

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12th February 2014

PRESENT:-

Conservative Group

Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor Mrs. Patten.

Labour Group

Councillors Bambrick, Bell and Dunn.

In attendance

Councillor Hewlett and Councillor Wheeler (Conservative Group)

OS/24. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Mrs. Hood (Conservative group) and Councillor Mrs. Mead (Labour Group).

OS/25. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meetings held on 18th September 2013, 23rd October 2013, 11th December 2013 and the Special Meeting on 12th December 2013 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

OS/26. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2014/15**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services submitted a report which detailed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) base budget for 2014/15, together with an updated financial forecast to 2024. This item had been considered by the Housing and Community Services Committee at its Meeting on 6th February 2014. The report also set out details of the proposed rent increase and options for 2014/15 under the Government's National Rent Setting Policy.

A slide showed the 10-year financial plan and the HRA was still projected to be in a good position, which would allow for stock investment and debt repayment, with projected surpluses.

Next, the presentation covered rent levels. It was reported that South Derbyshire were behind the National Formula. The Policy Committee had set an average rent increase of £4.16 per week or 5.5% for 2014/15. A question was asked as to whether new houses would be let at a higher rent level and an explanation was given on the implications of straying out of the framework and setting higher rent increases.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services responded to further questions on the potential new build project at Coton Park where he confirmed

that the houses would be council owned. Over the next 10 years there would be a need to make sure the rent covers maintenance and costs. A question was asked as to whether the £20,000 provision was sufficient to cover bad debts, The Director confirmed that in the short-term this may not be adequate but over the life of the financial plan, would not have an overall detrimental impact unless there was a significant increase in arrears. It was considered that the proposed rent increase may not help situation.

Referring to the risk matrix in the report, a final question was asked on who makes the decision to use additional resources. The Director confirmed that this would be the Finance and Management Committee, although they would take into account any recommendations by the Housing and Community Services Committee, as occurred last year.

It was agreed that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 22nd January and 12th February 2014 are received by the Finance and Management Committee on the 20th February 2014.

It was agreed to note this report.

OS/27. **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 – REPORT ON USAGE**

The Committee received a report on the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) since November 2013. The Council had approved the amended RIPA Policy and Guidance document at its Meeting on 24th January 2013. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was authorised to review the Council's use of RIPA and for the period November 2013 to January 2014, there had been no authorisations requested for the use of these powers. The report also requested that the committee approve the amendments to the Council's Authorising Officers and update the RIPA Policy and Procedure document in line with organisational change.

It was agreed the report be noted.

OS/28. **WORK PROGRAMME**

It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed an annual work programme which was reviewed at each Meeting. It was explained that proposals for the annual review of the work programme to take place at the annual report session on 27th March the cemetery provision would also be taken back to this meeting. Consultation on the future work programme would take place with Parish councils and Policy committees.

It was agreed that the proposals for the annual review of the work programme be approved as outlined above.

MRS. A. PLENDERLEITH

CHAIRMAN

The Meeting terminated at 6.35 p.m.