

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Monday 26th June 2023 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Steve Fritchley in the Chair

Councillors Anne Clarke, Mary Dooley, Duncan McGregor, Clive Moesby, Sandra Peake and John Ritchie.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Vicky Dawson (Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement), Andy Clarke (Operational Repairs Manager – Dragonfly Developments), Kath Drury (Information, Engagement and Performance Manager) and Alison Bluff (Governance Officer).

EX1-23/24 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Sandra Peake.

EX2-23/24 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

EX3-23/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As a Member on the Dragonfly Board of Directors, Councillor Steve Fritchley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 7 – Dragonfly Development Ltd – Appointment of the Board of Directors, and would leave the meeting at the relevant time.

EX4-23/24 CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS TO THAT STATED ON THE AGENDA

The Chair advised to a change in order of business to that stated on the agenda. Agenda item 7 – Dragonfly Development Ltd – Appointment of the Board of Directors, would be considered before Agenda item 8 – Award of Void Cleaning contract for BDC Housing Stock 2023-2027.

EX5-23/24 MINUTES – 3RD APRIL 2023

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Clive Moesby **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of an Executive meeting held on 3rd April 2023 be approved as a correct record.

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NON-KEY DECISION(S)

EX6-23/24 **AMBITION PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JANUARY TO MARCH 2023**

Executive considered the Ambition Plan Targets Performance Outturns for the period January to March 2023.

Out of the 31 targets, 18 (58%) were on track, 4 (13%) had achieved their outturn for 2022/23, 1 (3%) had failed to achieve its outturn for 2022/23 and 8 (26%) had been achieved previously.

Referring to CUS.07 - *Reduce average relet times for standard voids (council properties) to 20 calendar days by March 2021 and maintain thereafter*, the Deputy Leader stated that a complete review of the target was required and a better understanding of the different areas that related to void properties, which had a detrimental impact on the HRA and council tax revenue.

The Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement provided an explanation of minor voids and major voids, the staged approach taken to some properties where necessary, and any bespoke works required. Substantial works carried out to empty properties meant no disruption to a tenant and was more cost effective to the Council. It also meant a property was meeting the decent homes standard prior to relet, which should require less works if the property became vacant again in around 5/10 years' time and had been left in good repair.

In 2022/23 the following works had been undertaken to 321 void properties.

- 34 damp proof works
- 61 new wet rooms
- 186 new kitchens
- 44 new boilers, some included replacing the back boiler system
- 100 new bathrooms (not wet rooms)

The Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement highlighted that void figures were reducing. Referring to the same quarter in 2021/22, she noted that minor voids were down from 59 to 42, and major voids were down from 118 to 75.

The Operational Repairs Manager – Dragonfly Developments, added that work to major void properties was undertaken to the standard set by the Council in 2017, further to a major voids review. Some works were required to be undertaken to regulation standards, for example, electrical regulations 18th edition, smoke alarms to the latest British standard. Management voids were also included in rent loss figures, however, these were properties that were empty ready for regeneration, redevelopment, or major capital works, for example, safe and warm. This was usually around one hundred properties per year. There were also examples where some tenants had refused major refurbishment works in the past and these had been carried out when the tenant had either moved on or passed away. Housing had a number of contractors they worked with, some with agreed rates so works could be directly awarded to them, however, depending on their capacity to carry out works in a timely manner, this also impacted on rent/council tax income and void turn around.

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The Leader thanked the Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement and the Operational Repairs Manager – Dragonfly Developments, for providing the explanation and noted that Executive Members were available to help negotiate some of the difficulties created with procurement and contractor delays etc.

Referring to CUS.03 - *Ensure that at least 50% of transactions are made through digital channels by Dec 2024*, a Member queried if housing applications had increased since electronic applications were introduced. The Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement advised that housing applications had doubled since going online. However, as not everyone was comfortable with technology, each contact centre had a designated officer trained on the application form who could sit with a customer in the contact centre and help them complete the form. Paper forms were still available and, in some cases, when necessary, officers had visited people in their homes to help them complete their application.

The Chief Executive noted that the Council's new Ambition 2024-2029 would outline the key areas that the Council would focus on during 2024-2029. All Members would be fully involved in the development and regular monitoring of the performance management framework to support the Ambition. Workshops in relation to the development of targets would be organised for Members later in the year.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Clive Moesby **RESOLVED** that the quarterly outturns against the Council Ambition 2020-2024 targets be noted.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

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.

EX7-23/24 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2023 -2024 (EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS)

Executive considered the appointments to outside bodies 2023/24 which came under the Executive functions.

Members were advised of two updates since the publication of the agenda. Councillor Anne Clarke would now be the representative on Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and not Councillor Mary Dooley, and there would be no representative on the Two Shires Credit Union as this body no longer existed.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Mary Dooley **RESOLVED** that subject to the two amendments as set out above, appointments to Outside Bodies as listed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved,

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Reasons for Recommendation

Executive were asked to consider and to make appointments of representatives to the list of Executive Outside Bodies attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Executive could choose not to appoint to the Outside Bodies; however, this was not recommended as this would fail to provide a representative of the Council to these organisations.

(Governance and Civic Manager)

EX8-23/24

AWARD OF VOID CLEANING CONTRACT 2023-2027

Executive's approval was sought to appoint Sweet Aroma as Contractor to carry out the cleaning of empty properties (also called void properties), within the Council's existing housing stock, over a four-year period commencing in July 2023.

The contract was required in order to maintain existing service levels and effectively manage quality and time and ensure consistent standards. The proposed service would run for four years commencing in July 2023 on a 2+1+1 year term basis. The estimated annual cost of the service was £30,000 (excl. allowance for inflation).

Working in conjunction with the Procurement Team, the works were tendered in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules. Two tenders were received and evaluated on 18th April 2023. Sweet Aroma Ltd scored the highest with 89.21 out of 100.

Moved by Councillor Steve Fritchley and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that (1) the 2+1+1-year contract with Sweet Aroma Ltd be approved,

(2) that progress on the contract is reported through the Housing Stock Management Group which consists of both officers and Members.

(Contract Administrator)

Reasons for Recommendation

Following a Procurement led open tender process, the evaluation team were unanimous that Sweet Aroma Ltd represented the best submitted tender.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

None.

Councillor Steve Fritchley left the meeting at this point

Councillor Duncan McGregor in the Chair

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KEY DECISION

EX9-23/24

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR MEMBERS TO SIT ON THE DRAGONFLY BOARD

Executive considered a report in relation to expressions of interest for Members to sit on the Dragonfly Board of Directors.

In order to progress the governance arrangements required, it was necessary to appoint additional Directors to the Board of Dragonfly Development Ltd and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd.

The CIPFA Good Practice Guide on Local Authority Companies advised that a company should have sufficient freedom to achieve its objectives and to be able to compete with other companies in the market. This, however, needed to be balanced against the Council's needs to retain effective oversight of the company to protect its investment and ensuring the company acted in accordance with the Council's ethos and values.

It was essential that Board Directors offered the company and existing Directors long term stability. This was to ensure consistency of decision making and a thorough level of understanding and experience of the Dragonfly Group operations.

Currently, there were two Directors of Dragonfly Development Ltd, Councillor Steve Fritchley and Grant Galloway, (CEO Dragonfly Group).

At its meeting on 1st February 2023, Council had agreed that Executive would receive a further report to approve additional appointments to the Board of Directors.

There was no set rule regarding the maximum number of Directors on the Board, however, accepted practice suggested this should be between 4 and 7 (up to 10 in some guidance).

Prior to the recent District Elections, all Council Members (at that time), received an invitation to express an interest in becoming a Director on the Board. Subsequently, four Members had expressed an interest and had attended a briefing session for further information, which was held on 8th March 2023.

However, with the District Elections due to take place soon after, it was agreed that appointment to the Boards of Directors would be paused until after the Council's Annual Meeting on 24th May 2023.

Following this, a further new request for expressions of interest had been issued to all Councillors and as part of the Members Induction Programme, a briefing session regarding the Dragonfly Group took place on 6th June 2023. This enabled all new Members to gain further information regarding the companies, their purpose, and how they operated.

In response, four expressions of interest had been submitted along with details of key skills and experience - these were attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was considered the make-up and mix of skills and experience demonstrated by these Members was appropriate, suitable and sufficient to ensure the Board of Directors could operate in an effective and appropriate manner.

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Following the appointment of Directors to the Boards, consideration of remuneration would be undertaken by an Independent Remuneration Panel to establish whether this was appropriate, in order to ensure commitment of time and retention of skills and knowledge on the Board. Clarity would also be sought as to whether remuneration would be classed as a special responsibility allowance and paid by the Council under the Member Allowance scheme

Moved by Councillor John Ritchie and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that (1) the Expressions of Interest submitted by the Members listed in paragraph 2.9 and contained within Appendix 1 to the report be accepted,

(2) the Members listed in paragraph 2.9 and contained within Appendix 1 to the report be passed as nominees to the existing Board of Directors for formal agreement,

(3) the Council's Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth, is delegated the power to formally approve the appointments of the Members nominated and formally accepted by Dragonfly Development Ltd and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd to the Boards of Directors.

(Chief Executive)

Reasons for Recommendation

It is essential the Council appoints Directors to the Boards of Directors of Dragonfly Development Ltd and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

It is a requirement for the Council to appoint to the Boards of Directors for the wholly owned companies, the alternative of not doing so is rejected

The meeting concluded at 1050 hours.