

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

5 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr KWP Lynch - Chairman
Mr HG Williams – Vice-Chairman
Mr DC Bill MBE (for Mr DS Cope), Mrs R Camamile, Mr DW MacDonald and Mr R Ward
Officers in attendance: Rebecca Owen, Nicola Smith, Mark Tuff and Ashley Wilson

227 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cope and Smith, with the substitution of Councillor Bill for Councillor Cope authorised in accordance with council procedure rule 10.

228 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September be confirmed and signed by the chairman.

229 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

230 HOUSING CONTRACTORS REPORT - RETURN VISITS

In response to a request at a previous meeting, a report which showed how the housing repairs service monitored return repairs visits was presented to members. It was reported that all voids, adaptations and work under the planned investment programme were inspected, all jobs over £4999 were inspected and 10% of all other repairs were inspected. Members were informed that, of the 734 post inspections for responsive repairs, 43 were rejected but rectified quickly.

A member expressed concern that, where only 10% of repairs were inspected, there were potentially 430 failures that had not been picked up on inspection. In response, officers assured members that the tenants were proactive in reporting and issues.

A member asked whether officers kept a check of certain products for reliability so those that were proven to be less reliable could be avoided in future. In response, it was noted that there was a procurement framework across many councils so that research had already been carried out.

Members noted the report and thanked the Housing Repairs Investment Manager.

231 FRONTLINE SERVICE REVIEW: PLANNING

Members received a performance report on the planning service. It was noted that whilst planning fee income had been lower during 2017/18, it did not necessarily mean that fewer applications had been received. It was acknowledged that whilst there was a target for planning application performance, the service was not able to influence this as it was dependent upon applications submitted.

Members were informed about new regulations being imposed which measured councils on not only the five year housing land supply but also the number of houses actually delivered. Concern was expressed that it would be very difficult to encourage developers to implement their permission and the possibility of incentivising developers by way of review mechanisms or of Homes England using compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land was discussed. The risk of having to accept reduced S106 contributions was highlighted.

Some members wished their concern to be noted that government pressure to approve planning applications meant that members' ability to reflect the wishes of the local community was diminishing.

In relation to retention of staff, the importance of remuneration on a similar level to other authorities was highlighted and officers outlined initiatives such as implementing a career grade and supporting graduates through post graduate education. The difficulty in recruiting building control officers in competition with private companies which paid higher salaries was also acknowledged.

Officers were thanked for presenting so much information in such a concise report and the report was noted.

232 REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN QUARTER 2

Members received the financial outturn position as at September 2018. The variation in relation to car parking income was highlighted and it was noted that, whilst the increase had been agreed in February, there then ensued a consultation process followed by a notice period and creation of a revised Order which delayed implementation of the new charges by approximately three months.

In relation to capital schemes, it was noted that a large part of the underspend was due to the developing communities fund as projects had not been delivered as anticipated. In relation to the underspend on disabled facilities grants, it was noted that this figure had been committed but not spent at the time of the report.

A member referred to page 32 which commented on variations being due to contracts that needed to be tendered and work in progress that still needed to be charged and asked the value of those awaiting tender and those awaiting charging. In response it was agreed that this information would be sought and fed back to members outside of the meeting.

Attention was drawn to the green space improvement projects listed on page 30 of the agenda as being not commenced or being rephrased. It was agreed that members would be informed of the reasons for this.

233 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - QUARTER 2

Members were updated on the council's treasury management activity in the second quarter of 2018/19. A member queried the maturity dates on some of the borrowing and in response it was noted that the report covered the second quarter of 2018/19 so was in time at that point.

234 AGED DEBT QUARTER 2

Consideration was given to a report which outlined the position on sundry debts at the end of the second quarter of 2018/19. It was noted that a report would be brought to the following meeting on the action being taken on recovery of estates debt.

235 BUSINESS RATES AND POOLING UPDATE

Finance & Performance Scrutiny was informed of business rates performance including the volatility and uncertainty in relation to business rates income. It was noted that the outcome of the application for the business rates pilot was still awaited.

236 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN