

Present: Councillors Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*), Bob Bushell, Paul Gowen, Jackie Kirk and Pat Vaughan

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Andy Kerry

Also in Attendance: Debbie Rousseau, Caroline Coyle-Fox and Sheila Watkinson

13. Confirmation of Minutes - 14 August 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2017 be confirmed.

14. Matters Arising

The Chair referred to minute number 11 regarding members concerns over properties being left in a poor state of repair. He asked if a list of the types of works carried out on void properties had been circulated to Members?

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration gave an overview of the current voids turnaround times and advised that a sample list of void property repairs for October could be circulated to the committee following the meeting.

15. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

16. LTP Matters (Verbal Report)

The Chair advised that Eric Jenkinson the Chair of the LTP had recently resigned and a new Chair would be appointed at the next LTP meeting on Wednesday.

The Committee expressed their thanks to Eric Jenkinson for his work and contribution to the committee.

17. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 - 2017/18

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration

- a. presented the end of quarter report on Performance for the second quarter of the year 2017/18 (July 2017 to September 2017)
- b. advised that of the 23 measures 11 were on or exceeding targets for the year and 12 had not met the targets set.
- c. referred to paragraph 4 of the report and highlighted the areas where there had been overall improvement including:
 - Percentage of all emergency repairs carried out within time limits
 - Tenant satisfaction with repairs
 - Percentage of non-decent homes
 - Percentage of ASB cases closed that were resolved

d. further highlighted areas that had not achieved their target and explained the reason for this:

- Rent arrears
- Average re-let period
- Percentage of offers accepted first time
- Complaints

e. invited committees questions and comments

Question – How has the introduction of Universal Credit impacted on rent arrears?

Response – Currently only single people with new claims received Universal Credit. The present timescales for all new claimants going on to Universal Credit was April 2018 although this could be delayed.

Comment – The Government would be reviewing Universal Credit and looking at paying rents directly to landlords, if this was changed, it would have an impact on rent arrears.

Response – Since commencing the pilot scheme 7 years ago, there had been a lot of lobbying of the government to pay rents directly to landlords rather than to the claimant, the Government said that they would look at it.

Question – How many void properties were there at the moment?

Response – There would usually be around 30-40 void properties per month.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

18. Housing Revenue Account Final Out Turn 2016/17

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration,

- a. presented the 2016/17 outturn on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- b. advised that the net revenue budget was set as a surplus of £83,140 resulting in general balances at year end of £1,087,879.
- c. advised that the final financial outturn was actually an overall variance of £610 deficit against the year-end revised budget resulting in an actual surplus of £82,531, giving a year-end balance of £1,086,269.
- d. Referred to paragraph 3.1 of the report and summarised the key variances
- e. advised that Social Housing Discount Rates were raised from 34% to 42% resulting in revaluation of impairments and a capital adjust of the equivalent amount £45,420m.
- f. referred to Appendix B of the report and advised that Depreciation (K) showed a revised budget depreciation of £10,818m and then the annual revaluation increased the outturn to £11,070m therefore results in a non-cash capital adjustment £252k and this variance was transferred to the Housing Improvement Plan (HIP).

The Chair asked if the figures could be presented in an alternative way to show a comparison year on year?

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration suggested that in future the figures be presented as a comparison of previous years in 2 areas, spend on repairs and spend on supervision.

Members referred to Appendix C of the report and asked how the £1.5 million in reserves would be used?

Bob Ledger responded that it would contribute to the Western Growth Corridor.

RESOLVED that

1. the final outturn of the HRA in 2016/17 be noted.
2. that in future the report be presented as a year on year comparison of the following 2 areas:
 - Spend on Repairs
 - Spend on Supervision

19. Housing Investment Programme 2016/17

Kev Bowering, Investment Manager

- a. presented a report to provide an update on the Housing Investment Programme for the 2016/17.
- b. gave an overview of the background to the report as detailed at paragraph 2 and advised that a major review of the Housing Business Plan during the financial year resulted in a decrease to the budgeted planned expenditure for 2016/17 to £21,247,555.
- c. advised that the final spend on the programme as at 31 March 2017 was £11,433,966 which equated to 94% of the approved programme.
- d. referred to the table at paragraph 4 of the report and summarised the elemental performance as at 31 March 2017 compared to the estimated programme for the 2016/17 financial year.
- e. advised that development sites were purchased on the Moorlands, Allenby Close and Rookery Lane.
- f. further advised that initial feasibility works had been undertaken on various sites as the Council's new build programme gathered momentum.
- g. invited members question and comments.

Question – Why was the final spend on the Housing Investment Programme £10,715,052 reduced from the original amount of £21,247,555?

Response - The budget was carried over to 2017/18 for land acquisition and the building programme.

Question – Would more land be purchased this year?

Response – Yes as part of the new build programme.

Question – Would more staff be needed to manage an increase in housing stock?

Response – There would be no increase in the number of staff to manage the additional houses.

Question – Referred to Appendix A of the report and asked why there was a considerable difference between the approved budget for kitchen improvements and the actual spend?

Response – When kitchens were inspected some were found to be in better condition than expected and some tenants did not want the work being done therefore there was less money spent, the money would be allocated elsewhere.

Question – Asked for an update on the Queen Elizabeth road development.

Response – There were several stages to the development, Executive had made a decision in principal, the next stage would be to submit planning permission, if the planning permission was agreed the land would be bought and then a timescale and spend profile would be produced.

Question – Referred to Uffington Avenue and asked what works had been undertaken at this address?

Response – It was for aids and adaptations as the property, an extension had been built due to medical reasons.

RESOLVED that the final outturn of the capital programme in 2016/17 be noted.

20. Post Implementation Review of St Botolphs Court Modernisation Project

Kevin Bowring, Housing Investment Manager,

- a. presented a post implementation review of the St Botolphs Court modernisation project.
- b. advised that the project was completed in March 2017 and with a budget underspend of £16,027 on the amended budget £1,234,050.
- c. gave an overview of the work carried out at St Botolphs Court as detailed at paragraph 3 of the report.
- d. referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report and gave an overview of issues that had caused unforeseen delays and revised timescales had to be issued for completion of the project.
- e. highlighted the outcomes that were achieved from the delivery of the project as detailed at paragraph 4.3 of the report.
- f. explained the lessons learned following the delivery of the project as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report.
- g. advised that following completion of the work a tenant satisfaction survey was distributed to collect tenant feedback to identify any improvements that could be made to project delivery in the future.
- h. highlighted the results of the survey as detailed at paragraph 4.5 of the report.

The committee considered the contents of the report and commented on how well the project had been completed overall.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

21. Supported Housing Update (Verbal Report)

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration

- a. gave a verbal update on the progress of proposed changes to supported housing.
- b. advised that 7 meetings would be held at the sheltered housing schemes across the city to seek the views of the residents.
- c. advised that the next phase of the process would be to send out a newsletter to residents explaining the Council's findings following the meetings.
- d. explained that the third phase would be to send a questionnaire to all of the residents in sheltered housing.
- e. advised that formal consultation with staff would be undertaken in the New Year once a proposal had been developed.
- f. invited committee's questions and comments.

Comment – A review of the service was welcomed, there had been improvements in technology since the service was introduced and the changes would provide a better service.

Question – Have ward councillors been invited to attend the meetings?

Response – Members had not formally been invited to attend the meeting but were welcome to attend.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

22. Work Programme Update 2017/18

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the work programme for the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee for 2017/18 as detailed at Appendix A of the report.
- b. advised that this was an opportunity for the committee to suggest other items to be included within the work programme.

Members of the committee asked for a report outlining the roles and responsibilities of Estate Officers to be added to the work programme.

Members asked when the New Build Company would be brought to committee?

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration advised that the report would be presented to Policy Scrutiny Committee on 20th November and Executive on 15th December 2017.

RESOLVED that:

1. the work programme be noted.
2. a report outlining the roles and responsibilities of Estate Officers be scheduled into the work programme.