

Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 6 July 2022 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Mark Coxshall (Vice-Chair), Deborah Huelin, Barry Johnson, John Kent, Fraser Massey and Lynn Worrall

In attendance: Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Helen McCabe, TRL Development Manager
Roger Harris, Director of Thurrock Regeneration Limited
Mykela Pratt, Strategic Lead HR, Resourcing and Improvement
Julie Towers, Penna Recruitment Consultants
Helen Anderson, Tile Hill Recruitment Consultants
Anthony Lewis, Tile Hill Recruitment Consultants
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the General Services Committee held on the 14 June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

7. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

8. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Independent Remuneration Panel - Options

The report presented to Members set out the options for Members to consider regarding the future implementation of Independent Remuneration Panels at Thurrock.

Councillor Worrall questioned with the proposed changes of the constitution working group, scrutiny panel, possible changes to committees and membership of those committees whether there would be a risk to the interview process that roles could change before any decision had been made.

Councillor Gledhill stated that one of the reasons would be to make this process more independent for Thurrock to agree those changes which would allow the council to move forward.

Councillor J Kent agreed to maintain the four yearly cycle for the Independent Remuneration Panel, that the panel should be locally based looking at Thurrock's needs and therefore recommended that option 3 of paragraph 3.1 be moved forward.

Councillor Gledhill agreed the future operation of an Independent Remuneration Panel should be solely for Thurrock and with that recommended that paragraph 3.1, option 3, "Establish a new panel solely for Thurrock" be approved. Councillor Gledhill also agreed to maintain a four yearly cycle for the Independent Remuneration Panel.

RESOLVED

- 1. To establish a new Independent Remuneration Panel solely for Thurrock.**
- 2. To maintain a four yearly cycle for the Independent Remuneration Panel.**

10. Thurrock Regeneration Limited Progress Report

Councillor Coxshall welcomed Roger Harris, Director and Chair of Thurrock Regeneration Limited Board who provided members with the following update:

A progress report will be provided every six months to the General Services Committee on the up-to-date progress of Thurrock Regeneration Limited. Thurrock Regeneration Limited are in a better position in terms of wider governance, having appointed two additional directors, both had extensive experience in terms of housing development, having worked for local authorities and had brought a high degree of both private and public sector housing experience to the board. There were still two vacancies on the board with recruitment starting soon with the board keen to extend the local representation on the board and to look at wider issues around diversity. Thurrock Regeneration Limited has one scheme in operation in St Chads with the Board of Directors being fully independent of the council which would put Thurrock Regeneration Limited in a much stronger position. Belmont Road was also owned by Thurrock Regeneration Limited with the planning application process being resubmitting. Lessons had been learnt in terms of consulting with and working closely with the community as part of that development. Cabinet had agreed that the Culver Centre should be a Thurrock Regeneration Limited scheme and was pleased to announce that planning permission had already been agreed with the design team in place and referred Members to the timetable in the report. Keen to see Thurrock Regeneration Limited being a close partner for Thurrock in terms of the housing development options going forward, become a stronger organisation with a much stronger independent board with separate financial and legal advice. Roger Harris concluded that Thurrock Regeneration Limited was in a

very strong position and looked forward to working with the council over the next few years.

Councillor Massey questioned the timescale on the recruitment of the two additional vacancies to which Roger Harris hoped to go out to recruitment in September.

Councillor J Kent stated there was a lot to welcome from the report and had been glad to see the recruitment of the two new directors and the appointment of the other two directors in due course. Thanks were given for the update on St Chads but referred to the previous attempt to develop on Belmont Road and asked for some confidence that with the same amount of housing, in the same area and same place what would be undertaken differently this time. Councillor J Kent was glad to see that a community consultation would take place and questioned who would be undertaking that and how this time would this development be acceptable for the people who lived around Belmont Road. Roger Harris stated that a lot had been learnt from the previous experience and agreed that Belmont Road would not be easy for development but was well aware of the concerns that residents had during the building stages of that site and access. An independent company would be appointed to conduct some of the consultation. Helen McCabe stated that on the next board meeting an item on the agenda was the consultation of Belmont Road and confirmed the consultation would be undertaken by a third party.

Councillor Coxshall stated that Thurrock Regeneration Limited were wholly independent and should bring forward a planning application the right way, how the consultation was undertaken would be critical and to ensure a reputable company would be selected to deliver this. Had concerns over the timings but there would be plenty of time if the consultation and timetable were undertaken before the planning application to ensure residents had the opportunity to have a good view of access plans during and after the construction.

Councillor J Kent welcomed the proposed consultation and with the independent company putting forward a planning application would allow the Planning Committee to be truly independent. Councillor J Kent concluded that he could not see what would be different this time with the same issues with the siting of the compound, narrow access routes, problems with the school and day to day problems and at this time he still had no confidence in the plans. Councillor Coxshall stated those issues were known but as part of the consultation these would be dealt with in a sympathetically way before the application came to the Planning Committee. The lesson learnt had been independence, had listened and made the decision that a full planning application starting from scratch would need to be submitted.

Councillor Huelin questioned what Thurrock Regeneration Homes Limited, the housing management team, were currently doing now as there was nothing to sell. Roger Harris stated there were two companies, Thurrock Regeneration Limited was the parent company, the development arm, and Thurrock Regeneration Homes Limited was the housing management arm who

managed the properties on behalf of the development company. Councillor Huelin questioned as there were no properties to sell what they were doing at this time to which Roger Harris stated Thurrock Regeneration Homes Limited only employed one member of staff which was Helen McCabe, the other staff were all employed by the council. That Thurrock Regeneration Homes Limited was just the company with no other staff apart from Helen McCabe and for any work on the collection of rents, issues around anti-social behaviour or for any other issues such as tenancy management is contracted out. Helen McCabe reiterated that Thurrock Regeneration Limited was the strategic arm looking at development with Thurrock Regeneration Homes Limited was the operational arm.

Councillor Gledhill thanked Roger Harris and Helen McCabe for attending this evening.

Councillor Coxshall thanked everyone for attending this evening and agreed the committee should be updated on progress every six months.

RESOLVED

The contents of the report were noted.

At 7.52pm the committee agreed to enter into exempt session in order to discuss the personal details of applicants.

At 7.52pm, Councillor J Kent and Councillor Worrall left the meeting.

11. Shortlisting - Assistant Director Legal and Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director Regeneration & Place Delivery

The Committee considered the shortlist for the roles of Assistant Director Legal and Monitoring Officer, as well as the Assistant Director Regeneration & Place Delivery.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Two candidates for Assistant Director Legal and Monitoring Officer to be progressed to interview.**
- 2. Four candidates for Assistant Director Regeneration & Place Delivery to be progressed to interview.**

The meeting finished at 8.11 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk