

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of Bolsover District Council held in Chamber Suites 1 & 2, The Arc, High Street, Clowne on Wednesday 6th February 2013 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor E. Watts - Chair

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

Officers:-

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), B. Mason (Director of Corporate Resources), S. Tomlinson (Director of Neighbourhoods), P. Campbell (Head of Housing), A. Turner (Legal and Standards and Deputy Monitoring Officer), P. Brown (Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager) (to minute no. 845), S. Chambers (Communications Officer), R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

Also in attendance:

Councillor K. Reid, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee (to minute no. 846).

Mr T. Witts, Groundwork Creswell (to minute no. 845).

840. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A. Syrett.

841. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

EXECUTIVE

842. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minute No.	Councillor	Level of Interest
844.	A. F. Tomlinson	Significant Other Interest
846.	D. Kelly	Non Significant Other Interest

843. MINUTES – 14TH JANUARY 2013

Minute No. 774. Improvement Scrutiny Committee Review of Choice Based Lettings

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Management requested that Members agree that recommendation 7 of minute number 774 be rescinded.

Recommendation 7 stated that *'the Allocations Policy be amended immediately to reflect the changes relating to 'size criteria' in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which will come into force in April 2013'*.

The Head of Housing advised that a Housing Needs Survey was to be undertaken, the outcome of which may necessitate further amendments to be made to the Housing Allocations Policy. It was therefore considered that all necessary amendments be carried out as part of a single process once the results of the Housing Needs Survey were available and an assessment made of the impact of any changes on the demand for housing. Members were advised that the Improvement Scrutiny had been consulted and had agreed to the proposals to rescind the decision.

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that (1) recommendation 7 of minute number 774 which stated *'the Allocations Policy be amended immediately to reflect the changes relating to 'size criteria' in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which will come into force in April 2013'* be rescinded.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor K. Bowman
RESOLVED that (2) the replacement recommendation 7 of minute number 774 be *'A report considering options for changing the eligibility rules for the Allocation Scheme should be produced following the completion of the Housing Needs Survey, this should also consider the impact of Welfare Reform'*.

EXECUTIVE

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that (3) the minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 14th
January 2013 be approved as a true record subject to the
replacement of recommendation 7 of minute number 774.

(Head of Housing)

Councillor Murray-Carr drew Members' attention to a summary of a government document published in the last edition of First magazine. This document had outlined expectations that Local Authorities would be required to significantly improve upon the amounts written off as irrecoverable arrears. Councillor Watts agreed to circulate this to Members.

Councillor A.F. Tomlinson reaffirmed a Significant Other Interest in the following agenda item and in accordance with legal advice received, would remain in the meeting for the duration of the presentation and leave prior to the debate and decision taking place.

844. GROUNDWORK CRESWELL, ASHFIELD & MANSFIELD CORE FUNDING, REPORT ON ACTIVITIES DURING 2011/12.

Councillor Tomlinson, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, introduced the report and advised Members that this had been another successful year with Groundwork Creswell continuing to expand and develop their provision across a wider geographical area. A significantly increased number of participants had also been engaged in various programmes which was to be commended as Groundwork Creswell had suffered significant financial cuts like many organisations.

Trevor Witts, Groundwork Creswell, provided Members with a detailed presentation on the activities carried out during 2012/13. These included the

- Future Jobs Fund - this employed 45 people from the Bolsover area out of a total workforce of 90,
- Youth Contract - this project had high numbers of output, the fund had been successful in securing a project to cover the East Midlands area and was looking to increase numbers from 20 to 164. This was largely dependent on the Connexions service agreeing to release information from the database so that Groundwork could contact the youths who may benefit from the programme.
- NEET – out of the 20 people engaged in the programme, 18 had gone on to successfully secure employment or further education.

EXECUTIVE

- Youth Re-engagement – this had been a very successful programme targeted at young people at the edge of exclusion from school.
- Apprenticeships – the apprenticeships funded by Bolsover District Council for 12 months had been extended to 18 months by Groundwork Creswell.

Members were advised on the progress on a number of major programmes and developments including:

- Markham Vale – Groundwork Creswell had won the tender to carry out landscaping around junction 29a.
- Various projects across the area including skate parks and recreation grounds
- Construction – 10 empty properties in Bolsover would be brought back into use

Members' attention was drawn to the statistical information and service level agreement included in the agenda. Mr Witts advised that every £1 of funding generated £10 work of activity. The success of the programmes provided by Groundwork Creswell had allowed the services to be extended to practically the whole of Derbyshire and links had been established with other Groundwork organisations to share expertise and knowledge.

Councillor Tomlinson left the meeting.

Members asked questions with regard to provision for adults. Mr Witts advised that 18+ programmes presented significant cash flow problems and was difficult to sustain. Efforts were being concentrated on the 16 to 18 age bracket and the Council's assistance was requested to encourage the Connexions service to provide their database of contact details.

The Chair thanked Mr Witts for the presentation and congratulated the service on the successes achieved. Members were pleased to agree the release of the payment to Groundwork Creswell.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor K. Bowman
RESOLVED that the payment for 2012/13 totalling £13,900 be released to
Groundwork Creswell Ashfield & Mansfield.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To release the payment to Groundwork
Creswell, Ashfield & Mansfield in
accordance with the service level
agreement.**

(Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager)

EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive's and Partnership Manager and Mr T. Witts left the meeting.

Councillor A. F. Tomlinson rejoined the meeting.

845. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF DEMAND FOR HOUSING.

Councillor K. Reid, Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee, presented the report to seek Executive approval of revised recommendations in respect of the Scrutiny Review of Housing Demand in Bolsover District. The report had previously been presented to the Executive in May 2012 and the Scrutiny Committee had been requested to reconsider and revise several of the recommendations put forward.

The Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee had considered the comments and issues raised by the Executive and had carried out further discussions and consultation with relevant officers.

Recommendation 1 – Produce a new strategy and vision for local housing that redefines the Authority's role as a Housing provider and sets out a future for Bolsover as a major partner in the commercial house building, social and private rented sector.

Members were advised that the Housing Strategy that would be produced for Bolsover District would address and action this recommendation.

Recommendation 4 – Consider re-orientating the Housing Needs and Housing Options Teams.

This action would also be addressed by the production of the Housing Strategy.

Recommendation 6 – Consider altering the Housing application form so more relevant data about tenants can be gathered.

Discussions with relevant officers had concluded that the current Housing application form was not fit for purpose and it was therefore considered that the form should be reviewed.

Recommendation 7 – produce a plan to drive improvement in the prioritisation and turnover of Void Council properties.

Executive commented that the effects of Welfare Reform had not been considered in that they were not part of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny

EXECUTIVE

Committee remit and would be focussed upon in further detail by the Improvement Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked Councillor Reid and the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee for a comprehensive and informative report.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that (1) a new strategy and vision for local housing that redefines the Authority's role as a Housing provider be produced which sets out a future for Bolsover as a major partner in the commercial house building, social and private rented sector.

(2) Consider re-orientating the Housing Needs and Housing Options Teams.

(3) Consider altering the Housing application form so more relevant data about tenants can be gathered.

(4) a plan to drive improvement in the prioritisation and turnover of Void Council properties be produced.

(Head of Housing)

REASON FOR DECISION: **To consider the recommendations of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee on the demand for housing in Bolsover.**

Councillor Reid left the meeting.

Councillor Kelly reaffirmed a Non Significant Other Interest in the following item.

846. SUCCESSION FOR COUNCIL TENANTS

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Management presented the report to seek Members' approval of succession rules for Council tenants that gave the same rights to new and existing tenants.

The existing policy had been provided for Members' information.

The Head of Housing answered Members' questions in respect of succession rights.

EXECUTIVE

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that that Council use the freedom of the Localism Act 2011 to adopt a set of rules for succession that gives new tenants the same rights as existing tenants.

(Head of Housing)

REASON FOR DECISION: **To have a policy on tenancy succession that offers the same rights to new and existing tenants.**

847. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2013/14 TO 2015/16.

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report to update Members on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

The report had been previously considered by Audit Committee and would be presented to Budget Scrutiny on Friday 8th February 2013.

Members were advised that the Council may receive a further £60,000 in Efficiency Support Grant. Efficiency Grant would be awarded to Councils who had achieved their savings targets and introduced appropriate efficiency strategies. The bid would be submitted by 22nd March and initial indications were positive.

Members asked questions in relation to Derbyshire Highways to which the Director of Neighbourhoods responded. It was also confirmed that income from MOTs provided by the Council's garage would be included in the Streetscene efficiency savings. The Director of Neighbourhoods advised that the Communications Officer would be contacted in respect of publicising that the MOT service was available to the general public which would generate further income.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that all recommendations below be referred to the Budget Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 8th February 2013 for advice and consideration prior to the budget being considered by Council.

RECOMMENDED that (1) the view of the Chief Financial Officer that the estimates included in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2013/14 to 2015/16 are robust and that the level of financial reserves whilst at minimum levels are adequate, be accepted.

EXECUTIVE

(2) officers be required to report back to Executive and to the Audit Committee on at least a quarterly basis regarding the overall position in respect of the Council's budgets, these reports to include updates on progress in achieving the range of identified efficiencies necessary to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the 2013/14 financial year.

In addition to the above the following recommendations are made in respect of each of the main accounts of the Council.

GENERAL FUND

- a1) No Council Tax increase is levied for the financial year 2013/14 and the Council accept the proposed Government grant compensation arrangements and this recommendation is submitted for approval by the Council at its meeting on 1st March 2013.
- or
- a2) An increase in Council Tax of 1.99% is levied for the financial year 2013/14 and this recommendation is submitted for approval by the Council at its meeting on 1st March 2013.
- b) The Executive recommends to Council (at its meeting on 13 February 2013) the Medium Term Financial Plan in respect of the General Fund as set out in **Appendix 1** of this report and agrees the Revised Budget 2012/13 with a budget requirement of £9,624,910 together with the original budget for 2013/14 with a budget requirement of £10,402,084 as detailed in **Appendix 1 Table 1**.
- c) Officers continue to progress the implementation of measures designed to secure a balanced budget in respect of 2013/14 and 2014/15 with progress to be reported back to both Executive and Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.
- d) That Executive agreed to recommend the proposed Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 1 Table 3 to Council for adoption with effect from 1st April 2013.
- e) The Executive agrees to recommend an increase in the level of General Fund balances as at 31st March 2013 to one of £1.5m by utilising any under spend in respect of 2012/13 or by transferring either uncommitted earmarked reserves, or Transition Grant into the General Fund at the year end.
- f) That officers continue with the programme of work to secure the agreed savings programme of £0.615m at the earliest opportunity.

EXECUTIVE

- g) That officers work to ensure that the savings of £0.269m as identified within this report in respect of 2013/14 are secured at the earliest opportunity and that a savings strategy to achieve the further savings required for 2014/15 of £0.724m is presented to Executive for consideration by July 2013, with that savings strategy to incorporate an evaluation of the opportunities for securing further savings of at least £0.5m from the Strategic Alliance or other joint services (£0.250m per Strategic Alliance Partner).
- h) That delegated power be granted to Executive to approve that the budget be amended to reflect the identification and agreement of financial savings during the course of the year.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- a) That Council agrees to introduce the Government recommended rent increases with effect from 1 April 2013. The recommended increase will bring about an average increase in rents of 5.8%. However, the actual percentages will vary depending on the type of property.
- b) That the increases in respect of other charges as outlined in Appendix 2 Table 2 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2013.
- c) That the Housing Revenue Account as set out in **Appendix 2 Table 1** be approved as the Revised Budget in respect of 2012/13 and as the Original Budget in respect of 2013/14.
- d) That Executive recommends to Council that the HRA target level of balances is set at a level of £2m as at 31 March 2014.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- (a) That the Capital Programme for 2012/13 to 2015/16 as set out in **Appendix 3 Table 1** be approved.
- (b) That Executive notes the requirement to undertake up to £7.865m of prudential borrowing at the end of the 2012/13 financial year in order to fund expenditure incurred during 2012/13 which will be funded by capital receipts which it is currently anticipated will be received in the early part of 2013/14. Once received these capital receipts will be utilised to repay the prudential borrowing that has been undertaken at the year end.

EXECUTIVE

- (c) That the General Fund Capital Programme is operated at minimal levels until the outstanding capital receipts are secured.

(Director of Corporate Resources)

REASON FOR DECISION: **To approve the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for consideration by Budget Scrutiny Committee and Council.**

The meeting concluded at 1110 hours.