

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday 13th March 2017 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor R. Bowler in the Chair

Councillors P.M. Bowmer, C.P. Cooper, M.G. Crane, R.A. Heffer, A. Joesbury, D. McGregor, J.E. Smith, E. Stevenson and R. Turner (until Minute No. 0748)

Also in attendance were Councillors S.W. Fritchley (Portfolio Holder for Commercial Development and Efficiencies) and M.J. Ritchie (Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety) until Minute No. 0748.

Officers:-

B. Mason (Executive Director – Operations) (until Minute No. 0749), D. Clarke (Assistant Director – Finance and Revenues & Benefits) (until Minute No. 0749), C. Millington (Scrutiny Officer) and A. Brownsword (Senior Governance Officer)

0743. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

0744. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

0745. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0746. MINUTES – 13TH FEBRUARY 2017

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.A. Heffer

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RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee held on 13th February 2017 be approved as a true and correct record.

0747. LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Members considered the List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private document.

Moved by Councillor J.E. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.A. Heffer

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private document be noted.

0748. SAFE AND WARM SCHEME UPDATE

The Executive Director – Operations gave a presentation which updated Committee on the progress made concerning the Safe and Warm Scheme. It was noted that customer expectations had evolved away from traditional sheltered schemes with bedsit accommodation in favour of accommodation with separate bedrooms and controllable, efficient heating facilities. To upgrade sheltered accommodation and to meet these expectations it was necessary that in addition to the replacement of heating systems that wider refurbishment work was undertaken. To minimise disruption to the tenants this work would be undertaken at the same time. Phase 1 involved those properties where the boilers were at the highest risk of failure. Phase 2 works include those Sheltered Schemes where major refurbishment was required which could include conversion of bedsits to 1 bedroomed flats. Phase 1 was planned to start in April 2017 with completion by October 17. For Phase 2 the Council had commissioned architects drawings to help ensure a good quality scheme which would meet the needs of residents.

It was anticipated that the Phase 2 scheme would be out to tender in the Autumn of 2017, with start on site early in the 2018 calendar year. Phase 1 and Phase 2 work would account for 8 of the Sheltered Schemes, with the other schemes only requiring heating replacement. That replacement heating work would be planned around the Phase 1 and Phase 2 schemes. Normal maintenance work such as a new roof for Ashbourne Court would continue to be delivered as part of the capital programme.

The new heating arrangements would allow each individual property to regulate their own temperature and be charged on the basis of individual usage. It would also allow for central monitoring to ensure that residents were keeping their accommodation warm enough. Once the main contracted works were completed it was hoped to bring the monitoring work in-house.

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In terms of hard to let properties, high levels of occupancy were required for a sustainable Housing Revenue Account and the current lettings policy worked well where there was good demand for properties. One of the objectives of the Safe and Warm Scheme works was to make the Sheltered Schemes more attractive to potential tenants to improve occupancy levels. It was noted that the investment in the Sheltered Schemes (£3m) was part of a wider programme of investment including at New Bolsover (£10m) and the B@Home programme designed to meet tenant requirements and to ensure high levels of occupancy.

A discussion took place regarding the length of time it had taken for the works to be planned and communicated to Members. The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety noted that a review of void properties was currently underway.

A question was asked regarding why the bedsits had not been renamed studio apartments as requested in a previous scrutiny review. The Executive Director – Operations apologised for the oversight and noted that this was currently in the process of being changed on the system.

The Portfolio Holder for Commercial Development and Efficiencies noted that the concerns and frustrations of the Scrutiny Committee's had been noted by Cabinet and it was hoped that there would be better communication in the future between Cabinet, Officers and Scrutiny Committees.

Moved by Councillor R. Bowler and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith
RESOLVED that the update be noted.

Councillors R. Turner, S.W. Fritchley and M.J. Ritchie left the meeting.

0749. DERBYSHIRE REVENUES AND BENEFITS INITIATIVE – HOUSING BENEFIT AND LOCAL TAXATION SUPPORT VERIFICATION POLICY

The Assistant Director – Finance and Revenues & Benefits presented the report which sought support for the approval of the Housing Benefit and Local Taxation Support Verification Policy as part of implementing the ongoing Derbyshire wide benefits processing initiative.

It was noted that the policy would allow online application forms if the applicant wished to use them. The online facility would offer residents an additional choice which would simplify the application process for both local residents and for the

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Council. It would, however, be an additional option and the existing methods of applying would remain in place.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor R.A. Heffer

RESOLVED that the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee note the Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support Verification Policy to be submitted to Executive for approval.

(Assistant Director – Finance and Revenues & Benefits/
Senior Governance Officer)

The Executive Director – Operations and the Assistant Director – Finance and Revenues & Benefits left the meeting.

0750. ANNUAL SCRUTINY CONFERENCE

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the Annual Scrutiny Conference would be held on Wednesday 31st May 2017 at 0930 hours in the Council Chamber. A Budget Scrutiny Committee was scheduled in the afternoon, therefore a buffet lunch would be arranged.

Suggestions were requested for topics to be reviewed to be discussed at the conference. The following suggestions were received:

- Areas of concern within the District e.g. Castle Estate.
- Maintenance of closed cemeteries
- Usage of Bolsover District Council car parks
- Value for Money for disabled adaptation works
- Parking on verges

The Scrutiny Officer requested that any further suggestions be forwarded via email.

Moved by Councillor R. Bowler and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith

RESOLVED that the suggestions be noted and forwarded to the Annual Scrutiny Conference along with any further suggestions received.

(Scrutiny Officer)

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0751. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Scrutiny Officer noted that there were currently no items for discussion at the next scheduled meeting and asked whether Members wished to cancel the meeting.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor R.A. Heffer
RESOLVED that the meeting of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on Tuesday 18th April 2017 be cancelled due to lack of business.

0752. WORK PLAN

The Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee Work Plan was circulated for Members' information.

The Scrutiny Officer informed Members that an invitation had been received to view a house and smart flat in Blackwell on 10th April 2017 at 1000 hours. Members were requested to contact the Scrutiny Officer if they wished to attend.

Moved by Councillor R. Bowler and seconded by Councillor J.E. Smith
RESOLVED that the Work Plan be noted.

The meeting concluded at 1155 hours.