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GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Governance and Resources Committee held on Thursday 20 January 2022 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Tom Donnelly - In the Chair

Councillors Jacqueline Allison, Robert Archer, Sue Bull, David Chapman, Steve Flitter, Helen Froggatt, Alyson Hill, Susan Hobson, Dermot Murphy, Garry Purdy, Mike Ratcliffe and Alasdair Sutton.

Paul Wilson (Chief Executive) Nicola Astle (Joint ICT Service Delivery Manager), Steve Capes (Director of Regeneration and Policy), Rob Coggins (Director of Housing) Lee Gardner (Legal Services Manager) Karen Henriksen (Director of Resources), Deborah Unwin (Human Resources Manager), Jenny Williams (Head of the Internal Audit Consortium), Elizabeth Wilson (Corporate Policy Officer), Jason Spencer (Electoral and Democratic Services Manager),

At the start of the meeting the Committee stood in a silent tribute to Councillor Lewis Rose OBE, the former Leader of the Council who passed away on 6 January 2022.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michele Morley and Paul Cruise.

There were no substitutes.

244/21 – MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, Seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Resources Committee held on 18 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

245/21 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

246/21 – INTERESTS

There were no interests declared

247/21 – HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE

The Committee received a report proposing changes to the housing support service. The report set out details of the Council's statutory duty to prevent and relieve homelessness within the District and how the Housing Support Service had delivered this duty through providing two full time tenancy support workers employed by Adullam Homes.

It was noted that tenancy support workers provided a range of interventions including help with budgeting/money advice, seeking help with complex issues including drug/alcohol and offending behaviour with the aim of helping tenants to stay in their tenancy and live independently, this in turn reduced repeat homelessness and the issues and cost associated with it. Demand for this type of service always exceeded capacity and waiting lists for support were typically high with the pandemic likely to increase demand.

The current arrangements with Adullam Homes cost £80,000 per annum and supported around 80 people per year. Whilst the service had performed well the report proposed that going forward the Council would provide its own in-house tenancy support service as the service could be delivered more cost effectively in-house by directly supporting the Council's homelessness team, reduce costs and lead to improvements in delivery. This approach would assist in removing additional pressures from the homeless team and make sure that vulnerable persons received direct targeted help as identified.

Negotiations had been ongoing with Adullam and it was expected that the current service would end on the 1st February 2022. It was proposed that the two staff employed by Adullam would become District Council employees in the Housing Service through the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. It was confirmed that both staff were in favour of the change in provider/employer.

It was moved by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED That the change in delivery of the housing support service be
(Unanimously) approved together with the transfer of two employees from Adullam Housing Association to the Council's employment with effect from 1st February 2022.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

248/21 – POLICY ON PROBATIONARY PERIODS

The Committee received a report proposing the introduction of a new employment policy on Probationary Periods.

It was noted that there had previously been a probationary period in place but this had ended some time ago. Reintroducing the policy would require a change in the contracts of

employment for new employees with managers accepting responsibility for formally reviewing progress and confirming successful completion of probationary periods. It was suggested that the policy could also be seen as an enhanced induction policy.

The proposed policy would require managers to formally assess new recruits in terms of performance, attendance and conduct at 3 months and 6 months following appointment. If there were unresolvable issues at 6 months then employment could be ended. It was the view of the Senior Management Team that there were sufficient measures in place such as recruitment and induction practises to make sure that it would be very rare that an employee would not complete their probationary period but it was felt that a policy was needed to make sure that the process was fair, cost effective and would help facilitate the recruitment of a more suitable candidate.

It was noted that, if needed, standards of required attendance, conduct and performance could be clearly identified and support given for improvement during the probationary period.

It was confirmed that once the draft policy and guidance notes were approved, changes to the policy statement would require approval at Committee with Corporate Leadership Team approving changes to the guidance notes. The Policy would then apply to all new employees from 1 February 2022.

It was moved by Councillor Steve Flitter, seconded by Councillor Sue Bull and

RESOLVED That the Policy on Probationary Periods set out in the appendix to the
(Unanimously) report be approved.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

249/21 – CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2024 – PERFORMANCE 2020/21 AND PRIORITIES 2022/23

The Committee considered a report setting out performance against the District Council's Corporate Plan targets since its adoption in March 2020. It provided details of the Outturn data for 2020/21 and progress during the first six months of 2021/22. The report highlighted where performance was strong, and identified where progress was unfortunately delayed by COVID-19. The report also set out a proposed set of Corporate Plan priority target areas for 2022/23, which would enable service planning and budget preparation to take place in good time for March 2022.

It was noted that this report had previously been included on the agenda to be considered at the Council meeting on 25 November 2021 unfortunately, due to the late hour, the meeting closed before reaching this item. This meeting of this Committee was the first opportunity for the report could be discussed to facilitate service planning and budget preparation in time for March 2022.

Overall, of the 44 Corporate Plan actions for 2020/21, for which data was available, were fully or partially achieved and, despite the challenges of Covid-19 throughout the year, 50% of the Corporate Plan Actions were fully achieved and progress made on all the remaining Corporate Plan actions.

Detailed outcomes for 2020/21 Corporate Plan Actions were set out in Appendix 1 but highlights included:

- The introduction of an improved website home page with greater functionality and mobile access. This played a key role in maintaining and enhancing service delivery during the pandemic by providing a payment portal to expand payment options, and ensuring fully integrated payments were added to all online forms.
- Teams across the Council were redirected to support business survival during Covid lockdowns and the management and delivery of government grants. Approximately £70 million of business grants payments were made by the Council.
- Improved access to support for Residents and businesses was made available online, via our website. The number of fully trackable services were increased by 29 during the year and Covid specific support services such as information on government funding, testing centres and service arrangements were added in a timely matter.
- The Council provided £34,621 funding for projects that benefited the wider community despite there being a reduction in the number of activities carried out by community groups due to the pandemic.
- 27 Electric Vehicle charging points were provided across all four Derbyshire Dales market towns which exceeded plans for a minimum of one charging point per market town
- 75 adaptations were made to the homes of disabled people despite the impact of Covid on direct services. This exceeded the target of 50.
- Three Neighbourhood Plans were completed and were approved at referendum on 6th May 2021

It was moved by Councillor Sue Bull, seconded by Councillor Steve Flitter and

RESOLVED
(Unanimously)

1. That the outturn of Corporate Plan targets and actions for 2020/21 be noted.
2. That progress during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 against the Corporate Plan targets and actions for 2021/22 be noted.
3. That the Corporate Plan priority target areas set out in Section 3 of the report be adopted for 2022/23.
4. That a further report be presented to the Council budget setting meeting on 3 March 2022 with specific targets for each of the priority areas set out in Section 3 of this report.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

250/21 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – MID-YEAR 2021/22

The Committee considered a report summarising performance against the Council's 12 Key Performance Indicators for the first half of 2021/22. The report highlighted where the Council was performing strongly and identified areas for improvement.

It was noted that this report had previously been included on the agenda to be considered at the Council meeting on 25 November 2021 unfortunately, due to the late hour, the meeting closed before reaching this item.

The report confirmed that 10 out of the 12 [83.3%] targets for which data was available were on track to be achieved during 2021/22. The Key Performance Indicators that were performing particularly strongly included:

- The % of homeless households seeking assistance from the Council, for whom this intervention helped resolve their situation were at 100%.
- Invoices paid on time was currently running at 99.06% with just 19 invoices paid late..
- The percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks had exceeded its 75% target in both quarter one and two. In quarter two, 5 out of 6 major applications were determined within 13 weeks or an agreed Extension of Time period.
- Percentage of 'other' planning applications determined on time stood at 94% in quarter 2. This showed a significant improvement in performance from 89.7% at quarter 1.
- The speed of processing new claims for housing benefit and Council Tax support had a target of 24 days. This target had been achieved, with claims being processed in just 16.77 days as of Quarter two. The speed of processing notifications of changes in circumstances had a target of 8 days and at quarter 2, the speed was 5.08 days.

The target for the percentage of Council Tax collected within the year was 98.4%. At the end of Quarter two it was 61.4%. Although under-performing it was still expected to achieve the target by year end at the 61.4% collection rate at 30 September 2021 compared favourably to 60.6% in the previous year and 61.5% in September 2019.

The average number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE employee per annum was targeted at 9 days; per quarter the target was 2.25 days. At Q2 the level was higher the target of 3.7 days and it was therefore anticipated that performance would not recover before the end of quarter 4. It was noted that Covid-19 related sickness absence were not included in these figures.

It was moved by Councillor Susan Hobson, seconded by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe and

RESOLVED That Quarter 1 and 2 performance against the Key Performance
(Unanimously) Indicators for 2021/22 be noted

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

251/21 – TRANSFORMATION OF SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT MEMBER SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE

The Committee considered a report informing Members of the options available to transform the Council's democratic services function by procuring a technological solution to improve the professional image of the authority in respect of governance and transparency.

The report highlighted some of the risks apparent in the existing arrangements which were administratively heavy and inefficient. It was proposed that an 'off the shelf' solution for committee management would resolve the inefficiencies of the service, mitigate risks, and support Members and officers to move to a modern way of delivering democracy.

It was moved by Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, seconded by Councillor Jacqueline Allison and

RESOLVED
(unanimously)

1. That the purchase of a Committee Management System at a cost of up to £20,000 be approved.
2. That £20,000 be included in the proposed capital programme for 2022/23 (to be considered at the Council Meeting on 3 March 2022) for the purchase of a Committee Management System to be funded from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve using Electoral IER grant funding and that Council be recommended, from 2023/24 onwards, to allocate ongoing additional revenue funding of £11,050 p.a. for annual support for a fully hosted solution.
3. That the procurement of a Committee Management system be made through the G-Cloud 12 Procurement Framework.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

252/21 – FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022/23

The Committee considered a joint report of the Directors of Resources, Community and Environmental, Regulatory and Corporate and Customer Services setting out recommendations in respect of fees and charges for 2022/23 in relation to Community and Environmental Services, Corporate and Customer Services and Regulatory Services.

It was confirmed that in recent years fees and charges had generally been increased by an amount that slightly exceeded inflation rates at the time. This approach generated higher levels of income in real terms (assuming no significant customer resistance) and contributed towards the Council's corporate savings target. It was noted that, as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 3.1% in October 2021 and rose to 4.2% in November 2021, most fees had been increased by around 3.1% to 4.5% even though inflation stood at 5.4%. Where officers believed that an increase of 3.1% to 4.5% would not be appropriate, an explanation was provided in the report.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Susan Hobson and

RESOLVED

1. That the fees and charges recommended in Appendices 1 – 13 of the report be approved and implemented with effect from 1 April 2022.
2. That it be noted that fees and charges for Clean & Green team would be reviewed as part of the Clean & Green review and any amendments recommended as part of the review would be referred to the relevant Council meeting to approve changes.

Voting

For	12
Against	0
Abstained	1

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

253/21 – RESIDENTS ONLINE PANEL SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee considered a report setting out the results of the Derbyshire Dales residents' survey undertaken in October/November 2021. Alongside the quantitative results of the survey the report provided Members with a summary of qualitative responses and made recommendations about the results and ongoing actions.

Four different methods of gathering data were used; Face to Face interviews (focused on under 35 year olds), a postal survey of randomly selected addresses, a questionnaire link sent to Online Panel members, and an open survey promoted largely via social media. The same questions were used for each of the different surveys. A copy of the questions asked in the survey were set out in Appendix 1 of the report and a copy of the detailed Residents Survey report for the Face to Face and Postal survey was set out in Appendix 2.

The Residents Survey was undertaken throughout October and November 2021 and resulted in a total of 1,818 responses which was made up as follows:

- 1,066 Postal Survey
- 180 Face to Face Interviews
- 201 Online Panel Responses
- 371 Online Survey Responses.

The following responses and recommendations were made to address issues raised through the survey:

- Waste/bins – it was acknowledged that the waste contract had failed to deliver expectations. To address these valid concerns, an Independent Review of the waste contract was being undertaken and the findings of the Review would be considered by the Council.
- Communications – it was recognised that, during last year's waste contract problems in particular, the Council's communications did not always provide the information residents wanted. Whilst communications were timely and frequent, the information provided did not, and could not, answer residents' valid questions regarding bin collections. The Council was working with the contractor to implement in-cab technology to give Officers (and therefore residents) 'live' information on bin collections in future.
- Planning – in seeking to balance the needs of the district as a whole with those of individual residents, the Council was unlikely to be able to satisfy all residents all the time. However whilst the Council had a track record of engaging and communicating well with residents on some local development proposals, it was recognised that this good practice could be deployed in other cases too.
- Parking charges – In the latter part of 2021, the new Pay by Phone payment system was introduced to help improve the payment process for visitors and residents. In 2022, the Council would be reviewing the fees and charges structure for its car parks.
- Litter – Whilst not all of the verges across the district were the responsibility of the Council, over the last year the Council has been reviewing the frequency and standards of service delivered by its Clean & Green team, including the maintenance of verges. This work was almost complete and would be presented to Members in the coming months.

- Speeding traffic, potholes, road works, highways matters – these comments would be passed to Derbyshire County Council as the organisation responsible for providing these services

It was moved by Councillor Jacqueline Allison, seconded by Councillor Helen Froggatt and

RESOLVED
(Unanimously)

1. That the results of the Residents Survey completed in October/November 2021 be noted.
2. That qualitative data summarised from the Residents Survey be noted.
3. That the areas for attention, set out in Section 19 be reflected as actions in Service plans 2022/23, to be considered by Council on 3rd March 2022

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

254/21 – EXTERNAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT – ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

The Committee considered a report setting out progress made in respect of implementing the recommendations arising from the external review of internal audit.

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards required that the internal audit service must have an external review at least every 5 years. An external review of Derbyshire Dales District Council's Internal Audit Service was undertaken In May 2021. Although the results of the review were positive and the service was deemed to be compliant with the Standards, some recommendations were made to help aid further improvement of the service. The report provided details of progress made to date in implementing these recommendations.

It was moved by Councillor Steve Flitter, seconded by Councillor Dermot Murphy and

RESOLVED That the report be noted.
(Unanimously)

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

255/21 – PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE 2021/2022 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The Committee considered a report providing an update in respect of the 2021/2022 Internal Audit Plan. The report includes a summary of internal audit reports issued since the last meeting of this committee and an update on the implementation of internal audit recommendations.

Three reports had been issued one with Substantial Assurance, one with Reasonable Assurance and one relating to the Waste Collection Service with Limited Assurance. It was noted that the full internal audit review report on the waste contract would be reported to a future meeting of the Community & Environment Committee, along with the outcome of the Independent Review.

It was moved by Councillor David Chapman, seconded by Councillor Alyson Hill and

RESOLVED That the report be noted.
(Unanimously)

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

256/20 – EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Steve Flitter and

RESOLVED That in accordance with Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act
(Unanimously) 1972 the public and press be excluded because it was likely that the nature of the business to be transacted would result in exempt information being disclosed.

At this point the Committee excluded the public and press because in considering this item as it contained information relating to action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

257/21 – UPDATE ON CYBER SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

The Committee considered a report setting out the Council's current Cyber Security provisions and resilience. The purpose of the report was to give the Committee some assurances relating to the work the Joint ICT service and Council had been doing to mitigate the likelihood and impacts of a cyber-attack.

It was moved by Councillor Garry Purdy, seconded by Councillor Steve Flitter and

RESOLVED That the information provided in the report on the Council's Cyber
(unanimously) Security and resilience be noted.

The Chairman declared the motion CARRIED.

MEETING CLOSED – 8.30 PM

CHAIRMAN