

Recommendation by Overview and Scrutiny Committee to HBC Cabinet

March 1, 2022

“That cabinet be recommended to consider the full range of options available to the council in addition to selling its assets for development.”

The recommendation was put forward on Tuesday because the Operations and Place-Shaping Scrutiny Board had already undertaken research between December 2019 and the autumn of 2020. The aim was to understand how social housing for rent has been provided, in many cases by Conservative-led Councils in England, and to evaluate if this is something Havant Borough Council could achieve on its own land, albeit through the setup of a separate company.

The policy document would have been produced by that Scrutiny Board as a member-led proposal. However, as well as Scrutiny work and dealing with Covid-19 demands, the production of the new constitution took up much Officer and Councillor time. That constitution was then adopted on the 1st of March in 2021. This saw the scrutiny function changed, becoming the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and I'm pleased to say that some of the members who were on the Overview and Place Shaping Board remain members of the new Committee.

The workload of the Committee has been extensive with pre-decision scrutiny work over the past 12 months. There's been no time and even less democratic services officer time available to support member-led scrutiny items which have been taken off the work plan, let alone time available for members to pursue any policy making activity such as the ones to which we are referring.

Members voted on Tuesday to include a recommendation to Cabinet which asks that **all** options are considered for the development of HBC owned land especially that sited at Bulbeck Road and Plaza East car parks. Development of much needed social housing for rent within easy access of the town centre and public transport links, while at the same time enabling Havant Borough Council to keep the land as an asset should be considered. It's hoped that the Cabinet can agree the recommendation and schedule work in this regard.

As of Thursday the 3rd of March, we see that Councillor Robinson has made contact with Janice Morphet, Visiting Professor in the Bartlett School of Planning which is part of the University College London faculty of the built environment. It will be good for the affordable housing liaison panel to hear from Professor Morphet if she can come to the Plaza and give a presentation on the work she's been carrying out.

We must all remember what the term affordable housing actually means when we're making provision for those residents who cannot, and should not, be expected to buy a home but who nonetheless deserve a suitable safe and secure dwelling space.

Thank you.

Cllr. Lloyd – Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(Delivered to the HBC Cabinet Meeting, March 7, 2022, by Cllr. Francis, Vice-Chair, O&S.)