

## **BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

### **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**Present:** Councillor Duncan Bain (Chair)

Councillors Jenny Henson, Paul Marks, Mike Tebbutt and Greg Titcombe

**Also Present:** Martin Hammond (Executive Director)  
Helen Edwards (Head of Democratic and Legal Services)  
John Conway (Head of Housing)  
Callum Galluzzo (Committee Administrator)

#### **18.RD.15 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ash Davies. It was noted that Cllr Paul Marks was acting as substitute for Cllr Davies.

#### **18.RD.16 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **18.RD.17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **18.RD.18 RESPONSES OF THE EXECUTIVE TO REPORTS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (ITEM 8)**

A report was submitted that provided members with responses from the Executive Committee to reports from Research and Development Committee in relation to:

- Library Provision in Rothwell and Desborough
- Constitution Amendments

- Ward Initiative Fund – Review of Restrictions
- Car Parking Charging Strategy

It was heard that In line with the Council's Constitution, scrutiny committees may submit recommendations for proposals to the Executive Committee for consideration, with a response of the Executive then submitted to the next available meeting.

At its meeting held on 12th June 2018, the Research and Development Committee submitted recommendations on four items to the Executive Committee.

Following discussions it was

**RESOLVED** That the Research and Development Committee note the responses of Executive to the recommendations by itself made on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018

**18.RD.19 A FAIRER DEAL FOR SOCIAL HOUSING – THE HOUSING GREEN PAPER (A1)**

Members received a report that provided a briefing on the Government's green paper on social housing and invited the Research and Development Committee to consider and comment on its contents.

Members heard that the social housing green paper had recently been published by the Government in response to the Grenfell Tower disaster. In the wake of the tragedy, it became apparent that the fire and its aftermath were symptomatic of a wider disconnect between social housing tenants and the state at both national and local levels. The green paper represented an attempt by the Government to remedy this disconnect.

It was stated that the report represented a vision which valued and respected the voices of residents. A vision centred on how social housing could have supported people to get on in life, making it more likely, not less, they will go on to buy their own home, as well as providing an essential, good quality and well run safety net for those who need it most.

It was then stated that 66% of Kettering Borough households were owned by the occupier, 20% in private rent, 9% being owned by Kettering Borough Council and 5% under housing associations.

Members heard that the green paper promised a fairer deal for social housing residents, which comprised of 5 key areas:

- Ensuring homes are safe and decent;
- Improving the resolution of complaints;
- Empowering residents so that they can hold their landlords to account;
- Tackling stigma and challenging the stereotypes that exist about tenants and their communities; and,
- Building much-needed social homes and ensuring those homes can act as a springboard to home ownership.

**RESOLVED** That Research and Development Committee note the contents of the report.

**18.RD.20 LOCAL HOUSING COMPANIES (A2)**

John Conway, Head of Housing attended the meeting and provided the committee with a presentation outlining the findings of a recent study by consultants into whether or not setting up a local housing company would be beneficial for the Borough Council.

Members heard that Local Housing Companies could be set up by local government under the Localism Act 2011, Local Government Act 2003 and the Housing Act 1989.

It was also heard that benefits of setting up a Local Housing Company included the fact that properties would not be subject to right to buy and that it could help drive up standards of housing in the private rented sector. It was also heard by members that this could help to generate a long term income flow to the General Fund as well as being a useful component in a regeneration project.

Consultants, Campbell Tickell were appointed to prepare an outline business case for a 100% market rent local housing company which would have generated a revenue income to the Council.

Members heard that the consultants modelled a variety of market rent and sale scenarios where the critical factors for success were;

- The availability of council-owned land with the model being unlikely to work if Kettering Borough Council competed for sites on the open market
- The percentage of affordable homes that were required, over 20% would have affected viability
- That the potential yield would have been sufficient to cover the cost of finance.

The consultants stated that the most viable option was 80% sale and 20% rent on an existing council site but it was stated that this

would not have worked if the Council had to purchase land.

It was also stated to members that the market rent would not have been viable without ongoing cash injections from the General Fund for the first 20 years. The consultants stated in their findings that it would have been challenging for the Council based on land values and average construction costs, especially in the short to medium term. It was recommended by the consultants that the best way forward was for a review of land and assets across the council to identify opportunities for HRA developments or joint ventures with other parties such as housing associations.

Members heard that the council aimed to invest in its existing stock where 30% had been built prior to the Second World War. It was heard that by investing in the existing stock, the properties would be given a new lease of life and extending its use by 30/40 years. It was then heard that the Council would also continue to invest in new Council houses and in the Home for the Future Scheme.

**18.RD.21 WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19 (A6)**

The work programme was noted.

*(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 7:48pm)*

Signed: .....

(Chair)

CJG