

Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 23 March 2017

Attendance

Members of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Ian Angus (Chair)
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Val Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Andrew Wynne

Employees

Christopher Hale
Tim Pritchard
Neil White

Head of Housing
Head of Corporate Landlord
Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies**
An apology was submitted by Councillor Chris Haynes.
- 2 **Declarations of interest**
Councillor Tersaim Singh declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 Update on Housing Company.
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting (2 February 2017)**
That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters arising**
The Panel thanked the Chair for the fair, balanced and conscientious way he had chaired the meetings during the civic year.
- 5 **Update on Medium Term Financial Strategy savings within Corporate Landlord 2017/18**
Tim Pritchard, Head of Corporate Landlord, provided an update on the re-profiling of the medium term financial Savings proposed for Corporate Landlord in the Place Directorate for 2017/18.

The Head of Corporate Landlord explained how the savings totalling £150,000 following a service restructure; £997,000 through asset and estate management and £487,000 through facilities management would be achieved.

The Panel queried how the proposed income from the Council's commercial estate would be achieved and the Head of Corporate Landlord stated that this would be achieved through securing bad debts and arrears, filling voids and ensuring that all rents were closer to market levels.

In response to a question, the Head of Corporate Landlord advised that the analysis of asset utilisation should be ready in approximately three months.

The Head of Corporate Landlord commented that in respect of facilities management, the customer led review of services would entail getting intelligence from customers but for the catering and cleaning of schools this would need to be set against the market price for these services.

Resolved – that the report be received.

6 **Update on Housing Company (WV Living)**

Christopher Hale, Head of Housing, Education and Enterprise gave a presentation to the Panel on WV Living the City of Wolverhampton Housing Company.

The Head of Housing, Education and Enterprise advised that the Council's Cabinet had approved the setting up of a Housing Company in June 2016. Phase 1 which would include new homes at the former sites of:

- Danesmore Park Primary School
- Ettingshall Primary School
- Bilston Leisure Centre
- Wednesfield School Site

which were expected to be completed in summer 2018.

Phase 1 would provide 370 homes across the four sites with a mixture of new homes available through market sales, market rent and affordable housing.

The Head of Housing, Education and Enterprise added that over the next five years it was planned to provide 800 new homes across the city at a number of sites which would include areas marked for regeneration at Heath Town and in the city centre. It was hoped that the WV Living would be able to create a surplus by 2023 which could then be invested back into the company.

The Panel noted that www.wvliving.co.uk was now active and gave a range of information on the properties that would be available and the new proposed developments.

In response to a question, the Head of Housing, Education and Enterprise confirmed that WV Living would be providing homes themselves and were not available in any joint schemes with other developers. He added that it was intended to let the

properties through the market and would be rented as private rented properties and would therefore not be available to people on the housing register.

The Panel queried a recent press report that suggested that Wolverhampton had a high proportion of homes that remained unsold after a year on the market.

Resolved – that the Head of Housing, Education and Enterprise be thanked for the presentation.