

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 18th July 2023
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: Better Queensway

Executive Director: Alan Richards, Executive Director Environment and Place
Report Author: Glyn Halksworth, Director of Regeneration and Housing
Executive Councillor: Cllrs Daniel Nelson and David Garston

1. Executive Summary

The Better Queensway programme promises to be a transformative regeneration of housing and environment in the heart of our city, bringing forward new housing, improved neighbourhoods and environment, and catalysing inward investment and economic growth. The importance of the programme for the city was noted through a motion tabled at an Extraordinary Council meeting on 29th June 2023, at which a number of resolutions were agreed. These are detailed in the Appendix, *Delivering Better Queensway*.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

Notes the resolutions agreed at the Extraordinary Council of 29th June 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1. Following the procurement of Swan Housing as it's joint venture partner and work undertaken together through Porters Place Southend-on-Sea LLP, since late 2021 there have been some challenging developments which have impacted the progress of Better Queensway. The broader economic conditions within which we are operating, together with the significant constriction cost inflation pressures seen over the last couple of years, have contributed to the problems for Swan Housing. Intervention from the Regulator of Social Housing led to downgrading of Swan Housing and ultimately the recent merger of Swan into the Sanctuary Housing Group, in February 2023. Since this time Sanctuary has been assessing Better Queensway, alongside its other new commitments to Swan tenants and partners and the Council continues to be in discussions with them regarding Better Queensway. The motion shown at the appendix restates the ongoing importance of Better Queensway to this city and the Council's commitment both to its progression

and to the improvements of living standards currently living on the Queensway estate.

4. Reasons for Decisions

- 4.1. There was unanimous support for the motion during the Extraordinary Council of 29th June 2023.

5. Other Options

- 5.1. None

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Southend-on-Sea City Council continues to discuss the Better Queensway scheme with Sanctuary and commits through this motion to deliver a financially viable scheme.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. None

8. Policy Context

- 8.1. None

9. Carbon Impact

- 9.1. None specific to this report, albeit commitments to the new housing will lead to more efficient properties built to new regulatory standards. Enhancements to existing property as part of the commitment to improve living standards may also lead to better performing homes.

10. Equalities

- 10.1. The motion will positively impact the existing tenants and others in housing need in Southend, including many with protected characteristics.

11. Consultation

- 11.1. None has been undertaken specific to this report, although there has been considerable consultation as part of the Better Queensway work.

12. Appendices

Delivering Better Queensway Motion, Extraordinary Council 29th June 2023