

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

04 January 2023

PRESENT:

Labour Group

Councillor Bambrick (Chair) and Stuart (Vice-Chair)
and Councillors Gee and L Mulgrew.

Conservative Group

Councillors Atkin, Hewlett and Muller.

In Attendance

Councillor

OS/36 **APOLOGIES**

The Committee was informed that apologies had been received from Councillor Ackroyd.

OS/37 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM ITEMS ON AGENDA**

The Committee was informed that no Declarations of Interest had been received.

OS/38 **QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY 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.

OS/39 **QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE 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**OS/40 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) – REPORT ON USAGE**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee and informed Members no covert surveillance had been arranged during the period covered by the report.

RESOLVED:

To note the internal report on the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

OS/41 COUNCIL HOUSE LETTINGS AND VOID PROPERTIES

The Head of Housing presented the report highlighting the forward plan for empty properties and the targets for re-letting each property. The Committee was informed that recruitment of qualified electrical and gas safety engineers had been difficult and that agency workers were covering those tasks.

Members enquired about common reasons why tenancies were terminated, waiting list times, the demand for each type of property and alternative housing available for people on the waiting list. The Head of Housing informed the Committee that the main reasons tenancies were terminated were due to the death of the occupant, downsizing and tenants moving into alternative supported accommodation. It was noted that waiting list were being managed in accordance with preference of housing type and location.

Members sought clarity about the re-letting plan and how the Council compared with other authorities, the Right to Buy scheme and valuations, staffing levels in the Housing team and energy saving improvements.

The Head of Housing advised the Committee that the re-letting plan would be shared with Members. It was noted that other authorities had better results, however, circumstances were different and in the case of North-West Leicestershire, for example, the skillset of their in-house team was far greater than the local authorities within South Derbyshire. The Head of Housing informed the Committee that properties sold through the Right to Buy scheme were valued by independent Estate Agents and that there were approximately 20 applications per year. The Committee was also advised that the staffing situation was improving with project inspectors and a Fire and Building Safety person being recruited for the Repairs team and that energy saving improvements were undertaken whilst the tenant was in-situ.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the contents of the report and the Improvement Plan are noted by the committee.

1.2 That a progress report be brought back to the Housing and Community Services committee on 25 April 2023.

OS/42 **VACANT POSTS AND AGENCY COSTS**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee indicating that the position shown was in September 2022 and that the latest figures for December 2022 were that vacant posts had reduced from 70 to 61 and the number of agency staff was down from 57 to 55.

Members queried if any posts were shared with other authorities and if there was a general trend in staffing levels among other authorities, and if salary levels were benchmarked with other councils and the private sector.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Committee that a shared service existed with Lichfield District Council for Land Charges, that there was a general shortage of personnel in the public sector and that salary levels were compared with other authorities including unitary authorities, private companies and housing associations, noting that other terms and conditions were also taken into consideration such as flexible working.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That the analysis of vacant posts and agency costs as detailed in the report is considered and any recommendations referred back to Finance and Management Committee.

OS/43 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the Work Programme to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee considered and approved the updated work programme.

OS/44 **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 would be 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.

OS/45 **EXEMPT QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER
COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

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

The Meeting terminated at 19:15 hours

COUNCILLOR S BAMBRICK

CHAIR