

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**PRESENT:-**

**Conservative Group**

Councillor Mrs. Farrington, (Chairman), Councillor Swann (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Mrs Coe and Councillor Mrs Patten.

**Labour Group**

Councillor Bambrick and Councillor Mrs. Wyatt.

OS/26 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group) and Councillor Pearson (Labour Group).

OS/27 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM ITEMS ON AGENDA**

The Committee were informed that no declarations of interest from Members of the Council had been received.

OS/28 **QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10**

The Committee were informed that no questions from members of the Public had been received.

OS/29 **QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11**

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

OS/30 **ELECTORAL SERVICES**

The Chief Executive Officer presented a report to update Members on the revised structure of the Electoral Services Department. South Derbyshire is a fast growing district and with the demand on the electoral service and the recent move to Individual Electoral Registration (IER), continued resilience is crucial. The changes to the service will ensure that high standards of the service are continued into the future.

**RESOLVED:-**

***To note the changes in structure to the Electoral Services section.***

OS/31 **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) – QUARTERLY REPORT ON USAGE**

The Chief Executive Officer outlined the report, emphasising that the usage of RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) during the period September 2015 to November 2015 was nil. Following an inspection earlier in the year, South Derbyshire District Council remains accredited as an excellent local authority.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the internal report on the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 be noted.***

OS/32 **COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIP SCHEME**

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated that since she had been an applicant on behalf of one of the organisations awarded a grant through this scheme, this item would be chaired by the Vice-Chair.

The Community Partnership Manager presented the report to committee regarding the potential review of the grant application process in conjunction with South Derbyshire CVS. He highlighted that the scheme had been established to deliver two separate and distinct objectives to support the work of the District Council, firstly providing funding advice and supporting non-profit developing projects that benefit local residents, and secondly to attract inward investment to support larger capital projects. Recognising the change in the funding environment the scheme rules were amended in 2014/15 to allow applications for up to 50%, rather than the initial maximum of 25%, of the total project value.

Comments made by Councillors related to the CVS's involvement with supporting applicants through the process, the possibility of individual Councillors having access to a small pot of money to support the smaller local groups, how long the complete grant process takes, and making application forms more user-friendly including the use of plain English, were noted and responded to.

**RESOLVED:-**

***1.1 That the Committee recognised that the Community Partnership Scheme continues to address aims and objectives of the Council through both inward investment and support of non-profit organisations in the District.***

***1.2 That the Committee supported a review of the grant application process and associated paperwork, to be undertaken in conjunction with South Derbyshire CVS. This will include a review to make***

***recommendations about how the process can be made more accessible for non-profit groups working to support residents of South Derbyshire.***

***1.3 That the Community Partnership Manager work with Members of the Committee to simplify the grant application form.***

OS/33 **SECTION 106 HEALTH BASED PLANNING CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Planning Services Manager delivered a verbal update on the current situation regarding Section 106 Contributions, reporting that since the working relationship with SDCCG (South Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group) had started, the position had very much improved. He presented a list of all S106 (Section 106) contributions received since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, which included details of what the allocation was earmarked for. One of the issues currently being looked at, was how the monies would be transferred from the NHS (National Health Service) to the allocated work, since any grant the NHS accept they receive in perpetuity.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Committee requested that details be added to each application, on how exactly the proposed Section 106 contributions would benefit the public.***

OS/34 **A REVIEW OF COUNCIL TAX ARREARS**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services presented a report to Committee outlining the performance of the Council Tax arrears collection. Although the overall percentage (98%) of the collection rate is deemed good, the monetary amounts involved are significant.

The responsibility for the collection of Council Tax ultimately lies with the Council. Operational performance is included in the Corporate Services Contract with Northgate Public Services. Northgate are responsible for all aspects of revenue collection on a day-to-day basis, as part of the Contract, they are incentivised to maintain and increase collection rates. More and more people are encouraged to pay Council Tax by Direct Debit as arrears occur less frequently using this payment method.

Comments made by Councillors relating to how the Council could help encourage even more residents to pay by Direct Debit, were noted and responded to.

**RESOLVED:-**

***1. That the situation regarding Council Tax arrears is noted and that consideration be given to any further review.***

***2. That a leaflet be designed to encourage residents to pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit.***

OS/35 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

The Committee asked that Derbyshire Community Health Service be added to the Work Programme for the January or February 2016 meeting.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Derbyshire Community Health Service be added to the Work Programme for 2015/16.***

The Meeting terminated at 7:40pm.

COUNCILLOR MRS G FARRINGTON

CHAIRMAN