



Communities  
Overview Committee

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

1.30 p.m.

Item  
Public

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25  
JANUARY 2023  
10.00 AM - 12.45 PM**

**Responsible Officer:** Emily Marshall  
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**Present**

Councillor Robert Macey (Chairman)  
Councillors Nick Hignett (Vice Chairman), Duncan Kerr, Christian Lea, Dan Morris,  
Vivienne Parry and Mark Williams

**69 Apologies for absence and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ted Clarke.

**70 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

With reference to agenda item 6, Councillor Lea declared that his brother was the owner of a social housing company in Shropshire.

With reference to agenda item 6, Councillor Viv Parry declared that her daughter was part owner of a Connexus property.

**71 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**72 Public Question Time**

None received.

**73 Member Question Time**

None received.

**74 Understanding the Housing Market in Shropshire**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting:

- Laura Fisher, Head of Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living, Shropshire Council
- Melanie Holland, Strategy and Development Manager, Shropshire Council (remote attendee)
- Jane Trethewey, Assistant Director Homes and Communities, Shropshire Council
- Sue Allen, Bromford Housing (remote attendee)
- Richard Woolley, Chief Executive of Connexus
- Wayne Gethings – Chief Executive of Wrekin Housing
- Sarah Boden – Housing Plus Group
- John Green – Chief Executive of Shropshire Rural Housing
- Councillor Dean Carroll – Portfolio Holder for Growth, Regeneration and Housing

Jane Trethewey, Assistant Director Homes and Communities introduced the report which provided an overview of the social housing market in Shropshire in terms of supply, need and demand. The report highlighted current policy, and associated challenges, relating to social housing management and investment in existing and new social homes. The topic of social housing would be reviewed over three meetings of the Committee.

During the debate it was proposed that Cabinet be asked to look at affordability requirements in planning and that the Council invest in delivery of social housing. However upon being put to the vote, this proposition was not carried.

The implications of small rises in Interest Rates was outlined and the retro fit of homes to meet Energy Efficiency (EPC) Standards and the difficulties faced in this area. An example was that some of the retrofit works were very invasive and people generally were used to what they knew and disliked change, even though the majority of Shropshire's housing stock was over forty years old.

In response to a question relating to Homes England, The Strategy and Development Manager explained that she had recently attended an event and it was clear that Homes England were aware of the need for grant funding to invest in improving homes to meet energy efficiency standards. Councillors could help by being aware of the balance between land supply and affordability but also by taking the message back to their local communities that affordable housing was not a bad thing, as it is meeting the needs of the the local population.

The Scrutiny Officer provided a round up of the discussions and a plan for scoping the topic, reviewing the subject area, gaining context and formulating recommendations over the course of three meetings. Communication with Town and Parish Councils and local communities was an emerging theme from the discussions. Understanding need and demand now and in the future was vital and balancing that against cost. The Committee were urged to reflect on discussions from the meeting and contact the Scrutiny Officer if they thought of any issues they would like to cover.

The Chairman thanked officers and housing service providers for their attendance and welcomed their involvement throughout the process.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report and the feedback given be noted.

**75 Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer presented his report which outlined the Communities Overview Committee’s proposed work programme for the 2022-2023 municipal year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed committee work programme attached as appendix 1 be approved.

**76 Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.

Signed ..... (Chairman)

Date: