

Meeting	Economy, Place, Access and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date	25 March 2024
Present	Councillors K Taylor (Chair), Pearson (Vice-Chair), J Burton, Steward, Fenton, Healey, Whitcroft, Hook, Merrett (Substitute) and Nelson
Officers in attendance	Tracey Carter - Director of Housing, Economy & Regeneration Michael Jones - Head of Housing Nick Collins - Head of Property
In attendance	Councillor Lomas – Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities
Apologies	Councillor B Burton

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### **30. Declarations of Interest (17:32)**

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda.

Cllr Fenton noted that he had a non-prejudicial interest relating to minute 33 *Update on the Asset Management Strategy* as he was a trustee at a community centre which is run from a Council asset.

Cllr Pearson noted that he had a non-prejudicial interest relating to minute 33 *Update on the Asset Management Strategy* as he was a trustee at a community centre which is run from a Council asset.

### **31. Minutes (17:33)**

Resolved: The Committee agreed the minutes of the 27 February 2024 meetings be signed as a correct record.

### **32. Public Participation (17:36)**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

### **33. Update on the Asset Management Strategy (17:36)**

The Committee considered the report providing an update on the Council's Asset Management Strategy. Officers confirmed that the generates around £6.7m from its commercial portfolio of about 330 properties. It was confirmed that the many of the Council's properties were rented to independent traders in areas such as the Shambles. The Council also maintained office spaces, such as, at its Eco Business Centre which had a focus on startup companies.

It was confirmed that most of the Council's city centre units were occupied. Officers confirmed that there was always a conversation nationally about how to use a Council's commercial activity to support the funding of services. They noted that the Council was heavily commercial but were not in the same position of some Councils who had built billion pound investment portfolios. They noted that the Council's Asset Management Strategy sought to identify opportunities within York that didn't unnecessarily increase risk. The Committee enquired as to where the proposed saving of £800,000 in the Council budget would be identified from the Council's assets. Officers noted that two Council owned cottages were being marketed to be sound at a market price of £400,000 each.

The Committee enquired about the role the new Combined Authority and regional Mayor would have on Council assets and housing delivery. Officers confirmed that the Council would continue to own its assets and that the Mayor would hold a strategic position in Housing delivery, but that the Council would continue to operate its housing delivery programme and housing strategies. Members also enquired as to the Council was in discussion with the combined authority to ensure there would be a presence in York. Officers confirmed that the Combined Authority already rented space at the Councils West Offices building to the Combined Authority and would continue partnership working to ensure there remains a strong voice from York in the authority.

Members questioned the Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities about how the Executives pledge of 100% affordable housing would be implemented. The Executive Member explained that on Council land designated for housing development, these

would be developed either by the Council or registered providers as 100% affordable housing.

Officers confirmed that they were working on 100% affordable housing and in discussion with Members confirmed that there were challenges on some sites to deliver 100% affordable housing but were reviewing this for sites such as 17-21 Piccadilly. Officers confirmed that they would know more after this review but that small city centre sites such as this could pose problems for registered providers to take on and build 100% affordable housing.

The Committee discussed whether the Council could encourage certain types of businesses and promote certain sectors. Officers confirmed that the Asset Management Team worked closely with the Council's Economic Development Team to use the Council's role as one of the city's largest commercial landlords to support the Council's economic strategy.

Members raised questions regarding how the Council was seeking to decarbonise its current portfolio. It was confirmed that the Council had recently been awarded UK SPF funding for decarbonisation work and that they continued to work with the Council's Head of Carbon reduction to access grant funding for further work. Members enquired about whether assets the Council had released to communities to manage would receive support in decarbonising these assets and it was confirmed that the Council did continue to work closely with community groups regarding the maintenance and improvements to these assets.

Finally Members also discussed whether small patches of land in their wards could be handed over for community use. It was noted that these type of sites were often held by highways and could be used for things like underground cables. Members agreed to request that Council's be provided with a guide of what assets the Council owns in their ward. Members were also advised that they could approach the Executive if there was a Council asset they thought could be explored for use by a community group or project.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the progress made against the actions as set out in the Asset Management Strategy;
- ii. Officers would share with Council's a guide to help identify all Council owned assets by ward.

Reason: To ensure the Committee are content with the progress made against the actions in the Asset Management Strategy.

### **34. Work Plan (18:45)**

Members confirmed that the full task and finish group report into Dial and Ride would no longer be ready for the Committees April meeting. It was therefore agreed that a brief update would be provided on the progress of the task and finish group. The Committee also discussed work planning for the next municipal year, other potential task and finish groups, and how they could engage residents in identifying agenda items.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the Committee work plan.
- ii. The Chair of the Committee to explore how residents could be engaged in work plan setting and to draft a list of potential items the Committee could consider in the next municipal year.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a programme of work.

Cllr Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].