED that the appointment of a suitably qualified consultant to assess the options for the Council in respect of a Council company or joint venture vehicle through which the Council may retain some form of interest in the dwellings funded by way of the Affordable Housing Capital Budget, be

approved.

31 **Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth providing an update on the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Edyvean confirmed that the Plan had been produced by Hickling Parish Council, in conjunction with the local community and assessed by an independent Examiner. Cabinet noted that usually the Examiner's report confirmed that a plan was fit for purpose and had reached the required standard for adoption within the Council's own Local Plan. At that stage, the Council would normally accept or reject the Examiner's report in its entirety and then proceed to a referendum. However, in this particular instance, Cabinet was advised that two of the Examiner's recommended Modifications, 9 and 10 were not considered to be necessary to meet the legal requirements and Basic Conditions, details of which were highlighted in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 of the report.

In conclusion, Councillor Edyvean advised that if the Examiner's recommended modifications were accepted, it could possibly lead to development on a greenfield site, which would be unacceptable, and it was for this reason that the Parish Council had asked for Modifications 9 and 10 to not be accepted.

Councillor Moore seconded the recommendation.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) all of the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan be accepted, with the exception of Modifications 9 and 10;
- b) the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement and its publications be approved;
- c) a six week consultation should be undertaken on the proposed decision not to accept Modifications 9 and 10; and
- d) a referendum on the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed at this time.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN