

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room 1, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Monday, 8th March 2010 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor E. Watts – Chair

Councillors, K. Bowman, D. Kelly, D. McGregor, B.R. Murray-Carr and A. Syrett and A.F. Tomlinson

Officers:-

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), S.E.A Sternberg (Solicitor to the Council), S. Tomlinson (Director of Neighbourhoods), J. Brooks (Director of Resources), D. Hill (Head of Finance and Revenues)(from Minute No 798), P. Campbell (Head of Housing)(to Minute No 797), D. Whallett (Housing Enforcement Manager)(to Minute No 797), M. Ellis (Senior Parenting Officer)(to Minute No 794), J. Ritchie (Head of Community Safety and Street Services), L. Ball (Senior IT Projects Officer) (to Minute No 792) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

785. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors J.E. Bennett and A. J. Hodkin.

786. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

787. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

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788. MINUTES – 1ST FEBRUARY 2010

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor E. Watts
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 1st February 2010 be approved as a true record.

789. KEY DECISION NOTICES FROM THE JOINT BOARD HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2010

The record of decision notices from the meeting of the Joint Board held on 19th January 2010 had been previously circulated to all Members.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that the record of decisions from the meeting of the Joint Board held on 19th January 2010 be received.

790. WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND – QUARTER 3 MONITORING REPORT

Councillor Watts presented the report in respect of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund quarter three monitoring report.

The report had been produced following submission of quarterly monitoring returns for projects funded through the Council's Working Neighbourhoods Fund and also included some successful case studies.

Members commented that the report showed the hard work and success the Council was making and how putting resources into these types of schemes could make a difference and this was something to be proud of.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the report be received.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the Working Neighbourhoods fund is targeted to best effect.

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791. ICT BUDGET BIDS

The Senior IT Projects Officer presented a report to seek Members approval for the following three bids in relation to ICT expenditure;

- renewal of the anti-virus contract - £10,000 (one off)
- Disaster Recovery Contract - £15,000 (recurring)
- Internet leased line upgrade to 10mb - £5,000 (one off)

Members raised concern and lengthy discussion took place regarding ongoing funding for the Disaster Recovery Contract.

The Director of Resources advised the meeting that the Authority needed to show that it had robust systems in place for Disaster Recovery; the annual £15,000 would be dealt with as part of future years budgets. He added that shared provision with neighbouring authorities would also be explored for future work.

Members raised further concern that this important renewal of contracts should have been an essential part of the budget process when first estimated.

The Senior IT Projects Officer added that the Authority did not have to sign up to the contract for more than one year.

Further discussion took place.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that the ICT capital bids as detailed above be approved and financed from the ICT and Office Equipment Reserve for costs in 2010/11 only.

(Director of Resources)

Reason for decision: In order to allocate funds from the ICT Reserve in order to improve and update ICT provision.

792. HOUSING RENTS – QUARTERLY REPORT

Councillor Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management, presented the first quarterly report in respect of housing rents.

The report gave information on former tenants rent arrears and current tenants rent arrears including the total debt owed and action taken.

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A Former Tenants Rent Arrears Officer had been employed since January 2010 and had already had some successes with rent recovery as well as frustrations - these successes and frustrations were highlighted in the report.

Members noted there had been a significant drop in rent arrears in the previous two months. The Head of Housing replied that a number of write offs had been made recently regarding persons deceased and persons moving into nursing homes, these would be reflected in the next report.

The Head of Housing circulated further information to the meeting, which gave details of re-let times on properties; repairs, including completions in time and the numbers of properties meeting the standard under the Decent Homes Standard. It was noted that under the BVPI certain void properties could be excluded from the figures. The figures provided to Members included the BVPI and unadjusted figures giving the full picture.

The Head of Housing informed Members that, excluding refusals, the Authority would achieve 100% target for the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

A working group of the Portfolio Holders, officers and tenants' representatives considered the approach and developed new, more efficient processes. This resulted in a reduction in void properties.

Members commented that some of the rent recovery work was being hampered by the reluctance of the court to evict people. A Discussion took place regarding the Authority's relationship with the courts.

The Director of Neighbourhoods drew Members attention to the emergency repairs figures for December 2009 and January 2010; it was noted that almost 99% of emergencies had been completed in time during the adverse weather conditions.

Members welcomed the report and commented that the good achievements made should be publicised.

With regard to recommendation 2 in the report; Councillor Bowman suggested that the word 'either' be omitted from the recommendation.

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor E. Watts

RESOLVED that 1) the report be noted,

2) the format of the revised housing rents report be accepted.

(Head of Housing)

Reason for decision: To make Members aware of the progress in recovery of rent debt.

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793. PARENTING STRATEGY

Councillor Murray-Carr, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety presented the report, which included the Parenting Strategy for 2009 to 2011 for Members consideration.

The Strategy set out the Council's proposed vision and key priorities for supporting and promoting parenting in the District via a multi agency approach. The Strategy also contained an action plan to deliver parenting classes where there was a need and to build on the excellent work carried out so far.

Councillor Murray-Carr noted that Bolsover was the first District to gain a parenting order from the court.

The Senior Parenting Officer gave a verbal example to the meeting of a typical case.

Members asked questions and discussion took place.

The Chief Executive Officer noted that the positive case studies should be promoted.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that the Parenting Strategy 2009 to 2011 be adopted as the Parenting Strategy for the District.

(Head of Housing)

Reason for decision: **In order that the Council's approach to intervening with parents is clearly and publicly set out.**

794. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOR – CONSULTATION OF STANDARDS

Councillor Murray-Carr, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety presented the report, which set out an improvement plan and draft minimum standards in relation to anti social behaviour for Members consideration.

Results from the Place Survey 2009 had suggested that residents' perception of anti social behaviour in the District was poor at 31%. The Home Office had made funding available for authorities with a score of 25% or above based on these authorities developing an anti social behaviour improvement plan and a set of minimum standards. The funding was dependent on approval and publication of both documents by 31st March 2010.

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Both documents were also subject to wider consultation and would form part of the corporate service standards.

The Housing Enforcement Manager drew the meeting's attention to the Anti Social Behaviour Improvement Plan and gave further detail on actions and milestones. The Community Safety Partnership was also consulting on the document.

Members raised questions and discussion took place around targets being realistic, resources being in place and getting partners to work with the Authority.

Councillor Murray-Carr added that the Improvement Plan and Standards would help keep a record of work and demonstrate what the Authority had done with regard to tackling anti social behaviour. The Chief Executive Officer commented that the Authority tackled anti social behaviour very well but that this was about the perception of anti social behaviour

The Head of Community and Street Services stated that he would like to thank the Housing Enforcement Manager who was doing a tremendous amount of work.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that 1) the Anti Social Behaviour Improvement Plan and the Minimum Standards of Response be approved,

2) The Director of Neighbourhoods be permitted to make further amendments to the Standards and Improvement Plan following wider consultation. Any changes to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Housing Enforcement Manager and Head of Community and Street Services.

(Head of Housing / Director of Neighbourhoods)

Reason for decision: In order that the Council's approach to anti social behaviour is clearly and publicly set out.

795. LOCAL LETTING POLICY – SPRINGFIELD CRESCENT, BOLSOVER

Councillor Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management, presented the report in respect of a local letting policy for Springfield Crescent, Bolsover.

The Authority had been working with agencies including the Police to help tackle the problems of anti social behaviour on Springfield Crescent which was a mixed tenure of Council and privately let properties.

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Action had been taken against the main perpetrators and in order to minimise the risk of an inappropriate allocation, i.e., tenants who were vulnerable or tenants likely to cause antisocial behaviour, it was proposed to introduce a local letting policy.

All properties in the area would be allocated through the HARP panel and the points systems set aside for a six month period. Housing Officers would also work with private sector landlords to encourage them to take similar steps when reletting properties in the area.

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RESOLVED that 1) the local lettings policy for Springfield Crescent, Bolsover be agreed for a period of six months,

2) all allocations for the area to be made through the HARP panel during this six month period.

(Head of Housing)

Reason for decision: **To introduce a local letting policy in the Springfield Crescent area which has experienced high levels of anti social behaviour.**

796. CHOICE BASED LETTING

Councillor Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management, presented the report in respect of the government's initiative for allocating council housing known as 'Choice Based Letting' (CBL). A draft housing allocations policy was attached to the report for Members' consideration.

All local authorities had to introduce the scheme by 2010.

The necessary software had been procured through a partnership with other local authorities and this had shared the cost.

Public consultation meetings had been held in Clowne and Bolsover and both of these had been well attended. Around one thousand people on the housing waiting list had also been consulted and the Council had received some good feedback.

The Head of Housing added that officers had been working with PPMG 4 Members to help develop the scheme.

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Wider consultation would be carried out to seek views of tenants, applicants, local housing providers and support agencies. Feedback from this consultation could lead to the policy being amended, and if so, would be presented to Members for their further consideration.

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that the draft policy be accepted.

(Head of Housing)

Reason for decision: **In order that the Council's approach to adopting an allocations system based on choice is clearly set out.**

797. ENERGY MANAGEMENT – INVEST TO SAVE IMPROVEMENTS

Councillor Kelly, Portfolio Holder for Environment, introduced the report in respect of energy savings at Sherwood Lodge and Riverside Depot.

Further to readings taken from Sherwood Lodge and Riverside Depot a proposal had been received which involved the installation of voltage optimisation equipment. This would guarantee savings of 5.4% and 22 tonnes of CO₂ at Sherwood Lodge. It was anticipated, however, that savings of 9.5% and 39 tonnes of CO₂ would be generated. Guaranteed savings for Riverside Depot would be 13.2%, and 8 tonnes of CO₂, with anticipated savings of 17.6% and 11 tonnes of CO₂. The proposal specifies that if the guaranteed savings were not met these savings would be provided by the installer.

Moved by Councillor D. Kelly, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that approval is given for the installation of voltage optimisation equipment as detailed in the report.

(Director of Neighbourhoods)

Reason for decision: **To assist the Council in meeting its carbon reduction target and to generate ongoing savings.**

798. ARREARS - IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS OF £1,000

Councillor Syrett, Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion, presented the report to seek Members approval to write off outstanding debts, including costs, amounting to £16,507.69 in respect of persons who couldn't be traced / bankrupt or companies in liquidation.

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Moved by Councillor A.M. Syrett, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that the irrecoverable items including costs amounting to
£16,507.69 be written off with the proviso that should any of the
debts become collectable the amounts be re-debited.

(Head of Finance and Revenues)

Reason for decision: In order the outstanding debts can be written off
where they are uncollectable.

799. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor E. Watts
RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as
amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the
following items of business on the grounds that they involve the
likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated
Paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the
public interest for that to be revealed.

800. ARREARS - IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS OF £1,000 EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 3

Councillor Syrett, Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion, presented the report to
seek Members approval to write off outstanding debts, including costs,
amounting to £4,788.92 in respect of accounts where the debt was not cost
effective to pursue.

Moved by Councillor A.M. Syrett, seconded by Councillor K. Bowman.
RESOLVED that the irrecoverable items including costs amounting to
£4,788.92 be written off with the proviso that should any of the
debts become collectable the amounts be re-debited.

(Head of Finance and Revenues)

Reason for decision: In order that outstanding debts can be written off
where they are uncollectable.

The meeting concluded at 1215 hours.