

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

22 MAY 2017 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr KWP Lynch - Chairman

Mr RG Allen, Mrs R Camamile, Miss DM Taylor, Mr P Wallace, Mr R Ward and Mr HG Williams

Members in attendance: Councillor Mr MA Hall

Officers in attendance: Rebecca Owen and Ashley Wilson

15 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cope and Smith.

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Camamile, seconded by Councillor Williams and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April be confirmed and signed by the chairman.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

18 CUSTOMER SERVICES - 12 MONTH PROGRESS UPDATE

Members received a report which provided an update on the performance of the Customer Services team over the last 12 months, in particular focussing on target times for answering calls and dealing with face to face enquiries.

Councillors Allen, Hall and Wallace entered the meeting at 6.32pm.

The reason for the high number of lost calls was queries, and it was noted that the complexity and as a result the time taken on calls had increased over the last few years. In addition to the increase in calls in spring due to garden waste scheme renewals and council tax annual billing queries, this had led to an increase in lost calls. Whilst additional staff were in place during these busy periods, there was a limit to the number of additional staff that could be recruited due to budgetary restrictions and space in the contact centre.

In response to a question about how the predicted performance over the next year, it was reported that officers anticipated it remaining at the same level. Discussion ensued in relation to the channel shift strategy and the importance of increasing the number of services that could be provided online. It was also suggested that more information needed to be provided to the public to signpost them to the correct authority as it was felt that the contact centre may receive a lot of calls that should be directed to other authorities. It was agreed that this would be explored.

Members asked that the concerns of the group in relation to the number of lost calls be passed to the Strategic Leadership Team and that a further report be brought to this body in six months.

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the concerns of Finance & Performance Scrutiny be passed onto the Strategic Leadership Team;
- (iii) a further report be received in six months.

19 REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN

Members were informed of the draft financial outturn for 2016/17. During discussion, the following points were made:

- The moving of money from one HRA reserve to another would not increase available money
- The average cost of bringing a void back into use was just under £3,000. Members queried the overspend and asked whether more work could be undertaken to anticipate the number of voids. In response it was noted that the expenditure on voids was being reviewed by senior officers and it could be discussed at the September meeting as part of the frontline service review for housing
- The maintenance reserve for Green Towers was queried and members asked for confirmation that the amount going into reserves was cumulative.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and RECOMMENDED to Council.

20 SUNDRY DEBTS QUARTER 4 2016/17

Members were informed of the position in relation to sundry debts at 31 March 2017. It was explained that the target had not been met in the fourth quarter due to two large invoices that had become due in March and had not been paid by the end of the month. It was reported that the larger debts were mostly in relation to commercial estates and that the Estates team were continuously improving processes to increase timely payment and reduce debt.

In relation to introducing an interest charge for late payments, a member recalled that this had been discussed a few years ago. In response it was noted that, due to the need to change the payments system and some tenants' contracts, it was an ongoing project.

The large debt in relation to planning was queried and officers agreed to look into it and let members know how the debt had arisen.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 4 2016/17

The meeting was informed of the treasury management activity in the fourth quarter of 2016/17.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

22 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

In receiving the work programme, members were informed that the Housing (including Housing Repairs) frontline service review would be brought to the September meeting, in place of the refuse & recycling review. It was reported that, due to the thorough performance review undertaken by the Scrutiny Commission, there would be no frontline service review report for refuse and recycling this year.

(The Meeting closed at 7.11 pm)

CHAIRMAN