

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

31<sup>st</sup> January 2019

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Smith (Chairman) and Councillors Dr. Coyle, Ford (substituting for Councillor Hewlett), Grant, Roberts, Watson and Wyatt

**Labour Group**

Councillors Rhind, Richards, Shepherd and Wilkins

HCS/72 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hewlett (Chairman), Councillor Coe and Tipping (Independent/ Non-Grouped Member).

HCS/73 **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 were noted and approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

HCS/74 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ford declared a personal interest in Item 10 on the Agenda by virtue of being a County Councillor.

Councillor Richards declared a personal interest in Item 10 on the Agenda and did not participate in the debate.

HCS/75 **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/76 **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.

HCS/77 **REPORTS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no Overview and Scrutiny Reports to be submitted.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

HCS/78 **REGULATION OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN PRIVATE SECTOR RENTED PROPERTY**

The Environmental Health Manager presented the report to Committee and detailed the new fixed penalty sanctions for offences within the private rented sector.

Councillor Watson sought clarification as to why the Regulation was not applicable to social landlords. The Environmental Health Manager noted the statute was not written in a way to enable it to be implemented within social housing. Councillor Watson expressed he found it unsatisfactory the Council and social landlords were not covered by the same regulation as private landlords. The Strategic Housing Manager explored the future expectations of existing housing stock to meet that standard, which would allow the Council the opportunity to undertake work to increase efficiency on applicable properties. New build Council housing will meet the same standard as within the private sector.

Members debated how the Council could begin to apply the new standards to current Council housing stock prior to the introduction of the new regulations as detailed in the report, with it being raised by Councillor Ford that the new regulations are aimed to protect vulnerable tenants within the private rented sector by simplifying the process to prosecute rogue landlords.

**RESOLVED:-**

***The Committee approved the proposed level of fixed penalty notices for offences under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property)(England and Wales) Regulations 2015.***

Abstention: Councillor Watson

HCS/79 **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SCHEME**

The Community Partnership Officer presented the report to Committee and updated Members on an amendment to the recommendation, which should read 'The Committee accepted the recommendations of the Community Partnership Scheme Assessment Panel, to award grants as detailed in section 4.11 of this report.' The Community Partnership Officer outlined the distribution of grants as detailed within the report.

**RESOLVED:-**

***The Committee accepted the recommendations of the Community Partnership Scheme Assessment Panel, to award grants as detailed in section 4.11 of this report.***

HCS/80 **OVERVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICE**

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) introduced the report to Committee, remarking the new Housing Services Management Team had been making significant improvements to the service over the past year, as detailed in the report.

The Housing Services Manager presented the report, advising on updates to the service which have included a focus on repairs with a long and short-term improvement programme, housing management, supporting vulnerable people by working closely with the police and voluntary sector, and preventing rough sleeping. The Housing Services Manager also advised a procurement exercise was currently being undertaken to appoint a new contractor,.

The Chairman welcomed the report and the on-going learning, development and training the service was undergoing to meet the needs of those being served.

Councillor Richards raised a query regarding Elected Members being present at the opening of a bid to ensure transparency, which the Cultural Services Manager responded to the query, noting the bidding process was amended once it became electronic. Councillor Richards further raised a concern regarding the communication between rent arrears and Revenue and Benefits as the information put forward at times can be contradictory. The Housing Services Manager addressed the concern by noting the two teams work closely together to ensure information is as clear as possible, but specific examples where this has not been the case could be explored.

Councillor Roberts requested local residents are given priority over allocation of Council housing instead of those from out of the area due to the decrease in Council housing stock. The Housing Services Manager and Strategic Housing Manager both noted the request and highlighted a residence qualification is part of the existing policy of eligibility, though highlighted flexibility of the policy in some cases due to individual levels of need.

The Chairman, on behalf of Councillor Hewlett and the Committee, thanked the Housing Services Manager for the report and noted it was evident significant progress had been undertaken.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 The Committee noted the progress made within the Housing Service since January 2018.**
- 1.2 The Committee endorsed the proposed future work programme to deliver further improvements to the Service.**

HCS/81 **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON TELECARE /CARELINE SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT OF OLDER PERSONS FLOATING SUPPORT**

The Housing Services Manager presented the report to Committee, outlining the changes proposed by Derbyshire County Council on Telecare/Careline Services and the recommended responses to the consultation on behalf of the Council. The Housing Services Manager further explained the impact upon the Floating Support Service as detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 The Committee approved the Council's response to the Derbyshire County Council (DCC) consultation on the provision of Careline and Telecare Services.***
- 1.2 The Committee noted the extension of the current contract to provide Floating Support (Wardens) services until November 2019.***
- 1.3 The Committee accepted the offer from DCC to deliver the 'Independent Living (Wardens) Service' to current and new service users for two years from November 2019.***
- 1.4 The Committee noted that during the period of this agreement, the Council will work with DCC and other providers of Housing, Social and Health Care to develop new services for older and vulnerable people.***

HCS/82 **CHURCH GRESLEY CEMETERY – LAYOUT CHANGES**

The Cultural Services Manager presented the report to Committee, highlighting the Cemetery is approaching capacity, which requires consideration of the options available as detailed in the report.

The Chairman noted this was a sensitive subject and would be challenging to manage. He expressed his appreciation for the hard work shown in addressing the issue.

Queries were raised by Councillor Wyatt and Councillor Richards regarding recording keeping of pre-purchased graves, graves which had been pre-purchased a significant time ago, what was done with pre-purchased graves which have never used and what conditions were attached to family plots. The Cultural Services Manager advised the requested information would be provided to the Committee in due course.

Councillor Richards raised a further query of the ability to find alternative locations, noting limited capacities within cemeteries have been a long-standing issue. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) agreed with the concern, which was why approval was being sought for further investigations to commence.

**RESOLVED:-**

- 1.1 *The Committee to seek approval from Finance and Management Committee for a budget of £17,700 to remove two adjacent non-essential paths at Church Gresley Cemetery in order to use the recovered land to provide additional burial space therein.*
- 1.2 *The Committee approved the cessation of the practice of allowing people to pre-purchase graves within cemeteries managed by the District Council except where ground conditions restrict the use of double graves.*
- 1.3 *The Committee approved officers investigating identification of possible cemetery space within the Swadlincote urban core.*

HCS/83 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:-**

*The Committee considered and approved the updated work programme.*

HCS/84 **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.*

**MINUTES**

*The Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 were received.*

**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.*

**DIRECT ACQUISITION OF COUNCIL HOUSING IN ASTON ON TRENT**

*Members approved the recommendations in the report.*

The Meeting terminated at 7.10PM.

COUNCILLOR P SMITH

VICE-CHAIRMAN