

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY, 2022**

**MEMBERS:** Councillors Mahmut Aksanoglu, Margaret Greer, Charith Gunawardena, Tim Leaver, Andy Milne and Edward Smith

**Officers:**

**Also Attending:**

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Councillor Margaret Greer welcomed all attendees to the meeting and invited councillors and officers to introduce themselves.

Apologies were received from Cllr Anyanwu who was substituted by Cllr Yusuf.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 30 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Chair Cllr, Greer proposed to defer the minutes and arrange an extra meeting to cover the Local Plan and agree minutes.

It was agreed to hold an additional meeting subject to the agreement of the monitoring officer. The new date will be sent out in due course.

### **4. LOCAL PLAN - TOWN CENTRES**

Mark Bradbury and Andrew Catcheside presented this item and highlighted the following points:

- It was clarified that the Town Centre Action Plans don't form part of the Local Plan.
- The action plans respond in context to the Council plan to support an economy that works for everyone, develop town centres that are vibrant safe and inclusive.
- The action plans are designed to be live documents which will be updated on a quarterly basis and as ongoing community engagement brings forward opportunities and ideas.
- Officers' welcome members feedback and comments

### Questions and comments:

- It was recommended that the council work closely with the Market Square Trust to help improve it. Officers confirmed they are in communication with the trust, it is a historic market town and should be a feature in the plan.
- It was useful to see how the Town centres have been affected by the pandemic. There is no reference on major applications going through the town centres. Officers confirmed that the plans are live documents, we will look closely at planning permissions and how we can address this. Once proposals go through, we can discuss how we can influence what we do in the areas to creative connectivity.
- When asked what learning has been taken from other town centres officers explained that Andrew and his team have been looking at examples. They have been working with town centre task forces set up by Government who have given advice and funding.
- Members raised the point on how to get variety in Enfield Town and have more for night time economy, so residents stay local. Officers explained we are aiming to lead by example on the properties we own to show opportunity. We opened the Culture Palace which holds various evening events. This is being used to influence how to reopen the Dugdale.
- Members have received comments from residents that the Southgate plan was underwhelming and would like some detail to share to help to engage people. It was explained that we have the least influence with Southgate due to lack of property we own, the Police station has come on the market so we have been in contact with potential bidders. Officers would like to be introduced to people in Southgate who then can engage with and share ideas.
- Enfield Staff are a significant portion of the footfall within Enfield Town, will staff be coming back to the office? It is good Pret is now here, but a shame to hear it will be closing at 5 instead of 6 due to lack of footfall. Officers confirmed council staff are starting to come back into the office, we are operating a hybrid working policy. Microsoft have not returned in great numbers, as they do this will contribute to higher footfall.
- There is significant vacancy in upper floors or shops could we make this residential or office space? Officers confirmed there are various planning policies which encourage this, we need to get the property owners to see the benefit in this.
- Officers confirmed the images will evolve with the plans. The Edmonton Green image differs due to a very successful event held there which residents were heavily involved so and it was felt this represented the area well.
- Cllr Greer requested a review on the Edmonton Green plan as it does not represent the whole community.

**ACTIONS:** Officers to provide clarity in an updated report on three-month goals and why the centres have such different goals.

## **5. HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW**

Bron Claridge, HIF Programme Manager, presented this item and highlighted the following points:

- Meridian Water successfully won £170m grant to deliver strategic infrastructure.
- The purpose of the rail works is to build on the new station and have a minimum of 4 trains stopping per hour. The design and development is ongoing. The business case is in the final stages to be passed on for approval next month.
- We have 25 companies working on the different aspects of Street works. We are due on site in summer this year. There is budget pressure, half of this is due to abnormal inflation.
- All the works are funded by Government, we are in preliminary funding stage and have claimed £15m to date.
- Key risks and mitigations were highlighted.

Members were invited to make comments and questions:

- Concern was raised over the risk of the final business case not being approved. Officers confirmed they are confident as it is strong. All the stakeholders are supportive. This project is government funded, so if they obstruct the approval officers will raise this with them.
- Cllr Smith pointed out a typo in appendix one, anticipated completion date for HIF Street Works should be Feb 2024 instead of 2023.
- Officers were asked to expand on timescales and planning for alternatives if the March 2024 completion date was missed. They explained that the HIF plan is assessed by Government and would not have been agreed if there were concerns. The timescale is tight and challenging but the team remains focused. To mitigate programme risk we are proceeding with early work packages which have been agreed to commence within the next few weeks to give us the best possible chance to meet the overall deadline. Meridian water is one of the most advanced programmes in the country.
- Members recognised that we are in an unusual inflation situation and asked if original estimates are divergent or similar. If they are higher what conversations have been had with government? Officers explained that around 50-70% of budget pressure is due to inflation, which is a national dilemma. We alerted government at the earliest possible time and been in contact with them over the past 6 months regarding this. Government has given indication they will provide additional financial support; we expect to get a conclusion on this in Spring.
- Officers clarified that of the £116m spent around 5% is due to inflation.
- On paragraph 34 of report officers clarified that once the contractor has had the opportunity to analyse the planning application and set of designs to identify efficiency savings and enhance the scheme, we would take these on board. We look at these options to consider

savings and sustainability. An example of this has been to change the material of curb stones to once which is more sustainable.

- Members commented that the project has good social value for Enfield residents, and we should push this and wanted some information on the numbers of local labour involved. Officers explained the Meridian Water employment strategy is making good progress, our target for 10% of construction spend to be on local companies is now at 25%. £11m has gone to a local company through the Vistry contact. The numbers do change, officers are happy to update on a periodic basis. Meridian water is expected to be a London Living Wage zone.
- Members were interested in what elements of the cutbacks most concerned officers and what the impact of this would be on affordable housing or quality. Officers confirmed there would be no impact on affordable housing. Any changes that at detriment to the levels of sustainability will be concerning, money was saved in other areas for example changing the light columns.
- Officers clarified that Meridian one is not dependent upon HIF for timescales. The future Meridian plots have varying degrees of dependency on HIF.

### 6. MERIDIAN FOUR UPDATE

Emma Beardmore, Senior Development Manager, presented on this item highlighting the following points:

- The council are delivering 5 the blocks in Meridian four. It will deliver 846 new homes consisting of 1,2,3 and 4 bed homes. This includes build to rent and affordable homes.
- Preliminary testing of the LBE client brief has been completed and build to rent has undertaken soft market testing.
- Work has progressed on the affordable housing provider framework
- We have secured an educational programme which includes architectural scholarship, project management apprenticeship and paid work experience. We also secured a £60k contribution towards the Meridian Water community chest
- Detailed design work is to be completed in early summer. The technical design will begin Autumn 2022.
- A main contractor procurement strategy is being worked on that looks at the way to build out the plots and the timescale.

Members were invited to make comments and questions;

- Officers clarified that 70% of the affordable homes will be social rent and 30% shared ownership. A large range of the salaries of residents in Edmonton matches the affordability for shared ownership.
- Members raised concern on the risks of the council being the lead developer and suggested bringing on investors and queried the report not providing income and borrowing figures. Officers confirmed the figures are documented in Cabinet reports. Market testing and analysis has been done and the status of the market is being closely monitored.

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- The majority of the market wants to invest in build to rent when we get to the detailed design stage. Officers are setting up an RP framework, there is a procurement process that needs to be followed.
- Members commented that it was positive to see more larger bedroom properties and the 3 and 4 bed homes should be prioritised for social housing. Officers confirmed the level of family housing is set and agreed by the planning committee and the level of family housing is mixed over each individual site.
- In response to members queries on how build to rent meets the needs for Edmonton where rent is high officers clarified that build to rent is set by the market. The overall cost of delivering 10,000 homes is over £4billion which would not be sustainable for the council, the private housing provides cost subsidy which enables a high level of affordable housing and supports the cost of the social infrastructure.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified.