

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee **Date:** Monday, 13 December 2021

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.00 - 7.22 pm

Members Present: A Patel (Chairman), N Avey, N Bedford, J Philip and C Whitbread

Other Councillors Attending Virtually: R Brookes, L Burrows and D Wixley

Apologies: Councillor H Whitbread

Officers Present: R Hoyte (Service Manager - Housing Development), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer), R Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer) and L Kirman (Democratic Services Officer),

18. CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor H Whitbread, who had tendered her apologies, it was proposed that Councillor A Patel be Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

Resolved:

That Members agreed that Councillor A Patel would assume the role of Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

19. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

20. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor C Whitbread would substitute for Councillor H Whitbread at the meeting.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

22. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee held on the 28 September 2021 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRESS REPORT - PHASES 4-5

Rochelle Hoyte, Service Manager, Housing Development presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and recommended that the Council House Building Progress Report - Phases 3 to 5 be noted. She advised that the report set out the progress that had been made across Phases 3 to 5 of the Council House Building Programme and that they were either completed, on-site or were currently being procured. The report was as set out in the Agenda on pages 11-90.

Phase 4

Phases 4.1 and 4.2 were currently on-site and were expected to reach practical completion between January and March 2022. Phases 4.3 and 4 would start on site in 2022.

Phase 5

R Hoyte advised that her team were continuing to work with the architects on the design stages for the proposed developments in Phase 5 and stated that early in 2022 she would be able to continue to consult with the Ward Councillors on the relevant schemes under Phase 5.

Councillor N Bedford referred to the recent houses that had been released in North Weald and asked why there was no consideration to put in any electrical car charging points in the houses as one of the residents had bought an electric vehicle and had been making enquiries of getting a charging point installed.

R Hoyte advised that she was aware and believed that it was being dealt with by the sustainability team who were looking to see if one could be installed. She stated that she was unaware if it had been resolved but she would make enquiries and report back to Councillor Bedford.

Councillor N Bedford thanked the officer for the update and asked if assurances could be given for the future at the planning stages and not after the developments had been finished.

R Hoyte assured Councillor Bedford that everything that was being worked on at present including Phase 5 and beyond would include electrical vehicle charging points. She also advised that when the North Weald development was planned quite a few years ago electrical vehicles were at the very early stages and stated that things had greatly improved since as electrical vehicles were becoming more common and affordable.

Councillor D Wixley advised he had a question regarding Chester Road, Loughton which was in Phase 4.1 and asked if there were any particular problems with this site and it was taking a long time for the build to complete. He stated that he had looked at this site a year ago and when work had been going on for several months. He also asked if there were going to be an electrical charging points installed on that site.

R Hoyte advised that all of the schemes in Phases 4.1 and 4.2 had been affected by the issues surrounding the supply of materials and labour supply. Covid had impacted on all the services to the sites in Phase 4. Some of the schemes that were due to be handed over this year will now be delayed until January to March 2022. Phase 4.1 does not have any vehicle charging points being installed but the infrastructure for these had been included. She advised that she would be able to give a further update on Phase 4 at the next meeting.

Councillor R Brookes referred to Kirby Close, Loughton which was in Phase 4.2 and asked if they would have any electric vehicle charging points or have none been planned until the later phases.

R Hoyte advised that Kirby Close had been considered for the infrastructure but the actual charging points were not determined when these sites were being planned. As the infrastructure was in place and when we know what was needed they can then be added.

Councillor J Philip referred to page 33 of the Agenda, Build / Tender Cost Status, and asked why the column headed 'Cabinet Approved Construction Cost' had tbc against every development in Phase 4.1. He highlighted that in all of Phase 4.1 the build cost was significantly higher than predicted and Phase 4.2, which hadn't yet commenced, was currently on target. He asked if going forward Phase 4.2 and beyond would remain very close to the predicted costs.

R Hoyte advised that all of the sites going forward would have a better management of the cash flow as enough contingency had or would be built into the predicted costs. She referred to page 33 of the agenda and advised that there was no reason why the column headed 'Cabinet Approved Construction Cost' stated tbc as it had already been agreed and that she would liaise with the Employers Agent who prepared the table to find out why.

Councillor A Patel referred to Phases 4.1 and 4.2 where the hand over dates had fallen behind what was originally quoted, could the Service Manager give assurances that the hand over will be on the dates that are now given as stated in the report.

R Hoyte advised that her team were meeting with the contractors on a weekly basis so if there were any slippages that would be when they would detail them. The dates in the report are the most recent dates reported by the contractors and she stated that she wouldn't expect to see much more slippage on what had already been due the them being at the end stages of the phases. The snagging process on Phase 4.1 was due to begin the first week of January 2022.

Councillor A Patel referred to Pentlow Way in Buckhurst Hill and as it stated in the report it remained delayed due to the substation he asked the Service Manager to clarify what that entailed.

R Hoyte advised that the delays had been due to legal and when first spoke to UKPN they advised that they had up to a nine month legal process time, this had now recently been agreed and the start on site should be in June 2022.

Councillor A Patel advised that a majority of the Cabinet went on an organised tour of some of the Council's new housing stock and that they were all very impressed with the build quality of what was coming forward. He referred to Hornbeam Close in Buckhurst Hill which was in Phase 5 and asked if officers had now started to engage with the residents.

R Hoyte advised that they had recently met with the architects and the designs were continuing to be worked on. No consultation had yet taken place with the residents regarding Hornbeam A as some issues in the terms of the layout of the scheme, there was a public right of way that went through the site that needed protection and the layout has had to be reworked. An update and new drawings was expected early in the New Year and then consultation with the residents would be arranged.

Councillor J Philip advised historically a table was prepared to show where the Council was in terms of the right to buy receipts and the payments of them and he didn't see any mention of them in this particular report and that was something that Members should be aware of given the potential of having to hand money back to the Government if the Council don't spend in the allotted time the monies from the receipts and particularly when schemes were slipping. He asked if these reports could be included going forward.

Councillor A Patel agreed that Councillor J Philip had made a very good point and that this should be a standard agenda item.

R Hoyte advised that she would include a report in the agenda going forward.

Councillor R Brookes asked why there was scaffolding on the Burton Road development, she thought this site had been completed a few years ago.

R Hoyte advised that it was to do with a leak in the roof to one of the houses and the contractor was repairing it.

Decision:

That the contents of the Progress Report on Phases 4 to 5 of the Council House Building Programme be noted and presented to the Cabinet in line with the Terms of Reference of the Council House Building Cabinet Committee

Reason for Decision:

Set out in its Terms of Reference, the Council House Building Cabinet Committee was to monitor and report to the Council, on an annual basis the progress and expenditure concerning the Council House Building Programme. The report sets out the progress made since reported at the last meeting on the 28 September 2021.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

The report was to update and for noting purposes only. There were no other options for action.

24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no other matters of urgent business for consideration.

25. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no business for consideration which would necessitate the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN