

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

HELD: Thursday, 23 February 2023

Start: 7.00 pm

Finish: 8.46 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: A Owens (Chairman)

Councillors: P Burnside
A Fowler
R Molloy
E Pope
D Westley
I Eccles
S Gregson
D Owen
I Rigby
D Whittington

Officers: Chris Twomey, Corporate Director Transformation, Housing and Resources
Simon Kirby, Head of Wellbeing and Place Services (Virtual)
Alison Grimes, Performance Improvement Lead
Tom Dickinson, Principal Solicitor
Alan Leicester, Head of Housing
Jane Maguire, Housing Regulatory and Quality Manager
Jonathan Mitchell, Housing Strategy & Development Programme Manager
Rebecca Spicer, Insurance and Risk Officer
Gilly Hodgkinson, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager (Virtual)
Julia Brown, Democratic Services Officer

28 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were later received by Councillor Finch.

29 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no changes to Membership of the Committee.

30 **URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There were no urgent items of business.

31 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

32 **DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of Party Whip.

33 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2023 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34 PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no items under this heading.

35 RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET

Consideration was given to the Minutes of Cabinet held on 24 January 2023 as contained on pages 763 to 772 of the Book of Reports.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of Cabinet held 24 January 2023 be noted.

(Note 1: That in respect of Minute 70 B – 'A Corporate Strategy for The Management of General Revenue Account (GRA) Property Assets' that the Council date should state 22 February 2023 and not 24 February 2023)

(Note 2: Councillor E Pope arrived during consideration of this item)

36 RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE & KEY RISK REGISTER

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services as contained on pages 773 to 850 of the Book of Reports, which set out details of the operation of the Risk Management Framework over the last twelve months; recommended changes to the current Risk Management Policy & Strategy and Toolkit; share the findings of an external risk review and set out details on the key risks facing the Council and how they are being managed.

The Risk and Insurance Officer outlined the report and responded to comment and questions raised by Members:

- New risk 'Cost of Living Crisis' introduced
- Excellent Report – tracked changes will be useful in future reports
- Concern expressed by several members in respect of the current risk assessment score for 'Delays in Preparation of new Local Plan' being too low. Upcoming changes to NPPF on submission of local plans for Examination in Public – Paul Charlson to review
- Planning & Regulatory Service Resources – Complaints/Communication
- Procurement Risk – Training provision of 'fault lines, self-analysis, case studies'

A comment was raised in respect of Appendix D – Cabinet Key Risk Report – Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services 'A savings plan to address the budget gap has been drawn up for consideration by Members', that this had not

been received by Members.

The Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources informed that this was provided at Council on 22 February at paragraph 10.5 of the GRA Revenue and Capital Budget Report and MTF Update 2023/24 to 2025/26. Members requested that this be clarified by Officers prior to Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the continuing effective operation of the Risk Management Framework as detailed in the Risk Management Annual Report 2022 (Appendix A) be noted.
- B. That the proposed amendments to the Risk Management Policy & Strategy (Appendix B) and Toolkit (Appendix C) be noted.
- C. That the findings of the external risk management review, set out in paragraph 7 of the report, be noted.
- D. That the progress made in relation to the management of the risks shown in the Key Risk Register (Appendix D) be noted and that the Committee request clarification prior to Cabinet in respect of (Appendix D) – Cabinet Key Risk Report – Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services 'A savings plan to address the budget gap has been drawn up for consideration by Members' which had not been received by Members.

37 HOUSING REGULATOR CONSUMER STANDARDS - KEY THEMES AND APPROACH

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources as contained on pages 851 to 861 of the Book of Reports, which was to provide a progress report on the action taken so far to review WLBC services, to ensure that the Council continues to operate within the Housing Regulators Consumer standards.

The Housing Regulatory & Quality Manager outlined the report and responded to the following comment and question raised by Members.

- That the needs of Armed Forces Veterans are addressed – This is a statutory requirement and, also covered within the 'Allocations Policy'
- In discussion it was noted that the Committee would like to see regular updates in respect of the review. The Housing Regulatory & Quality Manager informed Members that this will be brought to future meetings of the Committee as a matter of course.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report and updates.

38 AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP PRODUCTS

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources as contained on pages 863 to 908 of the Book of Reports, which was to seek approval for the publication of Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership policies.

The Housing Strategy and Development Programme Manager outlined the report, giving a summary of the two policies 'Rent to Buy' and 'Shared Ownership'. He then responded to comments and questions raised by Members.

- Welcome of the Policies, much needed by residents
- Process for allocation of property under Rent to Buy – ensure this is a fair process
- Ensure that the shared ownership policy allows shared owners to purchase additional shares enabling them to staircase to 100% ownership
- Advice sought from other Local Authorities and Registered Providers
- Does 'discount' build up for Rent to Buy as in Right to Buy – this aspect to be explored further by Officers.
- Marketing process – and involvement of Help to Buy Agent 1. The involvement of Help to Buy Agent 1 is not a Homes England requirement for Rent to Buy marketing. Homes England have recently removed the requirement of their involvement in the marketing of shared ownership properties and so the policy will be amended to reflect the change.

The Committee made the following comments for Officers to provide response to Members of the Committee and Cabinet:

1. To clarify the position for the provision of 'emergency repairs' following the intent to purchase.
2. The process and procedure to follow, in order to prevent a 'floodgate' for applicants.

RESOLVED That the contents of the Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership policies be noted.

39 **UPDATE ON ACTIONS – DAMP AND MOULD MANAGEMENT IN COUNCIL HOUSING**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources as contained on pages 909 to 916 of the Book of Reports, which provided an update about the work that is being completed to mitigate the issue with damp and mould in Council homes.

The Head of Housing Services outlined the report and responded to comments and questions raised by Members:

- Welcome of the report to tackle and investigate issue of damp and mould in Council homes
- Savills survey -789 properties identified - action being taken to ensure the safety of residents in relation to damp, mould, and condensation
- Investigation is carried out thoroughly

RESOLVED: That the Committee considered and noted the report, action and information contained therein.

40 **DELEGATED AUTHORITY - SPENDING UNDER THE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Wellbeing and Place as contained on pages 939 to 942, which was to highlight the governance system for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and agree spend approval for key items prior to the primary governance meeting.

The Economic Development and Regeneration Manager outlined the report and responded to comments and questions raised by Members. The Chairman requested that progress reports be presented to future meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED: A. That the report be considered and noted.

B. That progress reports be presented to future meetings of the Committee.

41 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORTING 2023/24**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources as contained on pages 917 to 928 of the Book of Reports, which was to seek approval for the Corporate Performance Reporting for 2023/24.

The Performance Improvement Lead outlined the report and responded to comments and questions raised by Members.

It was noted that in respect of Appendix A – 'WL165 % Staff Turnover Rate', it was noted that this should state 22/23 and not 22/24. The Performance Improvement Lead will update accordingly for submission to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note and support the suite of Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 at Appendix A.

42 **UPDATE ON PEER REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources as contained on pages 929 to 938 of the Book of Reports, which presented an update to Members following the Corporate Peer Challenge Report.

The Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources outlined the Report and Action Plan to Members. He informed that the Corporate Peer Challenge Peer Review Team, will check progress against the key recommendations on 28 February 2023.

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RESOLVED: That the Committee note progress against the Peer Review Action Plan.

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Chairman