

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday 5th November 2018 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor A.M. Syrett in the Chair

Councillors M. Dooley, S.W. Fritchley, D. McGregor, B.R. Murray-Carr, M.J. Ritchie and B. Watson

Officers:-

D. Swaine (Chief Executive Officer), K. Hanson (Joint Strategic Director – Place), L. Hickin (Joint Strategic Director – People), S. Sternberg (Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer), D. Clarke (Joint Head of Finance and Resources), K. Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager) (until Minute No. 0426), I. Barber (Property Services Manager) (until Minute No. 0429), A. Brownsword (Senior Governance Officer) and L. Robinson (Finance Assistant) (Observing)

0419. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H.J. Gilmour.

0420. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

0421. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

0422. MINUTES – 8TH OCTOBER 2018

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor A.M. Syrett

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 8th October 2018 be approved as a true and correct record.

0423. ITEMS RECOMMENDED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no items recommended by Scrutiny Committees.

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0424. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK ITEMS JOINT CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Joint Strategic Director – Place presented the report which sought agreement to the Joint Corporate Enforcement Policy which would set overarching principles for enforcement activities across both Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council. Each service would have its own set of enforcement policies that would sit beneath the corporate policy.

The Policy had been to the Healthy, Safe, Clean and Green Communities Scrutiny Committee and had been approved by the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee. A steering group had been formed to ensure that good robust enforcement action was taken with better communication to both Members and the public.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr and seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the Executive approves and adopts the Joint Corporate Enforcement Policy.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure legal compliance and to ensure that enforcement action taken by Bolsover District Council is better able to resist a challenge in the courts. The policy will also ensure all departments follow the same principles when carrying out enforcement action.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED: To do nothing and retain the previous published Corporate Enforcement Policy dated 2013 for Bolsover District Council is contrary to current regulatory requirements and statutory guidance.

(Joint Strategic Director – Place)

0425. NON KEY DECISION CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JULY - SEPTEMBER 2018 (Q2 – 2018/19)

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance presented the report which informed the Executive of the Quarter 1 outturns for the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 targets.

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager noted that out of the 61 targets, 32 (52%) were on track, 17 (28%) had been achieved (1 this time, 16 previously), 5 (8%) had been withdrawn (previously), 6 (10%) were on alert and 1 (2%) had been suspended.

G11 – Through a programme of targeted refurbishment bring 15 empty private sector properties back into use per annum.

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager informed Members that the target was on alert as only 5 empty private sector properties had been brought back into use so far this year. However, there was a lot of work ongoing and the team continued to take forward any opportunities.

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C13 – Reduce average relet times of Council properties (not including sheltered accommodation) to 20 days by March 2019

It was noted that a review of Void properties had taken place and most of the recommendations had now been implemented. It would take time for the effects of the recommendations to filter through, but some improvement to the target was expected. Members requested a report on the effectiveness of Tenancy Management.

C14 – Attend 99% of repair emergencies within 6 working hours

It was noted that the target was a stretch target, some tweaks were to be made to the reporting. Members noted that 97% was a good outcome and a credit to the staff involved.

H04 – Tackle childhood obesity through the delivery of a child focused health intervention programme to all Key Stage 2 year groups by the end of each academic year

It was noted that this target had been suspended due to the withdrawal of public health funding. However, schools have some ring fenced funds for physical activities. Leisure have offered each school a menu of different activities to buy in. A good level of engagement has been received so far.

T10 – Reduce the level of Former Tenants Arrears by 10% through early intervention and effective monitoring by 2019

It was noted a lot of activity was taking place, but the levels of new Former Tenants Arrears was rising faster.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor M. Dooley

RESOLVED that progress against the Corporate Plan 2015-2019 targets to be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: This is an information report to keep Members informed of progress against the corporate plan targets noting achievements and any areas of concern.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED: Not applicable to this report as providing an overview of performance against agreed targets.

The Information, Engagement & Performance Manager left the meeting.

0426. NON KEY DECISION INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Overall Policy and Strategic Planning presented the report which gave further information on the financial pressures facing the Council and summarised the measures being taken to maximise income, reduce costs and redesign service in line with the Transformation Programme.

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The Chief Executive Officer went on to explain the need to consider the Council's financial position and the income gap. It was noted that efficiency savings had been made by utilising reserves.

Statutory guidance had now been issued which came in to force in April 2018 for local authorities creating and Investment Strategy. The report also considered the types of investments considered to be suitable.

Members noted that there was no mention of HS2 and the possible impact it would have on business rates. It was also felt that a group should be formed to discuss possible projects, but Members were reminded that projects were discussed at Cabinet. A further Transformation Session for Members was planned for December.

Moved by Councillor A.M. Syrett and seconded by Councillor S.W. Fritchley

RESOLVED that Executive (1) consider the information set out in the report and request that a further report be provided setting out a draft Investment strategy for approval,

(2) receive a detailed analysis of how the Council's non housing property stock is performing including details of occupancy levels, voids, return rates, maintenance and capital depreciation costs, debt write offs and trends and demands,

(3) give regard to other areas of investment that could support delivery of the corporate aspirations in order to prioritise further, more detailed appraisals and discussions.

REASON FOR DECISION: 1. As set out in the report, the development of an investment strategy requires consideration of a number of key issues to ensure it reflects the requirements of the statutory guidance and enables Councillors to make informed 'risk based' decisions. The strategy will also need to include key factors to be considered when determining investment opportunities and a mechanism to appraise these. Consequently it is recommended that a further report be submitted to Executive setting out more detailed proposals for an investment strategy.

2. Understanding the performance of the Council's existing non housing property is essential in determining how further property investment opportunities should be approached. This information will enable Executive to give full consideration to areas of risk and reward within the management of existing stock, in order to determine and how well placed the Council is to expand its 'commercial' property portfolio activity. This is reflected in recommendation (ii).

3. The report highlights the uncertainty of the Council's future financial position but illustrates the managed process in place through the Transformation agenda. Given the need to consider how best to maximise the transformation reserve in delivery of the Council's Corporate priorities, Executive are asked to consider other areas of strategic investment. This consideration will assist in prioritising areas where further more detailed appraisal and discussion is necessary. This is reflected in recommendation (iii).

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OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED: An alternative option would be to not progress the development of an investment strategy and not consider other high level investment opportunities. Whilst this approach would limit any risks associated with the use of Council resources or additional borrowing for investment, it could restrict the ability to generate additional income or deliver key corporate priorities.

(Chief Executive Officer)

**0427. KEY DECISION
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - BUDGET MONITORING
REPORT QUARTER 2 – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources and Renewable Energy introduced the report which updated the Executive on the financial position of the Council following the second quarter's budget monitoring exercise.

The Joint Head of Finance and Resources noted that it was not yet known whether the Council would receive a settlement from the Government from 2021 and the Council was still waiting to hear what the Business Rate Retention would be.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor M.J. Ritchie

RESOLVED that (1) Executive notes the monitoring position of the General Fund at the end of the second quarter as detailed on Appendix 1 and 5 of the report (A net favourable variance of £1.469m against the profiled budget) and the key issues highlighted within this report

(2) Executive notes the position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Capital Programme and Treasury Management at the end of the second quarter (Appendices 2, 3 and 4 of the report).

REASON FOR DECISION: The report summarises the financial position of the Council following the second quarter's budget monitoring exercise for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury management activity.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED: The Budget Monitoring report for 2018/19 is primarily a factual report which details progress against previously approved budgets. Accordingly there are no alternative options to consider.

(Joint Head of Finance and Resources)

**0428. KEY DECISION
SAFE AND WARM UPGRADE SCHEME, HIDES GREEN, BOLSOVER**

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Commercial Services introduced the report and noted that this was a continuation of the Safe and Warm Upgrade Scheme.

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The Property Services Manager noted that various projects had already been successfully completed and this scheme was to replace and upgrade the boilers, remove asbestos and provide wet rooms in 32 flats and 6 bungalows on Hides Green Bolsover.

A tender exercise had been carried out and tenders had been assessed on the basis of a 60/40 price versus quality split.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor M.J. Ritchie

RESOLVED that approval is sought to appoint Matthews & Tannert Ltd to undertake the works as outlined within this report as per the tender sum of £426,637.63.

REASON FOR DECISION: A tender evaluation session was held on 16th October 2018 and led by the Procurement Team. The three returned valid tender submissions were assessed and scored as per the evaluation criteria on the basis of a 60 / 40 price versus quality basis.

The evaluation group were in unanimous agreement that the most competitive tender submission had been received from Matthews & Tannert Ltd who scored top on both price and quality respectively.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED: Due to the existing condition of the communal heating system there is potential risk for failure of the boilers. It is not economically viable to replace the boilers and there is further complication due to the deteriorating condition of the existing pipe work infrastructure.

(Property Services Manager)

The Property Services Manager left the meeting.

0429. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor and seconded by Councillor M.J. Ritchie

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 item of business on the grounds that it involves 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.

0430. NON KEY DECISION

There were no exempt non key Decisions.

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**0431. KEY DECISION
MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE DEBT – WRITE OFF OF
OUTSTANDING AMOUNTS
EXEMPT – PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 3**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources and Renewable Energy introduced the report which sought agreement to write off debts in respect of Collection Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Housing Benefit accounts.

The Joint Head of Finance and Resources noted that all possible efforts had been made to recover the debts.

Moved by Councillor B. Watson and seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that the Executive agrees to write off the amounts in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates of £21,113.89, Council Tax of £15,925.25, Housing Rents of £4,415.15 and Overpaid Housing Benefit of £12,929.59 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: Given that all available options to recover this debt have been explored it is important that the Council recognises the position and approves the write off.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED: Writing off of amounts which are no longer collectable is an essential part of the process of debt management. It ensures that a focus is maintained on those amounts which are collectable thus maximising overall levels of collection. Regular review of outstanding debt will continue as part of the day to day management of debt with a further report before the end of the financial year. It should be noted that the current collection rate for Council Tax, NNDR and Housing Rents is 98%, which is in line with that of other Derbyshire Authorities.

(Joint Head of Finance and Resources)

The meeting concluded at 1117 hours.