

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, AUDIT & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

4 AUGUST 2014 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Miss DM Taylor - Chairman  
Mr JS Moore – Vice-Chairman

Mr PR Batty, Mr PAS Hall and Mr K Morrell

Officers in attendance: Rebecca Owen, Katherine Plummer and Nic Thomas

109 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Camamile and Mayne.

110 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

On the motion of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Mr Hall, it was

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

111 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

112 FEES & CHARGES - AUDIT REPORT

Tim Ridout of CW Audit introduced his fact finding work regarding fees & charges. He explained that it was not recommending any changes, just highlighting matters to consider for future years. Members requested that in future such information is included in colour.

Members expressed concern with regard to a comment in the report that fees for building control were not known due to staffing changes, however they were reassured that the comment had been included in error and the charges were known and could be provided to members.

It was agreed that a report be brought to the November meeting to explain why there were no charges applied to some areas, or where charges were lower than other authorities.

113 OUTTURN

This item was deferred to the following meeting.

114 SUNDRY DEBTS - QUARTER 1

In providing an update on sundry debts owing to the authority, it was reported that there was a new officer in post who had done a lot of work to chase debtors in relation to commercial rents. Members were reminded that some of the debts were due to timing of invoices.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

115 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Members received the quarterly Treasury Management report. It was noted that no limits had been breached.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

116 BUSINESS RATES AND POOLING UPDATE

The Committee received an update with regard to business rates. It was reported that the authority would be expressing an interest in re-joining the pool, but at this stage no decision was required.

Members expressed concern regarding the loss of business rates should any large business in the area close, and in response it was reported that the risks were known and monitored regularly.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

117 FINANCE, AUDIT & PERFORMANCE SERVICE REVIEW - PLANNING

Following the request at the previous meeting, members received the first of the programme of service updates which in this instance was for the Planning service. It was reported that during the first quarter income was well above predictions, although this was partly due to the high number of speculative applications received. The Chief Planning & Development Officer reported that performance was reviewed annually and that all except two targets had been met.

Concern was expressed that the increase in applications must have an impact and associated costs in resources, and in response it was reported that a restructure was being considered and additional staff were being appointed. It was requested that a report be brought to the November meeting on the associated salary increases.

Whilst members highlighted the need to consider risk management, they commended the Planning Service for its hard work.

RESOLVED – the report be noted and a further report on salaries be brought to the November meeting.

118 HOMELESS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Following a request at the previous meeting, a report on temporary homeless accommodation was presented to the Committee. Members asked whether accommodation was inspected prior to use and also asked for reassurance that people with mental health issues were suitably accommodated. It was agreed that a response would be sent to members on these matters.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

119 WORK PROGRAMME

Attention was drawn to the inclusion of a service review for each meeting as seen on the work programme. Members requested training prior to the meeting on 10 September which would consider the final accounts. It was agreed that rather than hold the training immediately prior to the meeting, which would make it difficult for members to attend due to work commitments, it would be held the week before the meeting and members would be contacted to arrange a date.

(The Meeting closed at 7.54 pm)

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CHAIRMAN