

## **BOROUGH OF KETTERING**

### **RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

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

Councillors Ash Davies, Jim Hakewill, Jenny Henson, Mick Scrimshaw, Mike Tebbutt and Greg Titcombe

**Also Present:** Lisa Hyde (Executive Director)  
John Conway (Head of Housing)  
Leona Mantle (Tenancy Services Manager)  
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

*Prior to the commencement of the meeting, it was noted that proceedings were being live-streamed. Two members registered their objections to this.*

#### **19.RD.15 APOLOGIES**

None

#### **19.RD.16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING TO BE APPROVED AS A CORRECT RECORD AND SIGNED BY THE CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Research and Development Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Cllr Titcombe declared a personal interest in Item A1.

#### **19.RD.18 RESPONSE OF THE EXECUTIVE – WELLINGTON HOUSE**

Members received a report the provided the response of the Executive Committee to the referral made by Research and Development Committee at its 25<sup>th</sup> June meeting in respect of the shortfall in temporary housing provision caused by the closure of the Wellington House facility.

Cllr Scrimshaw stated that the concerns of the Committee had been wider than just the loss of Wellington House, also covering the significant rise in the use of temporary accommodation.

Cllr Hakewill raised further concerns that the report gave no specifics regarding Wellington House being brought back into use and how the issue of homelessness locally would be resolved.

The Head of Housing reassured members that the Council was deep in negotiations with Home Group, the owners of Wellington House and was aiming to report back to the Executive on the situation prior to Christmas.

A member of the public spoke in support of the facilities of Wellington House when it had been available for use to the Safe Until Daylight (SUD) service housing rough sleepers and hoped for a potential move back to the premises as soon as possible.

The Head of Housing responded to note that KBC were in daily contact with SUD and as part of the negotiations with Home Group were attempting to open Wellington House for that purpose at the earliest opportunity.

**RESOLVED**

that the Research and Development Committee noted the Executive Committee resolution concerning Wellington House and subsequent positive progress in bringing it back into use.

**19.RD.19      THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE TO ASK MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT IF THEY WISH TO SPEAK ON ANY PUBLIC ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

One member of the public registered his intention to speak in relation to Item 6 under the Council's Right to Speak Policy.

Four members of the public registered their intention to speak in relation to item A1.

**19.RD.20      KETTERING TOWN CENTRE TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS (A1)**

A report was submitted that sought to provide members with details of the findings of the Town Centre Task and Finish Group; to seek comments in relation to the recommendations of the group for submission to the Executive Committee and to agree the disbandment of the group upon submission of the final report to the Executive.

Cllr Titcombe, as Chair of the Task and Finish Group took the  
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opportunity to place on record his thanks to both the officers who had worked alongside the group and members of the group itself for their input and hard work.

Four members of the public spoke and raised a number of additional points for consideration as part of the recommendations to Executive, including;

- Increased support for the cultural offerings in the town with particular mention of Kettering Arts Centre
- Better and more secure cycle storage in the town centre
- Improved cycle links into the town centre
- Improved shopfronts to secure the aesthetic appeal of the town centre
- Solar panels on unused business roof-space
- Vacant retail units possibly used as short-term accommodation for rough sleepers or community art spaces
- Increased celebration of the town's history and heritage, making reference to William Knibb.
- Sustainable public transport elements required expansion
- KBC to be a focus for pulling together various art events in the town
- Disappointment at the lack of focus on increasing the sport and leisure offer in the town centre and recommendations related to health

Members echoed comments of the speakers in relation to secure cycle storage and suggested that the Shop Mobility unit could be a potential location for such storage.

Members also commented that sustainable public transport between the railway station, Wicksteed Park, Kettering Conference Centre and rural communities was a key consideration and wished to see this reflected in the report submitted to the Executive Committee.

It was considered that the final report should also include mention of the development of a long-term vision for improving the leisure and sport offer in the town centre.

In response to a query as to how to sustain the recommendations made by the group, it was noted that the Monitoring and Audit Committee would scrutinise the development of projects associated with the recommendation as well as receiving an annual health-check on the status of the town centre.

The Committee agreed that the final draft report be approved by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Cllr Greg Titcombe, prior to being submitted to the Executive Committee

**RESOLVED** that subject to the addition of references relating to secure cycle storage, sustainable public transport and the leisure and sport offer, that:

- i) the Committee accepted the Task & Finish Group recommendations set out in the officer report;
- ii) the Committee formally agree the recommendations to be taken to Executive Committee; and
- iii) that the Kettering Town Centre Task & Finish Group be disbanded

**19.RD.21 PET POLICY (A2)**

Members received a report that sought member approval to recommend to the Executive Committee a new policy on the Keeping of Pets within Kettering Borough Council tenancies.

Members registered their disappointment at the late arrival of the report, having been marked as “to follow” on the published agenda and did not believe they had had long enough to consider the report and its contents. It was suggested that this and the following item, the Domestic Abuse Policy, both be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee to allow members time to consider the reports.

**RESOLVED** that this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

**19.RD.22 DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY**

Members received a report that sought member approval to recommend to the Executive Committee a new policy on responding to Domestic Abuse within Kettering Borough Council tenancies.

For the same reasons as the Pet Policy above, it was suggested that this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee to allow members time to consider the reports.

**RESOLVED** that this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

**19.RD.23 WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was noted with the addition of the Pet Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy as detailed above. In addition, a report in relation to the Budget 2020/21 would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

*(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.11 pm)*

*Signed.....*

*Chair*

DJP