

Minutes of a meeting of the **Policy Group** of the Purbeck District Council held in the Council Chamber, Westport House, Wareham on Wednesday 17 October 2018 at 7.00pm.

Present:-

Councillor Gary Suttle (Chairman)
Councillor Barry Quinn (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Cherry Brooks, Laura Miller, Bill Pipe and Peter Webb

Also present: Councillor Mike Lovell.

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting: Alex Clothier, Enterprise Zone and Regeneration Manager; Richard Conway, Environment Manager; Bridget Downton, General Manager – Planning and Community Services; Sue Joyce, General Manager – Resources; Rebecca Kirk, General Manager – Public Health and Housing; Steve Mackenzie, Chief Executive and Kirsty Riglar, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager.

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Group).

30.18/19 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

31.18/19 **Urgent items**

The Chairman reported that an urgent item relating to the sale of the toilets at West Lulworth to the Lulworth Estate would be considered at the end of the agenda. He had agreed that such a report was urgent given the importance of completing the sale and the protracted nature of the negotiations before heads of terms were agreed.

32.18/19 **Public participation time**

Mr Nigel Hill of Moreton asked about the soundness of the 140% scale of development for the Moreton area included in the pre-submission Purbeck Local Plan. The General Manager – Planning and Community Services confirmed that the Council considered the Plan to be sound and evidence based and the pre-submission publication would commence on 22 October. She reminded Mr Hill that anyone who wished their comments to be considered by the Planning Inspector was encouraged to respond to the publication. The Leader reiterated this.

33.18/19 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2018 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

34.18/19 **Declarations of Interest by Members**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

35.18/19 **Forward Plan**

The Policy Group considered the current Forward Plan.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be received.

36.18/19 **Local Plan Review**

The General Manager – Planning and Community Services confirmed that the pre-submission publication would commence on 22 October 2018.

37.18/19 **Timson Cottages**

The Chief Executive presented a report seeking approval to take the necessary steps to create the Timson Cottages Trust. He reminded Members that the future of the Timson Cottages at Langton Matravers had been discussed by Council at its meeting on 8 May 2018. Consequently, advice had been sought from Counsel as to the status of the Cottages and he had advised unequivocally that there was no trust; as advised previously by the Solicitor to the Council, the condition of the will for the transfer of the cottages to the Council was satisfied when the Council entered into the bond. Counsel had suggested that it may be possible to maintain the spirit of the bequest by creating a trust. Creating such a trust would enable local trustees to administer the Timson Cottages whilst preserving the thrust of Mrs Timson's wishes. This would enable the Cottages to charge rent and benefit a wider spectrum of people than those with sufficient independent resources to pay the current voluntary contribution. In that case, tenants who were not of independent means could be helped by housing benefit.

In response to a Member's question, the Chief Executive confirmed that the current tenants were asked to pay a voluntary contribution. This was collected by the Council and ring-fenced for maintenance of the Cottages; the amount held was approximately £10-15,000. However, without this, the Council would be unable to maintain the properties.

Members referred to the original intent of the bequest which specified that the Cottages should be maintained for the benefit of older people and asked if a restriction could be placed on the trust to benefit people over the age of 55. The Chief Executive confirmed that any restriction could be placed on the trust but it may be necessary to complete an equality impact assessment if this was agreed.

In response to a Member's question, the Chief Executive explained that it would be up to the trustees to set the rent at a level that would enable tenants to qualify for housing benefit. It was likely that the current tenants would be left in situ with the current arrangements and that the rent would be introduced when the properties became vacant.

The Chief Executive confirmed that, if created, the Timson Cottages Trust would be an independent trust registered with the Charity Commission. It was not proposed to transfer the properties to Langton Matravers Parish Council because the legal advice was that the Cottages are owned by the District Council and a transfer to the Parish Council would need to be approved by the Shadow Executive Committee.

Members welcomed the proposal to create a trust and considered that as much of Mrs Timson's intention for the bequest should be encompassed within this. It was therefore proposed that the Cottages should be used to house people over the age of

55 with a connection to Langton Matravers in the first instance. If there was no demand from within the parish, demand from neighbouring parishes should be considered in a similar way to the Council's HomeChoice letting criteria.

It was also requested that information about the arrangements and model of housing provision of almshouses should be included in the report submitted to Council, should this be a viable alternative for ensuring the properties benefitted local, older people.

Resolved that a report be submitted to Council recommending that:

- (1) the Timson Cottages should be the subject of a trust for the provision of housing accommodation for persons who are homeless or in housing need and have a local connection with Langton Matravers or neighbouring parishes;
- (2) the Timson Cottages be transferred to the trustees on completion of the trust deed; and
- (3) approval of the final terms of the trust and the identity of the persons to be the trustees be delegated to the General Manager – Public Health and Housing, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the ward member for Langton Matravers.

38.18/19 **Refurbishment of Corfe Castle village hall – request for funding support**

The Enterprise Zone and Regeneration Manager presented a report seeking approval for the provision of match funding for an external funding application to assist in the completion of the refurbishment of Corfe Castle Village Hall. Members were reminded that the Council had previously approved a financial contribution of £40,000 and the village hall committee had been successful in being awarded external grants. However, unforeseen additional work for a drainage scheme had affected the original budget for the project. Currently the funding limitations had led to the omission of the finishing works and fit out of the community room and hub room. The village hall committee had submitted an application to the LEADER programme for £59,305 for the fitting out of these rooms. The LEADER programme would fund up to 80% of the project and the village hall committee had requested that the Council consider match funding the remaining 20%. It was proposed that a grant of £20,000 be provided. This would include 20% required for the LEADER application and the additional funding for the eligible funding items.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Council's normal policy was to provide grant of up to £50,000 to any scheme and that, if approved, Corfe Castle Village Hall would have received in excess of this amount. Members acknowledged this but considered there were exceptional circumstances and the proposed grant should be supported.

Resolved that a report be submitted to Council recommending that a supplementary capital budget of £20,000 be approved for improvements to Corfe Castle Village Hall, subject to approval of the LEADER application.

39.18/19 **Urgent item - Toilets at West Lulworth**

The Environment Manager presented an urgent report providing an update on the sale of the public toilets at West Lulworth to the Lulworth Estate. The Council agreed to sell

the public toilets to the Estate in June 2017 and concerns had been raised by Members, West Lulworth Parish Council and local residents that completion had not yet taken place. Members were informed that progress had been made in the past few days; the final three documents had now been agreed and were ready to sign. As soon as this was completed, exchange could go ahead and it was expected that the transfer would be completed within four weeks. It would be necessary to give four weeks' notice to the Council's contractor to cease cleaning the toilets.

The Environment Manager drew attention to the submission of a planning application by the Estate for the lower cove area. He confirmed that, once the sale had been completed, the Estate would be required to keep open and maintain the public toilets until works commenced. It would also have to provide temporary toilets whilst the works were underway.

Members welcomed this update but expressed concern that there would be further delay in exchange and completion. Officers confirmed that the Council could withdraw from the sale prior to exchange taking place but the Council would need to address the poor state of the toilet. There was currently £100,000 in the unapproved capital budget for this but it was acknowledged that this might be insufficient to complete all necessary works.

It was requested that an update be provided at the next Council meeting. If exchange had not taken place, it was considered appropriate for the Council to consider whether it should withdraw from the sale.

Resolved that the position be noted and an update provided to Council at its meeting on 13 November 2018.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm.

Chairman