

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

27th January 2021

PRESENT:

Labour Group

Councillor Rhind (Chair) and Councillor Mulgrew (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Richards, Shepherd and Tilley (substitute for Councillor Dunn).

Conservative Group

Councillors Ackroyd, Corbin, Ford, Haines, and Smith

Independent Group

Councillors Dawson and Roberts.

Non-Grouped

Councillor Churchill

In Attendance

Councillor Wheelton

HCS/66 **APOLOGIES**

The Committee was informed that apologies had been received from Councillor Dunn

HCS/67 **TO RECEIVE THE OPEN MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meetings held on 30th September and 18th November 2021, were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

HCS/68 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee noted that no Declarations of Interest had been received

HCS/69 **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/70 **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/71 RECRUITMENT OF ACTIVE SCHOOLS' PARTNERSHIP (ASP) PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE) AND SCHOOL SPORT COACH**

The Head of Cultural and Community Services presented the report to the Committee and sought approval for recommendations. It was explained that the primary role of the physical education coach would be to support the continued work of the Active Schools' Partnership.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 The Committee approved the recruitment of an Active Schools' Partnership (ASP) Physical Education (PE) and School Sport Coach, within the Active Communities and Health Team of Cultural and Community Services. The new post is to support the delivery of the South Derbyshire ASP's (SDASP) PE and School Sport programme.***
- 1.2 The Committee approved the recruitment of additional ASP PE & School Sport Coaches subject to service demand of the SDASP PE and School Sport programme.***
- 1.3 The Committee approved that the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) have delegated authority to extend the contracts of relevant ASP PE and School Sport Coaches subject to continued and/or growing service demand of the SDASP PE and School Sport programme and funding being secured.***

HCS/72 REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE-NOVUS CONTRACT

The Head of Housing presented the report to the Committee and explained that an extension and variation of a contract would usually have been carried out under normal business but that it was before the Committee for endorsement as the contract had been discussed in a variety of forums. The Head of Housing highlighted the added value of the contract and how well NOVUS had dealt with issues raised. It was further noted that there was concern about going out to tender at that time given the shortage of a skilled labour across the whole industry

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) highlighted how NOVUS had responded to complaints and was pleased with how it had worked collaborative with the Council regarding the bid for decarbonisation funding.

Members raised concerns regarding the performance of NOVUS and the reported poor communication with residents as well as the number of Voids and the impact on housing revenue.

The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) explained that at the beginning of the contract complaints had been received mid build or during refurbishments which had highlighted the issue of poor communication from NOVUS to residents regarding the impact of the build on the homes etc. but there had not been complaints regarding this for some considerable months. The Strategic Director (Service Delivery) assured Members that when a complaint was received the Council expected to receive a full and proper response from NOVUS.

The Head of Housing informed the Committee that at the start of the NOVUS contract there was a three month backlog of empty properties which had been followed by two years of challenges including Covid but there had been an improvement and it was recognised that the Housing Team had to ensure that NOVUS improved delivery and to this end there had been discussions with the NOVUS senior team regarding what needed to improve and how that was going to be achieved.

Councillor Ford raised a query regarding adaption works and the Head of Housing informed the Committee that since the publication of the report renegotiations had taken place to improve the completion time and the spend in relation to adaptations.

Councillor Wheelton reported that when NOVUS attended Overview and Scrutiny Committee Novus openly admitted that they got things wrong at the beginning but demonstrated how they had improved and Overview and Scrutiny was content with the both the explanations and the work being undertaken to rectify the position.

Members requested that a separate report be brought before the Housing and Communities Committee regarding Voids.

Councillor Richards thanked Members for their comments and stated that NOVUS should be held to account for the residents of South Derbyshire and he wanted to get the best out of the contract and enquired about customer satisfaction surveys.

The Head of Housing confirmed that NOVUS used an industry recognised commercial method survey and that all comments received were shared with the Council but it should be noted that it would be suspicious if it only received all good comments. It was also noted that in addition to the NOVUS survey the Council would carry out a satisfaction survey with all tenants that would include a repairs element.

RESOLVED:-

- 1.1 The Committee noted the proposed variation to the terms of the original contract with NOVUS Property Solutions.***
- 2.1 The Committee endorsed the two-year extension of the contract as allowed for in the original contract document.***

HCS/73 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee Work Programme was presented to Members by the Strategic Director (Service Delivery).

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the updated work programme.

HCS/74 **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 THE EXEMPT MINUTES

The Exempt Minutes of the Meetings held on 30th September 2021 and 18th November 2021, were received.

ANY EXEMPT QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11

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

ACQUISITION OF HOUSE IN LIEU OF COMMUTED SUM

RESOLVED:

That the Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

The Meeting terminated at hours: 19:00 hours

COUNCILLOR G RHIND

CHAIR