

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, AUDIT & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

12 JANUARY 2015 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT:

Mr JS Moore (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Mr RG Allen (for Mr PR Batty), Mrs R Camamile, Mr PAS Hall, Mrs L Hodgkins and Mr K Morrell

Officers in attendance: Cal Bellavia, Julie Kenny, Rebecca Owen, Katherine Plummer and Sharon Stacey

326 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Batty and Taylor, with the substitution of Councillor Allen for Councillor Batty authorised in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.

327 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

328 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

329 FINANCE, AUDIT & PERFORMANCE UPDATE - HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Committee was provided with an update on the financial, performance and risk position of the Housing and Community Safety Service.

During discussion, a member questioned the reason for forecasting an overspend with regard to homelessness. In response it was noted that the was income forecast in relation to bonds paid to those under threat of homelessness in order to be able to secure accommodation, and that due to the nature of the assistance, the debt was often not recovered in full.

With regard to the development of affordable homes under the HRA Investment Strategy, it was noted that there would be four new properties on Dragon's Lane, Newbold Verdon, of which two would be rented and two would be shared ownership. The two rented properties would be available via the Choice Based Lettings scheme and the shared ownership properties would be advertised via local Estate Agents. In response to a member's question, it was confirmed that the rented properties would be available for those local to Newbold Verdon in the first instance.

In addition to the properties in Newbold Verdon, it was also noted that there were plans for thirty council properties on Southfield Road, Hinckley and there was also a piece of land at Martinshaw Lane, Groby, which was intended for development of housing by the authority.

Officers advised members that, for new schemes, work took place with Parish councils to ensure local people understood how to apply for affordable housing and officers were trying to encourage housing associations to make links with parish councils and local councillors.

Councillor Allen arrived at 6.39pm.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

330 FINANCE, AUDIT & PERFORMANCE UPDATE - HOUSING REPAIRS

Members received an update on the financial, performance and risk position of the Housing Repairs service. The Chief Officer reported that 100% of 'priority 1' repairs were carried out within the target time of 24 hours, over 99% of priority 2 repairs were carried out within five working days, 87% of priority 3 repairs were carried out within the target timescale, and 85% of priority 4 category repairs were completed within the timescale. It was confirmed that measures were being taken to address the slower response time to non-urgent repairs.

A Member highlighted the risk outlined in the report with regard to increased damp and condensation issues and asked how widespread the problem was. In response it was explained that so far this winter it had not proven to be such a problem, but that the low temperatures and damp weather had not yet been experienced to the same extent. It was explained that tenants were encouraged to ensure heat and ventilation to reduce damp and condensation problems, but that this raised affordability issues for some.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

331 CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS - HOUSING REPAIRS

Further to a request at the previous meeting to see an example of the process of determining a complaint about the Housing Repairs service, a report was presented to members which gave some background information, outlined the process and also the outcome of the complaint.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

332 INTERNAL AUDIT BLOCK 2014-2015

The Internal Auditor presented the Internal Audit progress report 2014/15 including the completed review of car parking which was a follow up of the 2013/14 review.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

333 OUTTURN - 2ND QUARTER 2014-15

The Committee was informed of the revenue and capital outturn at the end of the second quarter of 2014/15. Members were reminded of the decision by Council to move £350,000 of the forecast £500,000 general fund underspend to the waste management reserve.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

334 PERFORMANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2014-15

Members were provided with the council's position with regard to performance indicators and benchmarking, service improvement plans, corporate risks and service area risks. During discussion, the following points were raised:

- The reason for 1% of service improvement plans not predicted to meet target dates (paragraph 4.2) and the actions to address this were queried. Officer agreed to report back.
- The position in the top quartile for all four indicators in paragraph 4.1.2 was highlighted.
- A member expressed concern with regard to the progress of items five (ECO and Green Deal funding) and six (developing partnership working in relation to domestic abuse outreach services) under 4.2.1 as there were issues with being able to meet the targets. In response it was noted that progress regarding ECO and Green Deal was due to reduction in funding from the energy companies, but it was hoped that this would recommence soon, and the outreach service funding was reliant on Leicestershire County Council.

RESOLVED – the report be noted.

335 BUSINESS RATES & POOLING UPDATE

Members were informed of business rates performance from 1 April to 30 September 2014 and updated on pooling arrangements for 2015/16. The Committee was reminded that pooling had been disbanded for 2014-15 due to uncertainties, but it was anticipated that if it were reinstated for 2015-16 a surplus would be achieved. It was noted that if the pool was reinstated, 50% of business rates that would otherwise go to the Government would go to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), so would stay in Leicestershire. Representations were currently being made that the districts should see improvements as a result of the money held by the LEP.

In response to a member's question, it was agreed that members would be updated on the membership of the LEP.

336 WORK PROGRAMME

The Work programme for the remainder of the year was noted by members and the joint budget meeting with the Scrutiny Commission on 29 January was highlighted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.18 pm)

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CHAIRMAN