

Present: Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Helena Mair, Councillor Thomas Dyer,
Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor Lucinda Preston,
Councillor Pat Vaughan, Councillor Loraine Woolley,
Councillor Laura McWilliams and Councillor Sue Burke

Apologies for Absence: None.

48. Confirmation of Minutes - 22 November 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2018 be confirmed.

49. To Receive Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee Minutes - 5 November 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018 be received.

50. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

51. Change to Order of Business

The agenda item order was altered as below:

4. Section 106 Contributions Update
5. Christmas Market Outturn 2018 – Update
6. Portfolio Performance Overview – Quality Housing
7. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny – Quality Housing
8. Quality Housing Progress Report
9. Performance Report – HRS
10. Electoral Registration
11. Work Programme for 2018-19 - Update

52. Section 106 Contributions Update

Nicola Collins, Heritage and Planning Enforcement Team Leader:

- a) provided Performance Scrutiny Committee with the annual update on section 106 agreements detailing contributions collected and negotiated in the last 12 months to December 2018.
- b) invited members comments and questions

Question: Members asked at what stage of development did the Section 106 monies get released and whether the contribution for the student flats proportioned out? It was also asked how a bid was made in the current funding for Boutham Park and Hartsholme Park?

Response: Boutham Park was the closest recreational area to Westbrook Drive. Some projects were not in the time frame for when the Section 106 monies had to be spent so there was a provision in place whereby if the development didn't come to fruition in the allocated time frame then the Section 106 monies would be allocated to the next nearest site.

Question: Members asked whether the Section 106 Monies would be paid to ourselves for Queen Elizabeth Road.

Response: Yes. The land could be purchased by someone else which would mean the owner of the site would pay the monies. Money that was allocated to Glebe and Minster Medical Practices was for physical provisions at the practices and not to pay for GP's.

Question: Members asked what had happened to the projects from last year and whether this information could be circulated.

Question: Members asked about the St Marks development and whether the Homebase site was being used for student dwellings? Members also asked whether there was to be a zebra crossing near the student flats.

Response: Student accommodation didn't trigger the affordable housing allocation. Comments from Highways regarding the zebra crossing were that the ropewalk crossing was to be updated rather than a new one installed.

RESOLVED that:

1. Officers be tasked to:

- add another column to the table 4.2 to specify what Section 106 monies had already come in
- update the current ongoing project list and circulate to the committee
- refer the Section 106 allocations policy to Policy Scrutiny Committee

2. The content of the report be noted.

53. Christmas Market Outturn 2018 - Update

Simon Colburn, Assistant Director – Health and Environment Services:

a. gave a verbal update regarding the Christmas Market 2018 and highlighted the following:

- the throughput of visitors was estimated at 230,000 over the weekend which was very well attended
- there was a decline in coaches using coach parking this year with 208 coaches using the facility.

- 7728 cars used the park and ride which was down on previous years but car parking in the City Centre had increased over the market period.
- Preliminary outputs from the University were to be received.
- There were 200 official stalls at the market, some had dropped out. Stall fees for returning stall holders had been frozen from 2017.
- 31% of stalls were from Lincolnshire.
- The market had a large footprint over social media with one post being liked over 2500 times.
- Visit Lincoln had over 100,000 new hits on their website.

b. invited members' comments and questions.

Comment: Thanks were given to Simon Colburn and the staff who worked at the Christmas Market. Members thought that the child wrist band scheme was a really good idea.

Question: Members asked if there was a review taking place to ensure the market continued to be a success for future years?

Response: A review had been started and a workshop had been arranged in October. All aspects of organisations and people would be included in this meeting to make sure the business plan would make the event sustainable for future years.

Question: Members asked for details of the percentage of food stalls present at the 2018 market?

Response: A lot of the food stalls were pop up stalls which were not on our land and were harder to control.

Question: Members asked if the County Councils Christmas Market had an impact on our market and whether officers had been approached to join both of the markets together.

Response: There was a discussion to be had with the County Council about sharing costs. The County Council did want a separate event to ours and wanted a separate branding. The City Council wanted to make sure that Lincoln was the place to visit at Christmas time and that the City of Lincoln Council Christmas market was one of the best.

RESOLVED that:

1. Officers to investigate the percentage of food stalls at the Christmas Market 2018 and report back to Committee.
2. The content of the verbal report be noted.

54. Portfolio Performance Overview - Quality Housing

Pat Jukes, Corporate Policy Business Manager:

- Gave a presentation outlining the Performance of the Quality Housing Portfolio which included:

- Contextual Information on the Quality Housing portfolio:
 - Lincoln had approximately 44,600 homes in the city. As of December 2018 7,782 were council owned social housing units.
 - There were currently 308 'old style' licensed HMO's in Lincoln as of January 2019.
 - There were currently 275 'new style' HMO applications in various stages of approval.
 - In the last 6 months, the City Council had issued:
 - Disabled Facilities Grants – 23
 - Hospital Discharge – 1
 - Gas Central Heating – 3
 - As of 2017, the amount uncovered by Local Housing Allowance rates on the average rent costs for a 3 bedroom property was £43.70.
 - At the last official count in October 2018, there were 26 rough sleepers in Lincoln.
 - The house price to work place based earnings ratio for Lincoln in 2017 was 5.54.

- Highlighted the following key points:
 - Lincoln's average price paid for all property types had increased by 4.8%, growing from £150,538 to £157,848.
 - Average private rental costs had decreased in all properties with either 1, 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms.
 - The number of households in temporary accommodation had seen a small increase from 2016/17s figure of 24, rising to 27 in 2017/18.
 - The rent collected as a proportion of rent owed had surpassed its target of 96.50% with a figure of 98.19%.
 - The current level of tenant arrears was above the target of 3.50% with a figure of 2.95%.
 - The percentage of reactive repairs completed within target time was above the target of 97.50% with a figure of 99.36%.
 - The number of homelessness applications had increased from Q2 last year by 241, now reporting at 368. This was primarily due to the Homelessness Reduction Act changes (introduced April 2018), where Lincoln City Council must now support anyone, threatened with homelessness within 56 days or was already homeless. This meant there was a duty to start working with people at an earlier stage and help should initially be offered regardless of whether the person had a local connection to Lincoln or a priority need for assistance. It was therefore almost certain that homelessness presentations would increase in the first year.

- Invited member's comments and questions.

Question: Members asked how many children were in temporary accommodation.

Question: Members stated that the impression they had been given was that Lincoln was a place where it was difficult to get on the housing ladder. How did this equate with the ratio for wage as Lincoln was the third lowest in regard to house prices?

Response: Building Societies and banks had different criteria so the effect of their policies could vary. The third lowest was due to a combination of low house prices and low wages. There were a lot of people on low wages in Lincoln.

Question: Members asked for clarification on the amount uncovered by benefits for rent for a 3 bedroom property.

Response: The uncovered amount referred to the gap between the level of housing benefits received and the rent payable in the private sector. This was different between private sector rents and council rents as they were very different. All council houses were below the LHA level.

RESOLVED that:

1. Officers would investigate the figure for how many children were in temporary accommodation and report back to committee.
2. The content of the presentation be noted.

55. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny - Quality Housing

Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing:

- a) Presented a report which highlighted the following:
 - Homelessness
 - Tenancy Management
 - New Build/Allocations
 - Housing Improvement Programme
 - Housing Repairs
 - Supported Housing
 - Private Sector Housing
 - Health
- b) Invited member's comments and questions.

Question: Members asked if the original tenants from De Wint Court got first refusal on the new housing once it was built.

Response: This option was being looked into. The existing building had not yet been demolished.

Question: Members asked whether we supported private landlords and whether help was given to tenants of private landlords who were not in a rogue landlord position but needed work to be carried out on a property.

Response: Accidental landlords that could not maintain properties were being investigated. There was a HMO Licensing Scheme which meant if the landlord became a trusted landlord they received a reduction on their licence fee.

Question: Members asked whether the HMO Licensing Scheme helped landlords who only owned one property.

Response: It would if they fell within the HMO criteria. The Accreditation Scheme was something that was being taken up. Private Landlords were offered free seminars to keep them up to date. The Rogue Landlord Scheme was a separate pot of money that was used to deal with the really bad landlords. The Rogue Landlord team should be looking into these types of cases but unfortunately the work had to be prioritised. If tenants were having problems with their landlord

then they did need to approach the City Council. The law was on the tenant's side which was really positive. Unfortunately Universal Credit had a massive impact on landlords meaning that some private landlords couldn't take on Universal Credit tenants.

Question: Members asked whether we were duty bound to house homeless people that come from outside the City for 56 days.

Response: Tenants could come to us up to 56 days before they were to be made homeless so a plan could be put in place. If the tenant didn't have a local connection then they would score lower and fall lower on the list.

Question: Members asked whether pressure could be put on shop owners to rent out the flats above to tenants on the housing register.

Response: There was a project that took place previously but there wasn't much take up. Access to the flats could be a problem as well as fire regulations.

Question: Members asked whether there were any plans to use the housing revenue fund monies in the future and what opportunities there were for building council properties for example could RAF Scampton be used?

Response: Work was ongoing to understand the need for council housing in Lincoln. Some of the buildings at RAF Scampton were derelict. The HRA borrowing CAP gave a lot more opportunity and choices with how the money was spent. When houses were being built the community and place was looked at. Partner organisations were to be looked at to help bring affordable housing to the city. WGC had the prospect to give us a lot of opportunity with housing.

Question: Members asked what more could be done to reduce stress within housing and whether play park could be built in new build house areas to help reduce child obesity.

Response: The environmental budget was being looked into to see if it could be doubled. There were older workers in housing that suffered from musculo skeletal issues which didn't help with stress levels. The Director of Housing was looking at the stress sickness levels to try and identify where the problems were and in what areas. There were issues within the Housing Solutions Team and a lot of work had taken place to help alleviate the issues. The Housing Solutions Office was a very stressful place to work due to the nature of the work and the tenants' problems that were dealt with on a day to day basis.

Question: Members asked what complications were in the application process for the housing list.

Response: The process was being reviewed by The Assistant Director of Housing to make the process easier.

Question: Members asked for an explanation for the re-letting target date figures and asked if council tenants could still house swap.

Response: Target figures for the City of Lincoln Council were a lot tighter than other councils. The figure shown started from when the keys were handed to the next tenant. Some targets couldn't be met due to other aspects, for example the Police used one of our flats for surveillance which meant any repairs couldn't be

carried out and the property couldn't be re-let. Mutual exchange did still take place.

Question: Members asked if they could have training on the statutory legislation for when they were attending ward surgeries and whether the Rogue Landlord Scheme could be replicated, even in a small way when the funding disappeared.

Response: Training could be arranged on the statutory legislation. The Rogue Landlord Scheme would continue to work and other funding resources were being looked into.

Question: Members asked whether the 'council owned' building firm was still being set up.

Response: The situation had changed. There was a CAP in place for borrowing. There were a number of things that were being looked at but the work of the Housing Solutions Team was the main focus.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

56. Quality Housing Progress Report

Daren Turner, Director of Housing:

- a) Provided Performance Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress towards the Quality Housing strategic priority contained in Vision 2020.
- b) Highlighted the following key points:
 - Eight projects were flagged green with none currently red.
 - Consultation with residents for supported housing had taken place.
 - Some empty homes had been brought back into use.
 - The Spa Road development was a big development but there were issues with the land being contaminated.
- c) Invited members' comments and questions.

Comment: Members commented that Council Tax had doubled on empty properties last year.

Response: Council Tax did go up by 150%. The latest autumn statement stated this could now go up to 500% over a period of time.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

57. Performance Report - HRS

Matt Hillman, Maintenance Manager:

- a) Updated Performance Committee on the financial position of the Housing Repairs Service at the end of the 2017/18 financial year.
- b) Reported that the Housing Repairs Service had a year of success during 2017/18 with the service maintaining their performance from previous years with a surplus of £253,209 for the year.

c) Highlighted the following:

- Tenant satisfaction with repairs finished the year exceeding performance.
- Throughout the year of 2017/18 the percentage of repairs completed within timescale remained above the target of 95% and ended the year at 97%.
- All emergency repairs within the year were carried out within 24 hours of them being reported for the second consecutive financial year.
- The performance target of 95% of repair appointments being kept was above target throughout the year and the final outturn of 95.85% was a slight improvement on the previous year.
- Performance for the first time fixes had improved significantly over the last few years. The first time fix rate for 2017/18 was 90.21% compared to 86.1% in 2016/17.
- The number of days taken to complete a repair had increased in 2017/18, however still finished the year on target at 8 days.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

58. Electoral Registration

Graham Watts, Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager:

- a) Provided Performance Scrutiny Committee with an update on electoral registration in the City of Lincoln.
- b) Explained the Electoral Registration Canvass process.
- c) Highlighted the following statistics:
 - All 49,561 properties at the commencement of the canvass in Lincoln were sent Household Enquiry forms.
 - 10,000 of these properties were categorised as being student accommodation. Access to the student campus at the University of Lincoln was restricted so an arrangement with the post room at the University was in place for their staff to make delivery of Household Enquiry Forms upon commencement of the academic year.
 - The final electorate published on 1 December 2018 at the close of the canvass was 60,138.
- d) Explained the following:
 - Household Notification Letters were sent to all properties in the city in January each year as a further check to ensure that the information held on the Electoral Register was correct and accurate.
 - Poll Cards for scheduled elections in May were to be sent to all eligible electors in March each year due to there being local or national electoral events occurring every year.
- e) Invited members' comments and questions.

Question: Members asked if there was more that could be done to engage people in registering to vote such as leaflets and social media to try and stop the subject looking dry.

Response: Current documents were prescribed by government.

Comment: Members commented that some people did not understand how a Council was run and wondered whether the City of Lincoln Council was missing a trick.

Question: Members asked how people who did not speak English as a first language were helped/dealt with. Some foreigners did not understand what elections they were able to vote in.

Response: Documentation could be issued in different languages if needed and help was available on the phone.

Question: Members asked if the councillor profiles could be updated with new pictures to help raise the profiles of councillors.

RESOLVED that:

1. The matter of raising councillor profiles be reported to Ethics and Engagement Committee.
2. The content of the report be noted.

59. Work Programme for 2018-19 - Update

Clare Stait, Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the draft work programme for 2018/19 as detailed at Appendix A of her report
- b. advised that the work programme for the Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; the work programme was then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with the Performance Scrutiny Committee and its Chair
- c. reported that items had been scheduled in accordance with the existing work programme and officers' guidance regarding the meetings at which the most up-to-date information could be reported to the committee; the work programme also included the list of portfolio holders under scrutiny
- d. requested any relevant comments or changes to the proposed work programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.