

MINUTES

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2017

Present:

Councillors:

Members: Adeleke Hearn
Armytage Fethney
Banks Imarni (Vice-Chairman)
Bassadone Mahmood (Chairman)
Conway Silwal
England W Wyatt-Lowe

Councillor Griffiths (Portfolio Holder for Housing) and Councillor Harden (Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services)

Officers:

Richard Baker	Group Manager (Financial Services)
Julie Still	Group Manager – Resident Services
Elliott Brooks	Assistant Director – Housing
Emily Rae-Maxwell	Participation Team Leader
Kayley Johnston	Member Support Officer (Minutes)

Other:

Paulette Read	Tenants and Leaseholders committee
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The meeting began at 7:30pm

105 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Housing and Community OSC meeting on 15 March 2017 were agreed by members and signed by the Chairman.

106 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Natasha Brathwaite.

107 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There was no declaration of interest.

108 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

109 **CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None

110 **Q4 BUDGET MONITORING FINANCIAL REPORT**

R Baker presented this report explaining that there were no material changes.

R Baker was happy to take questions.

Cllr Imarni referred to page 7, 3.8 recharging. Is this the result of the new officer?

R Baker said no, and that it related to internal recharging of supports services and management overheads.

Cllr Mahmood asked if the financial tweaking for homelessness was in the budget.

E Brooks stated that it doesn't come in this financial year it's covered in the 2018/19 budget.

Cllr Mahmood referred to item 7.3 – additional budgets (the slippage), is it harmful to the budget.

E Brooks said no it's not harmful it's the profile of change. He also stated that work on Able House is being done.

Cllr Imarni asked for an overview of Stationers place as the reports showed that a lot of the underspends from other projects were being moved there. £300k underspend and an additional £791k misallocated from another project although the last update advised that the size of the Stationers place development was being scaled down.

E Brooks said that there is an issue there on the grounds. The ground which it's on aren't great but we knew this beforehand. There is an update on all new build schemes coming to the committee in September.

Cllr Mahmood referred to 7.4 Can you give an update on Osbornes contract and the under spend, is there a contract issue.

E Brooks said it's due to work not getting on site on time. They weren't comfortable with issuing work for the costs; they wanted to see a wider range of contractors.

Cllr Mahmood made reference to the Capital Development Reserve movement at the top of page 13.

R Baker said it related to the general fund, its money for future projects, specifically the Development Company. This went to Cabinet a few months ago.

Cllr Mahmood referred to appendix B page 15. Are we reducing or losing staff.

E Brooks said paragraph 4.7 page 7 of 11, it explains it all there.

Action: None

Outcome: The report was noted.

111 Q4 HOUSING

E Brooks presented the 2016/17 performance report. He was happy to take questions from Members.

The housing team were commended by Members for their commitment and outstanding achievements some of which culminated in Emily-Rae Maxwell winning both Eastern Region New Professionally but also the National New professional of the year award from Inside Housing

Cllr W Wyatt-Lowe referred to page 33 risk HRL01, how do the two relate to each other.

E Brooks confirmed that they are the same the terms. It should read Supported Housing.

Cllr W Wyatt-Lowe asked who he should talk to about an idea he got from another meeting.

E Brooks said Health in Dacorum would be a good start or Strategic Housing. If you point the email to E Brooks he will get the ball rolling.

E Brooks explained that there has also been staffing changes to Emily's team and two new members to cover the vacancies they had. The team has also been re-branded. E Brooks will send a family tree chart of all staff.

Cllr Adeleke referred to page 21, the possibility to renew Osbornes contact for another year. How do you oversee that they are complying.

E Brooks said the work they carry out, there are stages and these stages are checked by the project team, so there are no issues around compliance.

Cllr Adeleke asked a question around the compliance of Able House.

E Brooks said that Able House did originally comply and we are very confident that they are water tight on health and safety. Elliot also mentioned that prior to any recent events Sally Marshal had already instigated a health and safety review and update programme with each of the senior management team having been given an area for research, review and responsibility. The first regathering for reviewing their findings had already taken place and further meetings are schedules throughout the year.

Cllr Griffith added to that saying they are very proactive, the welfare and health and safety is taken very seriously. A statement will be made at full Council regarding this issue.

Cllr Imarni asked if a decision had been made about fire extinguishers or sprinkles to be installed in all flats. Whilst we don't want to be knee jerk we do want to continue our good track record in going over and above to ensure the safety of our residents.

Cllr Griffith said this is still been looked at and there are no legal requirements as of yet. We are still awaiting the outcome but we will however comply with legal requirements once we are aware.

Cllr Imarni referred to page 21, 21.5 curiously worded it.

E Brooks said it's a discussion held, Osborne demonstrated how they have met their targets. We may ask questions around this or get them to elaborate etc. This is how it's decided if they bank an extra year.

Action: see above

Outcome: Report was noted.

112 Q4 RESIDENT SERVICES

J Still presented this report, she highlighted the following; increase in crime but DBC stayed the same. There has been an extra 74 bays as part of the verge hardening project. The modern slavery course is well attended. The adventure playground has good attendance and the Old Town Halls attendance is very good at 71%.

Cllr W Wyatt-Lowe spoke about safeguarding and asked how the two Councils worked together; elaborating that it's quicker to combine information through a single funnel.

He also asked if J Still was aware of the ASB in Adeyfield.

J Still will speak to the ASB team tomorrow as she wasn't aware of it. Regarding safeguarding she explained that a very good system was in place and she had no worries.

Cllr Fethney commenced the Police reports; they are working hard at it.

Cllr Banks asked if staff have been depleted.

Cllr Harden congratulated J Still and her team on a fantastic job they do, they are such a varied department which works well. Cllr Harden said that staff can move around the Council if they wish; however we need to work better with Herts County Council. A report is going to CTM to look at roles.

J still said that 3 posts have moved back to Housing.

Cllr Adeleke also spoke about housing; the report says that CCTV has increased. The 2/3 staff managing it, is there plans to increase it?

J Still said that there are always 2/3 staff on at a time and the CCTV is covered 24/7, it is sufficient and there is also a Police radio based there. There is also 2 casual staff on call if need be. They are looking at future business plans to improve the income.

Cllr England referred to the budget, his understanding was that they were cutting the CCTV budget.

J Still confirmed that was correct but they didn't go ahead with it.

Cllr England referred to page 3.9, he said spaces this year have dropped compared to the previous year.

J Still said it's not that spaces have dropped it's that the areas are becoming more complex. The easier areas were done first. The budget is still being spent and they are getting spaces out there where they can.

Cllr Harden added to that saying we shouldn't look at it like that, the complex areas cost more and it's not always easy to get as many spaces on complex sites, but the works are still going ahead it's just due to complex sites.

Cllr Mahmood referred to item 15 (F) Operation Tropic and asked what exactly this was.

J Still said it refers to human trafficking, there's a team at Hertfordshire Constabulary to deal with it.

Cllr Mahmood asked about NDR04 on the risk register.

J still said they are high risks but they are managed through a health and safety, supervised activities etc which mitigates the risks.

Action: None.

Outcome: Report was noted.

113 **HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - WILL ALSO COVER THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY AND THE HOMELESS REDUCTION ACT.**

Emily Rae-Maxwell presented this report on behalf of Natasha Brathwaite.

E Rae-Maxwell confirmed that she had received a call from Natasha earlier in the day confirming that they has received silver standard for homelessness. This is positive and they are on track to get gold by November.

E Rae-Maxwell was happy to take questions from Members.

Cllr W Wyatt-Lowe asked if it would be possible to provide tracked changes so the changes are more visible on the report.

E Brooks stated that nothing has changed and that they are just highlighting the progress against it.

Cllr Adeleke asked what the figure was for homelessness people on the register compared to 2/3 years ago.

E Brooks said he doesn't have the exact figures to hand but the people to be claiming homelessness has gone up. He believes it's approximately 100 from last year so around 709 this year and 554 last year.

Cllr Adeleke said he would like sleeping rough figures.

Cllr Harden said he believed it was between 12 and 14.

Cllr Mahmood asked if the report could be proof read as there are a few errors.

Cllr Imarni asked what was meant by item 52.

E Rae-Maxwell explained it was the temp accommodation grant; there is a report at the back detailing it.

Cllr Mahmood referred to item 53, homelessness reduction act.

E Brooks said its grant for a new post they are pending recruitment now.

Cllr Mahmood referred to 3.11, how are you improving through investment. How do you do it?

E Rae-Maxwell said they take over help to rent, they offer it out wider, they run training for private landlords, and they also work with letting agents. There are lots more plans for this.

Cllr Mahmood asked Members if they were happy with the recommendations on page 58.

Members agreed and the report was noted.

Action: None

Outcome: Report Noted

114 HOUSING SERVICE - BENCHMARKING REPORT 2015/16

E Rae-Maxwell presented the report. The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an overview of Dacorum's Housing Service performance when benchmarked against a group of peers by House Mark.

The report includes recommendations linked to the performance, satisfaction and costs of housing management, responsive repairs and voids and major works and cyclical maintenance.

E Rae-Maxwell was happy to take questions from Members.

Cllr Bassadone asked if the list at the end, did they opt to join in.

E Rae-Maxwell said these 66 peers were selected.

Cllr W Wyatt-Lowe said he was pleased we have a benchmarking. He made a suggestion, and asked if we could have more forms in a table format. Example worst was..... Best was.....

Cllr Mahmood asked who Crisis were.

E Rae-Maxwell said they are a homelessness national charity.

Action: None

Outcome: Report Noted.

The Meeting ended at 9:03pm