

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities held at
2.30 pm on Thursday, 18 November 2021

Present:

Members: Councillor D (Chair)

Shadow Cabinet

Members Present: Councillor R Bailey

Other Members:

Councillor L Bigham (Chair, Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4))
Councillor K Miks (Lower Stoke Ward Councillor, for item 24 below)

Employees Present:

D Butler, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
C Eggington, Streetscene and Regulatory Services
R Moon, Director Preproperty Services and Development
U Patel, Law and Governance
A Walimia, Property Services and Development

Apologies: Councillor M Lapsa

Public Business

22. Declarations of Interest

Councillor K Miks declared an 'other interest' in the matter the subject of Minute 24 below headed "Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre – Update November 2021" as she is a Trustee of the Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation. As Councillor Miks was invited to the meeting in her capacity as a Ward Councillor, she remained in the meeting and took part in the discussions.

23. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2021 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

24. Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre - Update November 2021

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Property Services and Development which provided an update on the Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre as of November 2021.

Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre ("the Centre") is owned by the Council and has been managed by Volunteers of Stoke Aldermoor Community Association since they occupied this part of the building in 2007.

The purpose of the report was to update the Cabinet Member and to seek approval for an 'expressions of interest exercise' to consider if any other community groups would be interested to operate community activities. This exercise would be conducted whilst the existing occupier remained in-situ to continue with the daily activities within the centre and for the benefit of the wider community.

Stoke Aldermoor Community Association (SACA) currently occupy and operate out of Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre which is a Council owned building and within the operational property portfolio. SACA conduct various activities for the local community to use and the Council currently has a 'landlord' and tenant' relationship with the volunteers of the centre but without a formal agreement in place.

In February 2016, Cabinet approved the Connecting Communities Phase 1 report which included a recommendation that all community centres should be self-sustaining by March 2017 (no subsidy in the form of repairs and maintenance) and that Community Associations enter into leases to that effect. Majority of the community centres have entered into long leases and SACA remains one of the last few to complete this. The current set up of the existing organisation has not made it possible to enter into a long lease.

To date, the Council had spent £14,088 in 2018/2019, £18,620 in 2019/2020 and £25,829 in 2020/2021 and £11,400 during the current financial year 2021/2022, in reactive repairs and maintenance works in the centre.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval to invite community groups to express their interest to run and manage Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre. Following this exercise, a long lease would be available for the selected community group to consider further and take on the full management and maintenance of the centre. It was vital to appoint the right organisation for the benefit of all residents and the whole of Lower Stoke community. The main criteria for the organisation was to demonstrate a sound financial plan, previous building management experience and the proposal must include the facility to include all members of the community, regardless of age, sex religion and socio-economic backgrounds.

The existing occupier SACA would continue to run and operate from the centre and would be invited to submit their 'expressions of interest' accordingly.

Since the publication of the agenda and the report, an updated Business Plan has been submitted by Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre. The updated business plan had now fulfilled the criteria that was set out to them to confirm their financial position, trustees information, structure of the organisation and confirmation as a 'CIO' status. The business plan was forwarded to the Cabinet Member for information.

On the basis that the group had now provided the required information to enable the Council to consider them for a one year lease, the Cabinet Member would be now be recommended to proceed with Option 2 of the report at paragraph 2.2; "to consider entering into a lease for one year with SACA on a full repairing basis.

Councillor S Miks, a Lower Stoke Ward Councillor, attended the meeting and commented that the Centre has been running exceedingly well and expressed her

gratitude for the excellent work that the Centre has been doing and welcomed the opportunity to continue supporting the diverse community of Lower Stoke.

Representatives of SACA and Grapevine attended the meeting and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to continue their work in the Centre.

Members present at the meeting welcomed the change in recommendation and considered this to be excellent news for the Centre and the wider community.

The Cabinet Member explained that the report had to be published to meet legal deadlines even though the negotiations were still ongoing in the background at the time.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities:

- 1. Approves the existing organisation, Stoke Aldermoor Community Association (SACA) to sign a one year lease and manage the Centre on a full repairing and liability basis with no financial support from the Council. This is on the basis that the organisation has now submitted an updated business plan to the satisfaction of the Council which demonstrates how they will operate and run the Centre**
- 2. Requests that an update report be submitted during the last 2 months of the one-year lease ending.**

25. Consultation on the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which sought authority to consult for a six week period on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The report would be considered by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) on 15 December 2021.

SPDs add further detail to the policies in the development plan but cannot introduce new policy. SPDs provide additional guidance for development and are capable of being a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

One of the key objectives of the adopted Coventry Local Plan was to deliver sufficient affordable homes over the Plan period to 2031. The aim of this SPD is to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes as set out in the plan and in compliance with the most up to date national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The additional guidance provided within the SPD sets out the different types of affordable housing as defined by Government and provides the detail on how these should be delivered. This included setting out the process in agreeing affordable housing delivery, affordability types and tenures, dwelling design, management structures and Section 106 Agreements for securing delivery.

Responses would be analysed and taken into account when considering amendments which may be required. The proposed final version would be reported to Cabinet for adoption, at which point it would replace the previous version.

Once adopted, this SPD would replace the outdated Affordable Housing Guidance which was adopted in February 2006.

Members in considering the draft SPD, raised the following points:

- They welcomed the additional work on S106 contributions to ensure developers deliver appropriately
- They welcomed the engagement with social housing providers
- Would like to see drive to encourage more 'homes for life' which are larger yet still affordable ie with wider doorways etc to make future provision for prams and wheelchairs
- There should be no visual distinction between good quality affordable housing and market housing

The Cabinet Member welcomed the discussion and in conclusion stated that the purpose of reviewing the SPD was to increase good quality affordable housing and making it clear to developers what is expected of them.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities authorises an extended (to account for Christmas holidays) seven week public consultation period on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

26. Consultation on the Draft Energy Supplementary Planning Document

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which sought authority to consult for a six week period on the draft Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD would be considered by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) at their meeting on 15 December 2021.

SPDs add further detail to the policies in the development plan but cannot introduce new policy. SPDs provide additional guidance for development and are capable of being a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

Providing further guidance on building standards as they relate to carbon reduction and climate change over the Plan period to 2031 is a key commitment set out in Policy EM2 (Building Standards) of the adopted Coventry Local Plan. The aim of this SPD is to provide technical guidance on energy standards and requirements to improve the environmental sustainability of new development in the city.

The additional guidance provided within the SPD would aim to provide clear information for applicants about policy requirements and expectations, clearly set out what detail the council expects developers to provide to assist the decision

making process and to encourage developers to promote excellence and best practice in sustainable development.

Members present at the meeting raised the following matters:

- Whether the SPD could be refreshed to reflect new innovations in technology
- Had consideration been given to regeneration by social landlords?
- Balance between regeneration to ensure energy efficiency and maintaining heritage

The Cabinet Member stated that the SPD sets out the Council's aspirations and informs developers of what is expected of them. It was acknowledged that there would always be conflicting priorities when working towards energy efficiency, a challenge between maintaining properties and their original features and making them climate appropriate.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities authorises an extended (to account for the Christmas holidays) seven week public consultation on the draft Energy Supplementary Planning Document.

27. **Consultation on the Draft Open Space Supplementary Planning Document**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which sought approval to consult for a six week period on the draft Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD would be considered by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) on 15 December 2021.

As with the previous SPDs, this SPD adds further detail to the policies in the development plan but cannot introduce new policy. SPDs provide additional guidance for development and are capable of being a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

The purpose of the Open Space SPD is to set out the Council's approach towards the provision of public open space in new residential development. It supplements Policy GE1 of the adopted Local Plan, which states that: "new development proposals should make provision for green infrastructure to ensure that such development is integrated into the landscape and conservation, design, archaeology and recreation".

The additional guidance provided within the SPD aims to provide clear information for applicants about policy requirements; which developments would trigger a requirement for open provision, how much open space should be provided, what kind of open space is needed and clear expectations in terms of design and delivery.

Members in considering the draft SPD raised the following:

- Whether canals were included within linear routes?
- Should the City be putting green space aside to deal with climate change to ensure a cooling effect around the city?

- Are smaller housing developments on green spaces looked at holistically to avoid housing creepage and ultimate loss of green space?
- Has consideration been given to the provision of green spaces within the city centre, especially for those who live there?
- Need to ensure allotments are provided within developments
- Developments should take into consideration the City's commitment to plant a tree for every resident in the city.

It was noted that planning were working closely with urban forestry to ensure that the policy is strengthened as we move towards a local plan review.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the discussions and concluded that the purpose of the consultation was to strengthen the open space supplementary planning document to ensure that there was provision of good quality green spaces within the city.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities authorises an extended (to account for the Christmas holidays) seven week public consultation on the draft Open Space Supplementary Planning Document.

28. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

29. **Any other item of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)