

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

19th November 2020

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Pegg (Chairman) and Councillor Corbin (Vice-Chairman).
Councillors Atkin, Fitzpatrick (substituting for Cllr Dawson) Mrs Haines, Dr Perry and Mrs Wheelton (substituting Cllr Churchill).

Labour Group

Councillors Mrs Heath, Mulgrew, Rhind, Richards, and Shepherd.

In Attendance

Councillor Roberts

HCS/42 **APOLOGIES**

The Committee was informed that apologies had been received from Councillors Churchill and Dawson.

HCS/43 **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th July 2020 were noted and approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

HCS/44 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

It was noted that Councillor Atkin declared that Items HCS/50, HCS/52 and HCS/58 to be of personal interest by virtue of being a County Councillor.

HCS/45 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

The Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

HCS/46 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed that no questions from Members of the Council had been received.

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

HCS/47 **CORPORATE PLAN 2020-24 PERFORMANCE REPORT (2020-21 QUARTER 2)**

The Head of Organisational Development and Performance presented the report to the Committee highlighting the key areas on track and provided Members with an overview of the Risk Register and requested that Members noted that the Anti-Social Behaviour figures included breaches of COVID-19 restrictions.

Members raised questions about the selection of parks for Green Flag status, how was the Council gauging support from the community and the loss of revenue in the Voids Rent Register. The Head of Cultural and Community Services advised members that four parks were close to Green Flag status and that a report about this would be brought to Committee for consideration. The Head of Housing advised Members that the maintenance contract had been delayed by three months due to the COVID-19 restrictions, but work had restarted in July and that plans were in place to address the preparation of properties for rent.

RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 The Committee considered progress against performance targets set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.***
- 1.2 The Committee reviewed the Risk Register for the Committee's services.***

HCS/48 **REVISED COMMUNITY TRIGGER PRACTITIONER GUIDANCE**

The Communities Manager presented the report to the Committee summarising the benefits and key points of the process.

RESOLVED:-

The Committee considered and approved the revised Derbyshire Community Trigger Practitioner Guidance document as per Appendix 1 of the report.

HCS/49 **MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2019-20**

The Communities Manager presented the report to the Committee informing Members of the refreshed statement for 2019-20 prepared in conjunction with Derbyshire County Council.

RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 The Committee considered and approved the revised Council Modern Slavery Statement as per Appendix 1 of the report.***
- 1.2 The Committee gave the Strategic Director – Service Delivery delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to agree the annual Statement, subject to there being no significant changes made. This will be in line with Derbyshire County Council's Statement which will be approved annually by its Director of Community Services.***
- 1.3 The Committee considered and approved the revised Modern Slavery Referral Procedure and Guidance for Council Employees as per Appendix 2 of the Report.***

HCS/50 **BETTER CARE FUNDING ALLOCATION – FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the report to the Committee setting out the financial position and action plan until the financial year end. It was proposed to ring-fence £50,000 for an officer to address fuel poverty across the District and noted that the report would be presented to the Finance and Management Committee to ratify the finance and staffing.

The Committee queried the underspend noted in the report and asked if there were provisions for helping residents with technology and support for those living in properties without cavity insulation. The Strategic Housing Manager reassured Members that there were plans to apply funds to projects in the District and there was confidence that funds would not be returned to Derbyshire County Council. The Strategic Housing Officer informed the Committee that Digital Inclusion was an important part of the provision of capital grants along with the Disabled Facilities Grant which allowed for residents to maintain independence. It was noted that where two schemes within Better Care Funding where assistance was available to assist homes with thermal improvements and the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) confirmed that Local Authorities would also apply for the Green Homes Grant to assist with these improvements.

RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 The Committee noted the progress of schemes that have been supported through the allocation of Better Care Funding (BCF) and welcomed the wider impact they are having on reducing pressure on front-line Council Services***
- 1.2 The Committee approved the proposed BCF Action Plan, timescales and revised allocations contained within Appendix 1 of the report.***
- 1.3 The Committee approved the use of £50k from the BCF allocation to be ringfenced for a new project and associated staffing costs to***

enable better targeting of resources based on recent stock condition data.

1.4 The Committee approved changes highlighted within the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy as per Appendix 2 of the report.

1.5 The Committee granted delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) in conjunction with the Chairman of the Committee to make any minor amendments to the Policy necessary to ensure its effective delivery. Any major changes would be brought to Committee for approval.

1.6 The Committee referred staffing and financial elements of the report to a future meeting of the Finance and Management Committee for consideration and approval.

HCS/51 HOUSING INCOME MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Head of Housing presented the report to the Committee informing Members that the aim of the Policy was to address rent arrears through external partnerships and internally by enabling Customer Services to support residents with their rent accounts.

Councillor Mrs. Wheelton on behalf of Councillor Churchill requested clarity regarding under occupancy benefit and the underpayment of rent. The Head of Housing explained that under occupation of a property could attract a reduced payment of benefit meaning the benefit does not cover the full amount of the rent leading to the accrual of rent arrears and the Council reserved the right to enforce the tenancy agreement if the rent arrears are not met by the tenant.

RESOLVED:-

1.1 The Committee agreed that the Housing Income Management Policy, as per Appendix A of the report, be issued for consultation with the public and stakeholders.

1.2 The Committee agreed that the final version of the Policy be reported to the Committee in early 2021 for implementation with effect from 1st April 2021.

HCS/52 HOMELESS OUT-OF-HOURS SERVICES

The Head of Housing presented the report to the Committee informing Members that the service offered since 2011 had been reviewed and Covid-19 had highlighted a number of arrears to be looked at.

Councillor Mrs. Wheelton, queried the level of out-of-hours service that Careline provided to the District. The Head of Housing confirmed that the out-of-hours services signposted all enquires that were not related to homeless out of hours business. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) confirmed to Members that the resilience of the Careline service had been considered and

that a piece of work was underway looking at what the out-of-hours offer would look like across the Council.

RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 The Committee approved the Council serving the required six-months' notice on the other Districts in Derbyshire and Staffordshire to terminate the agreement for the provision of out-of-hours homelessness services by this Council on their behalf.***
- 1.2 The Committee agreed that the Council's own processes and procedures for dealing with out-of-hours homeless applicants be reviewed and enhanced by improving risk assessment and data sharing arrangements.***

HCS/53 **HOUSING SAFETY POLICIES**

The Head of Housing delivered the report to the Committee summarising the new suite of safety policy documents and highlighted a number of key policies that included the Asbestos, Electrical and Gas Safety Policies

Councillor Wheelton raised a query regarding the expertise used in compiling the safety policies. The Head of Housing confirmed that the safety policies continued to be updated regularly following new guidance and legislation and that external asbestos contractors gave guidance and assistance in writing the Asbestos Policy and external expertise was also sought for other policies such as the Gas and Electric.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee approved the following Housing Safety policies and procedures:

- Draft Electrical Safety Policy, as per Appendix A of the report***
- Draft Fire Safety Policy, as per Appendix B of the report***
- Draft Gas Safety Policy, as per Appendix C of the report***
- Draft Legionella Policy, as per Appendix D of the report***
- Draft Lift Safety Policy, as per Appendix E of the report***
- Asbestos Policy and procedures, as per Appendix F of the report.***

HCS/54 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee Work Programme was presented to Members by the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) which had been updated to include indicative dates.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee considered and approved the updated work programme.

HCS/55 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:-

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11

The Committee was informed that no questions had been received.

TO RECEIVE THE EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the following Committees were approved as a true record:

Housing and Community Services Committee 7th July 2020.

CARELINE AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

The Committee approved the recommendation in the report

The Meeting terminated at 7.20 pm.

COUNCILLOR D PEGG

CHAIRMAN