

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY

23 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Cllr C Ladkin - Chairman
Cllr P Williams – Vice-Chairman
Cllr JMT Collett, Cllr DS Cope, Cllr SM Gibbens, Cllr K Morrell, Cllr LJ Mullaney,
Cllr MC Sheppard-Bools and Cllr R Webber-Jones

Members in attendance: Councillors

Officers in attendance: Tan Ashraf, Rebecca Owen, Madeline Shellard and Ashley Wilson

553 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies.

554 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor P Williams, seconded by Councillor Morrell and

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 be approved.

555 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

556 COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

Members received an update on the activities of the Council's Housing Service. It was highlighted that Covid-19 had significantly impacted on service delivery and officers had been very flexible in their working practices and taken on additional responsibilities. They also provided a proactive support service to the most vulnerable tenants and made more than 3,500 phone calls to ensure tenants were supported.

Other consequences of Covid-19 included:

- decreased rent collections as tenants suffered financial hardship
- reduced number of repairs carried out as only essential and urgent repairs were permitted
- increased reports of anti-social behaviour as people were concerned about breaches of Covid-19 government guidelines
- increased reports of loneliness and a decline in well-being amongst residents of independent living schemes as social activities were suspended

In response to members' questions it was noted that:

- reducing the council's carbon footprint and using other forms of energy needed to be considered

- planning for an increased demand for more sheltered accommodation needed investigation
- the service has an aspiration to build more homes and will be working towards government directives to provide electric charging points, subject to available financial resources
- additional resources would be needed to continue working with young people to reduce anti-social behaviour, however partnership working with schools would continue

Members highlighted they had received positive feedback for the work officers had carried out during the pandemic and wanted to pass on their thanks to the teams.

Members noted the report.

557 PERFORMANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE 2ND QTR 2020/21

Members were provided with the second quarter 2020/21 outturn position for performance indicators, service improvement plans, corporate risks and service area risks. It was highlighted that one indicator, calls lost, had performed significantly better than target and members recognised that it was a difficult report due to the pandemic as much progress had been affected by Covid-19.

Members also highlighted that it was difficult to review performance targets for this period and it would take some time to recover and form a recovery target plan. Members agreed it would be helpful to find a way to recognise the recovery performance as it would be demoralising for staff to work tremendously hard without meeting targets for the next 12 or 18 months.

Concerns were raised about misinformation circulating regarding the council's position in relation to the five year housing land supply and members requested clarification on the stability of the current position. It was agreed that a response would be circulated outside of the meeting and considered at a future meeting if deemed necessary

Members noted the report and that they would be provided with information on the five year land supply.

558 FINANCIAL OUTTURN - SEPTEMBER 2020

The financial outturn position as at September 2020 was presented to members and it was noted that the position had improved since the last report and there now might be a slight surplus rather than the expected deficit of around £900,000. The council benefitted from the government's various Covid-19 funding schemes which covered some of the predicted losses. However it was noted that income would be impacted as the crematorium would not be completed until January 2022.

In response to members' questions it was reported that the long term forecast might not be as positive, if for example the new homes bonus was removed and not replaced by government and depending on the outcome of the government's delayed Fare Funding Review.

Members noted the report.

559 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE QUARTER 2 - 2020/21

Members were presented with the report on the Council's Treasury Management activity in the second quarter of 2020/21 and it was highlighted that the return on short term investments had dropped as interest rates had fallen in the economic downturn. It was predicated that this would get worse in the short term.

Members noted the report.

560 SUNDRY DEBTS – QUARTER 2 - 2020/2021

The position on sundry debts as at 30 September 2020 was reported to members.

Members noted the report and the chair thanked all officers.

(The Meeting closed at 7.32 pm)

CHAIRMAN