

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 5 December 2022 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Steve Fritchley in the Chair

Councillors Mary Dooley, David Downes, Clive Moesby, Duncan McGregor, Liz Smyth and Deborah Watson.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Grant Galloway (Executive Director of Strategy and Development/Chief Executive – Dragonfly Developments), Pam Brown (Assistant Director Leader's Executive, Partnerships, Governance and Communications), Jim Fieldsend (Assistant Director & Monitoring Officer), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Samantha Bentley (Service Manager (Environmental Health) (to Minute No. EX80-22/23), Ian Barber (Director of Property & Construction Dragonfly Development Ltd/Assistant Director of Property Services & Housing Repairs), Vicky Dawson (Assistant Director Housing Management, Enforcement and Customer Services) (to Minute No. EX80-22/23), Kath Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager) (to Minute No. EX76-22/23), Joanne Wilson (Scrutiny and Elections Officer) and Alison Bluff (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillors Anne Clarke and Nick Clarke.

EX70-22/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EX71-22/23 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

EX72-22/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

EX73-22/23 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of an Executive meeting held on 31st October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

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MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY

EX74-22/23 **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICY ON SKY LANTERNS AND HELIUM BALLOONS**

Executive considered a detailed report presented by Councillor Nick Clarke, Chair of Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee, in relation to the Committee's review of Council policy on sky lanterns and helium balloons.

The aim of the review was to assess the local impact of Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons and review local Council policy.

The objectives agreed by the Committee were to assess national campaigns and neighbouring authorities, and consider replicating a similar charter/policy for BDC, and to assess the scale of the local environmental impact via consultation with both residents and local agencies/groups. The key issues identified for investigation were detailed in the report.

The key findings arising from the review were that there was limited additional impact the Council could have at a local level due to current national legislation, however, designating restrictions on use on Council land would bring the Council in line with over 50% of English councils.

To ensure service delivery remained efficient and effective across the board, Committee's advice was that the Council aligned its approach with that of neighbouring authorities as this would allow officers in the joint Environmental Health Service to take a proportionate and appropriate approach to enforcement and advice/guidance, within the Fire Service area.

Scrutiny Committee had put together five recommendations which were detailed in the review report.

Executive supported all five recommendations and the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health & Licensing agreed to write to the relevant Minister to lobby for change to national legislation in line with the national campaign.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Clive Moesby

RESOLVED that (1) the recommendations of the review as outlined in section 2 of the review report be endorsed,

(2) monitoring by Committee takes place over a twelve month period via the PERFORM system with an update report to Committee at the end of the monitoring period.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

Reasons for Recommendation

The Committee had put together five recommendations which would hopefully assist the Council in limiting the impact of local use of sky lanterns and helium balloons.

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Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

While the number of contacts over recent years had been limited, Members felt that further action could be taken to bring the approach of BDC in line with that taken at neighbouring authorities. This should enable a more streamlined service and create efficiencies for the team. As such a 'do nothing' option was discounted.

Executive could choose not to endorse the recommendations of the review, where they felt the course of action recommended was beyond the delivery capacity of the Authority.

EX75-22/23 **AMBITION PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2022 - (Q2 - 2021/22)**

Executive considered a report which provided the July to September 2022 (Quarter 2) outturns for the Council's Ambition targets 2020-2024.

Out of the 31 targets 21 (67%) were on track, 1 (3%) had been withdrawn, 1 (3%) had been amended, 1 (3%) continued to be on alert, and 7 (23%) had been achieved previously.

Following discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, ENV 08 - *Bring 5 empty properties back into use per year through assistance and enforcement measures*, had now been withdrawn. This was because the target had limited value and measures were being developed which would be better useful to Members to assess performance regarding private sector housing.

Councillor McGregor also advised Members that a meeting would be taking place to discuss issues around CUS.07 - *Reduce average relet times for standard voids (Council properties) to 20 calendar days by March 2021 and maintain thereafter*.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Clive Moesby **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

Reasons for Recommendation

This was an information report to keep Members informed of progress against the Council Ambition targets noting achievements and any areas of concern.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not applicable to this report as providing an overview of performance against agreed targets.

The Information, Engagement and Performance Manager left the meeting.

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EX76-22/23 ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION AT 33 HARLESTHORPE AVENUE CLOWNE

Executive's approval was sought for the appointment of a Contractor to undertake demolition, and alteration and extension works at 33 Harlesthorne Avenue, Clowne.

Housing Services had identified a need for a suitable property in the area to provide accommodation for a family with welfare requirements. 33 Harlesthorne Avenue, Clowne, was a void property and had been identified with the potential to extend and adapt as it had sufficient land surrounding it provided by a garage site.

The project included for demolishing the garage site to incorporate the space into the boundary of the property. This would allow the 2 bedrooomed semi-detached bungalow, with attached single skin offshoot, to be converted into a 3/4 bedrooomed bungalow with wet-room and family kitchen-diner area.

Working in conjunction with the Procurement Team, the works were tendered in accordance with Council procedures. One tender was received and evaluated on 1st November 2022 and the evaluation group were in unanimous agreement that Ven Construction Ltd's tender represented a high quality submission.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor

RESOLVED that (1) Ven Construction be awarded Contract to carry out the demolition, alteration and extension works at 33 Harlesthorne Avenue, Clowne, in accordance with tendered specification and following tender evaluation,

(2) progress on the contract would be reported through the Housing Stock Management Group.

(Building Surveyor/ Contract Administrator)

Reasons for Recommendation

The evaluation group were in unanimous agreement that the tender represented a high quality submission received from Ven Construction Ltd.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

None.

EX77-22/23 BOLSOVER HOMELESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2022-2027

Executive's approval was sought for the adoption of the Bolsover Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The core aim of the Bolsover Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was to break down system blockages, argue that a multi-disciplinary approach was needed to make systems work better, and that services were flexibly designed around the needs of the Council's customers.

The strategy had been developed through close collaboration between the Derbyshire Homelessness Officers Group (DHOG), and a wide range of partner agencies to ensure

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that the Council was “working collaboratively to prevent and reduce homelessness, making it everyone’s responsibility.”

The strategy would meet the vision and aims through the delivery of 4 clear priorities;

1. Make homelessness everyone’s responsibility through a system wide approach,
2. Prevent homelessness and respond through early intervention and personalised solutions,
3. End rough sleeping and repeat homelessness,
4. Develop sustainable supported and settled housing solutions.

The strategy would serve as the Council’s main homelessness & rough sleeping strategy for 5 years. It was noted that there was a legal requirement for the Council to have a homelessness & rough sleeping strategy in place.

The Chief Executive commented that there was a difference between homelessness and rough sleeping and the Council was now seeing a large number of people presenting themselves as homeless or potentially becoming homeless due to the current cost of living crisis.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that the Bolsover Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 be approved and adopted.

(Assistant Director Housing Management, Enforcement and Customer Services)

Reasons for Recommendation

By adopting the strategy the Council would be able to meet the continued challenges ahead such as meeting the needs of those with multiple and complex needs and the coming issues related to the increases in the cost of living.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not to approve the recommendation to implement the proposed strategy. It should be noted that the Council would be in breach of its legal requirement to have a published Rough Sleeping Strategy in place.

Not to approve the implementation of the proposed strategy would have a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of considerably vulnerable individuals. The strategy provided a co-ordinated framework for the delivery of essential services to protect the wellbeing of rough sleepers.

BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

EX78-22/23 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - REVISED BUDGETS 2022/23

Executive’s approval was sought for the 2022/23 revised budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme.

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General Fund

The proposed 2022/23 revised budget for the General Fund was attached at appendix 1 to the report. The appendix showed the original budget for 2022/23, which was approved by Council in February 2022, the current budget which reflected budget transfers and approved changes during the financial year, and the proposed revised budget for 2022/23.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The revised budget for the Housing Revenue Account was set out in appendix 3 to the report.

Capital Programme

The Council's capital programme was shown in appendix 4 to the report. It had been updated from the original budgets to reflect approvals within the year and the profiling of the individual schemes following approved changes by Members and from detailed discussions with budget officers.

The risk of not achieving a balanced budget was outlined as a key risk within the Council's Strategic Risk Register. Whilst officers were of the view that these risks were being appropriately managed, it needed to be recognised that continued reductions in budgets may mean that adverse variances arising from particular issues or pressures outside of the Council's control, may not be able to be absorbed from favourable variances in other budgets. Similarly the income on the HRA needed to be carefully managed to ensure the HRA continued to be sustainable over the life of the 30 year business plan, particularly in light of the expenditure increases the Council had seen during the last 12 months.

Councillor McGregor noted that the Council was in a better position financially than some other local authorities and that was due to the good work of the Council.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor

RESOLVED that (1) the revised General Fund budget for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1 and detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be noted,

(2) the revised HRA budget for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved,

(3) the revised Capital Programme for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 4 to the report be approved.

(Section 151 officer)

Reasons for Recommendation

The purpose of the report was to set revised budgets as early as possible within the financial year to ensure that identified budget savings were realised, that all budget managers were working to the revised budgets and to allow any planned changes to be delivered.

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Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

General Fund and HRA

Any surplus on the Council's two main revenue accounts would result in an increase in financial balances at the year-end which were available to protect services at a time of declining central government support. It was proposed that additional resources would be transferred to reserves in preparation for future expenditure.

Capital

There were no alternative options being considered with regard to the proposed allocations from the Capital Programme budget as it ensured the Council's assets met health and safety requirements in that they were maintained in a fit for purpose state that ensured they remained fully operational.

KEY DECISIONS

EX79-22/23 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Executive's approval was sought to enter into a Service Level Agreement between Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and Bolsover District Council which set out a funding arrangement for the grant of Household Support fund.

In October 2021, the government announced that a Household Support Fund grant (HSF), would be made available to county councils and unitary authorities in England to support those most in need over the winter. The Council was awarded funding to cover a six month period, October 2021 to March 2022 (Tranche 1), and a further six month period, April 2022 to September 2022 (Tranche 2).

A third tranche of Household Support Fund had been announced to cover the period, October 2022 to March 2023, with the purpose of the grant being to provide support to vulnerable households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills, essential living costs and housing costs.

Following discussion, it was agreed that DCC would retain a portion of their grant funding to assist vulnerable households with regard to food and utility bills, and the Council would utilise the grant of approximately £100,000 - £114,000 around housing costs.

A Service Level Agreement had been provided by DCC, which was appended to the report, and set out how the grant must be administered along with reporting information.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor

RESOLVED that the Council enters into a Service Level Agreement for the Household Support Fund, with Derbyshire County Council, for the grant of approximately £100,000 - £114,000

(Assistant Director Housing Management, Enforcement and Customer Services)

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Reasons for Recommendation

This grant was an opportunity to financially assist vulnerable households across the District to prevent homelessness and to sustain tenancies.

In order to receive this grant the Service Level Agreement needed to be signed. The Council's legal team had approved the agreement in its current form.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Do nothing. This option was rejected as to refuse the Service Level Agreement would mean residents in the District could not benefit from the funding and may suffer financial hardship.

EX80-22/23 AIR QUALITY GRANT

Executive's approval was sought to access a grant from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to improve air quality in the District.

On 20th July 2022, the government announced that an Air Quality grant (£975,000) would be made to the Council in order to carry out agreed promotion and infrastructure improvements to improve air quality (specifically Nitrogen dioxide).

The grant had been made following compliance with the Ministerial Direction relating to air quality on the A34 within the District.

The purpose of the grant was to implement education initiatives and infrastructure improvements (as per the grant determination letter attached at appendix 1 and 2 to the report), and the funding could only be used to deliver these specific projects as agreed with DEFRA, and subject to quarterly reporting.

Moved by Councillor Deborah Watson and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that signing of the grant determination letters be approved.

(Chief Executive)

Reasons for Recommendation

The grant was an opportunity to improve air quality in the District through vehicle charging infrastructure, additional alternative transport initiatives and education and promotional activity.

In order to receive the grant, the determination letters needed to be signed and returned to DEFRA.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Do nothing. This option was rejected. To refuse the grant would limit the Council's ability to directly improve air quality.

The Service Manager, Environmental Health and the Assistant Director Housing Management, Enforcement and Customer Services left the meeting.

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EX81-22/23 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Steve Fritchley
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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed. [The category of exempt information is stated after each Minute].

PART 2 - EXEMPT ITEMS

EX82-22/23 UPDATE ON DRAGONFLY

Executive considered a detailed update on Dragonfly which included a slide presentation regarding current and upcoming housing projects/schemes.

Members welcomed the update and noted it was a good news story.

The meeting concluded at 10:30 hours.