

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Monday 30th January 2023 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Steve Fritchley in the Chair

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

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Pam Brown (Assistant Director Leader's Executive, Partnerships, Governance and Communications and Alison Bluff (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor Tom Munro, observing, and Sally Lovell (Business Estates Manager).

EX82-22/23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EX83-22/23. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

EX84-22/23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

EX85-22/23. MINUTES – 5TH DECEMBER 2022

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake
RESOLVED that the Minutes of an Executive meeting held on 5th December 2022 be approved as a correct record.

BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

EX86-22/23. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2026/27

Executive's approval was sought for the proposed budget 2023/24, for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan covering the years 2023/24 to 2026/27.

The detailed report provided Members with an overview of the Council's financial position in order to inform the decision making process. Any recommendations agreed

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by Executive would be referred to Council on 1st February 2023, for Members' consideration and approval.

In particular, financial projections were provided for

- 2022/23 Current Budget Position – this was the current year budget, revised to take account of changes during the financial year that would end on 31st March 2023.
- 2023/24 Original Budget – this was the proposed budget for the next financial year on which the Council Tax would be based and would commence from 1st April 2023.
- 2023/24 Original Budget, this included proposed increases to rents and fees and charges for the next financial year for the Housing Revenue Account.
- 2024/25 to 2026/27 Financial Plan – In accordance with good practice the Council agrees its annual budgets within the context of a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This included financial projections in respect of the next three financial years.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake
RECOMMENDED that Council approve:

- 1 that in the view of the Chief Financial Officer, that the estimates included in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27, are robust and that the level of financial reserves whilst at minimum levels are adequate, be accepted,
- 2 that officers report back to Executive and to the Audit and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis regarding the overall position in respect of the Council's budgets. These reports to include updates on achieving savings and efficiencies for 2023/24 and future years,

GENERAL FUND

- 3 a Council Tax increase of £5.72 is levied in respect of a notional Band D property (2.99%),
- 4 the Medium Term Financial Plan in respect of the General Fund as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved as the Revised Budget 2022/23, as the Original Budget in respect of 2023/24, and the financial projection in respect of 2024/25 to 2026/27,
- 5 that any further under spend in respect of 2022/23 is transferred to the Council's General Fund Reserves,
- 6 on the basis that income from Planning Fees may exceed £0.500m in 2022/23, the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Leader, be granted delegated powers to authorise such additional resources as are necessary to effectively manage the resultant increase in workload.

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

- 7 that Council increases its rent levels by 5% to apply from 1st April 2023,
- 8 that the increases in respect of other charges as outlined in Appendix 3 Table 1 to the report be implemented with effect from, 1st April 2023,
- 9 the Medium Term Financial Plan in respect of the Housing Revenue Account as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved as the Revised Budget in respect of 2022/23, as the Original Budget in respect of 2023/24, and the financial projection in respect of 2024/25 to 2026/27,
- 10 that under spends in respect of 2022/23 to 2026/27 are transferred to the HRA Revenue Reserve,

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 11 that the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 4 to the report be approved as the Revised Budget in respect of 2022/23, and as the Approved Programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27,
- 12 that the Assistant Director of Property Services and Housing Repairs be granted delegated powers in consultation with the Portfolio Member and the Asset Management group to approve the utilisation of the £260,000 of AMP Refurbishment Work allocation, with such approvals to be reported back to Executive through the Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report.

(Governance & Civic Manager/Section 151 Officer)

Reasons for Recommendation

The report presents a budget for approval by Council. It seeks to ensure approval to budgets in respect of the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Alternative options are considered throughout the report.

KEY DECISIONS

EX87-22/23. LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY – NEW BUILD PROPERTIES

Executive's approval was sought to adopt a Local Lettings Policy in relation to new build properties across the District.

Allocations to new developments required a mix of tenants to create sustainable communities and to give priority to local people. The Local Lettings Policy – New Build Properties, detailed the method of allocating new build properties to those who lived in or had a strong connection to the Ward where the new properties were located.

The strong local connection criteria would include;

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- Living within the Ward where the new build homes were located (and had done so for the past three years)
- Had a close family member (parents, grandparents or children) living in the Ward (and had done so for the past three years)
- Could demonstrate a strong local connection having lived in the area for five years, e.g., lived in the area as a child and then moved away
- Currently living outside of the Ward but were in paid employment within the Ward (and had done so for the past three years)

If there were no applicants in the categories above, the properties would be allocated in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy, in order of priority banding and waiting time.

Applicants would bid for properties via the Choice Based Lettings system and would undergo a first stage assessment based on the Council's usual Allocations Policy. Successful shortlisted applicants would be required to undergo a second stage selection process based on the criteria set out in the Local Lettings Policy before any offer of accommodation was made. This would require the applicant to attend an interview with the Housing Needs Assistant and Housing Tenancy Assistant for that area.

It was intended that the Local Lettings Policy would apply to any new build property built or acquired by the Council, and any other new build schemes in the District that were owned/managed by the Council. However, where there was a property with adaptations, this would be excluded and allocations would be through the Housing Allocation and Review Panel (HARP) as set out in the Allocation Policy.

Members noted that they welcomed the policy.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that the Local Lettings policy – New Build Properties be adopted.

Reasons for Recommendation

The new properties had been built to reflect the housing need in specific locations and it was considered necessary to have a Local Lettings Policy to manage the allocation of these. This ensured that priority was given to those with a local connection to the area in the first instance to meet the housing need and demand with an option for allocations to then take place in accordance with the Allocations Policy.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The alternative option was to let new build properties without a Local Lettings Policy, which would not achieve the desired outcomes in terms of letting properties to local communities, where there was an identified need.

EX88-22/23. RENT ARREARS POLICY

Executive's approval was sought in relation to the Council's updated Rent Arrears Policy.

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The Rent Arrears Policy had been reviewed and updated to reflect a number of changes including a revised staffing structure within the Housing team. There were now four income management assistants, one for each contact center area, who were responsible for arrears from initial contact up to and including the service of court warning for current arrears and also for recovery of former tenants' arrears.

The policy detailed the recovery process for garages, garage plots and parking bay arrears, which were managed by the Housing Assistants (Tenancy).

The Housing section had recently procured a rent income analytics software system, which was compatible with the Housing Case Management System, and this would aid in rent recovery.

The Equality Act assessment and wording throughout the document had also been updated.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor David Downes
RESOLVED that the updated Rent Arrears Policy be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

It was considered good practice to have a policy which set out the Council's approach to prevention and collection of rent arrears. The updated policy reflected changes in staffing and procedures.

The procedure which sat alongside the policy, ensured that all officers involved in tenancy management, at different levels or stages, adopted the same fair but firm approach and took account of the need to consider equality and proportionality when taking any action.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The policy was considered necessary so that members of the public were aware of the Council's approach to prevention and collection of rent arrears.

EX89-22/23. APPOINTMENT OF SECURITY AND CONCIERGE CONTRACTOR FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Executive considered a detailed report in relation to a procurement exercise being undertaken to appoint a contractor to deliver the Security and Concierge contract for the Council's commercial and corporate properties.

Delegated authority was sought for the Assistant Director of Development to appoint the first or second choice supplier when the evaluation of tender submissions and clarification interviews had been completed, and also to implement the two one-year extensions based on satisfactory performance from the contractor and an acceptable pricing proposal going forward.

Members were reminded that a procurement exercise had been undertaken in September 2021, to appoint a new supplier, which had been approved, however, due to performance issues the contract was terminated in August 2022 under delegated decision.

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Further to this, a six month temporary contract with the previous supplier, IPM FM Group Ltd, had enabled a continuation of providing the security services at the Council's commercial and corporate properties whilst a new tender exercise was completed. The temporary contract would terminate on 31st March 2023.

Moved by Councillor Liz Smyth and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor

RESOLVED that (1) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Development to appoint the preferred supplier and to enter in to a contract agreement to be drafted and issued by Legal Services. The delegation to include the appointment of the second supplier on the shortlist if for any reason contracts were not agreed with the preferred supplier,

(2) delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Development to implement the two one-year extensions based on satisfactory performance from the contractor and also an acceptable pricing proposal going forward.

(Assistant Director of Development)

Reasons for Recommendation

To offer a continuation of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) accredited security and concierge service across the commercial premises, allowing for the provision of concierge, out of hours CCTV monitoring, as well as alarm response and key holding for the commercial properties.

The Assistant Director of Development is to be given the delegated authority to appoint the first and second choice supplier, based on the evaluation of tender submissions and results of the scoring matrix. This will enable a contract to be awarded and the new contractor to be in place following the expiry of the temporary contract.

The contract will commence 1st April 2023 for 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years in two one-year extensions.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

To bring the service back in house, however, this would be at a significantly greater cost and the Council does not currently have the resource to run without having the SIA accreditation for the CCTV monitoring.

To bring the concierge element of the contract back in house, however, the staffing costs would be higher due to the need to employ more than two staff members for holiday and sickness cover etc. This would also mean a period of delay in the service provision as it would take time to recruit and appoint qualified staff. The Council would also still require a contractor for the CCTV monitoring with the SIA accreditation.

The meeting concluded at 1030 hours.