

**Present:** Councillor Gary Hewson (*in the Chair*),  
Councillor Tony Speakman, Councillor Thomas Dyer,  
Councillor Ronald Hills, Councillor Helena Mair,  
Councillor Liz Maxwell, Councillor Pat Vaughan,  
Councillor Loraine Woolley and Councillor Paul Gowen

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Lucinda Preston

**57. Confirmation of Minutes - 23 November 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017 be confirmed.

**58. Change to order of Business**

RESOLVED that item number 7 on the agenda in respect of Christmas Market Outturn 2017 be considered as the last item of the evening as a Section B restricted item.

**59. To Receive Minutes of Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee - 6 November 2017**

The minutes of the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee meeting held on 6 November 2017 were received.

**60. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Liz Maxwell declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Report by Councillor P West: Portfolio Holder for Housing'. Reason: She was a landlord of property in the city, should any pertinent issues be discussed under this item she would withdraw from the room at that stage. No such discussion took place, therefore she remained in the meeting.

Councillor Helena Mair declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Central Market Review'. Reason: Her husband worked as a local architect and was involved in the Transport Hub Scheme and the Central Market refurbishment. In the event that any discussion on these matters took place during the course of the meeting she would withdraw from the room at that stage.

She left the room during the discussion of the Central Market Review.

Councillor Liz Maxwell declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest with regard to the agenda item titled 'Vision 2020 - Quality Housing Progress Report'. Reason: She was a landlord of property in the city, Reason: She was a landlord of property in the city, should any pertinent issues be discussed under this item she would withdraw from the room at that stage.

No such discussion took place, therefore she remained in the meeting.

**61. Performance Report - Housing Repairs Service**

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration:

- a. presented a report to update the committee on the financial and performance position of the Housing Repairs Service (HRS) at the end of the 2016/17 financial year
- b. highlighted that there continued to be a strong commitment to improving the quality and efficiency of the service and that this was a key aim in the 2017/18 financial year
- c. requested feedback from members on the content of the report.

Members discussed the content of report, made comments, raised questions and received relevant responses from officers as follows:

**Comment:** Members thanked the Director of Housing and his team for the contents of an excellent report.

**Response:** There had been difficult times but the hard work was now bringing positive results.

**Question:** How was there an underspend in sub-contractors without an overspend in-house?

**Response:** The team had been more efficient than in previous years, more money had been spent on supplies with an internal store being brought back in house. Repairs were completed in a timelier manner.

**Question:** There was a significant variance in the supplies and services budget/actuals – was there a reason for this?

**Response:** The suppliers were providing stores at Hamilton House and all the vans had basic stocks on board which were regularly replenished. When a certain part was needed for a job, the repairs team now stayed at the job while the part was sourced and brought out to them. This was more satisfying to the resident and increased efficiency resulting in better value for money.

**Question:** The efficiencies were very welcome and performance in the majority had improved. Would there be a lower charge for repairs next year?

**Response:** The number of repairs remained at a constant level year on year. Productivity had increased as staff were working smarter. However a trend would like to be seen before repair costs could go down and this could be a matter of years.

Members thanked officers for the concise report along with thanks to the housing repairs service for their achievements recorded in the report.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

**62. Portfolio Holder under Scrutiny**  
**63. Portfolio Performance Overview: Housing**

Pat Jukes, Corporate Policy Business Manager:

- a. presented a portfolio performance overview of Housing covering the following main areas:
  - The city view: a contextual look at relevant information from the Lincoln Housing Market Report

- Performance measures covered in the basket of strategic measures
- The Lincoln Local Area Dashboard

b. members were asked for their comments and questions on the content of the presentation.

Members discussed the presentation in further detail and asked the following questions:

**Question:** Did we know how many empty properties were in the city and how many were second homes?

**Response:** This information was not to hand at the moment, however, the figures would be sought from the Council Tax section and sent out to members under separate cover.

**Question:** A member of the Committee knew of a house that had been empty for 20 years but there was furniture in the property and the owner rented a property around the corner from the empty one. What was happening with empty properties?

**Response:** The empty homes strategy was with CMT and this might assist with these issues.

RESOLVED that:

1. The following information be provided to members under separate cover:
  - The number of privately owned empty homes in the City
2. The contents of the report be noted.

#### **64. Report by Councillor P West: Portfolio Holder for Housing**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Pete West:

- a) presented his report regarding activity and achievements within his portfolio
- b) reported on several achievements of note during the year as follows:
  - Accreditation for the Anti-Social Behaviour Team in Tenancy Services
  - In co-operation with Waterloo Housing the Council were delivering 139 houses as Council properties with 71 for the housing association
  - The landlord accreditation scheme was now up and running
  - The rogue landlord initiative was now staffed and to date there had been one very successful prosecution with others ongoing within the system
- c) reported on improved performance in relation to rent arrears, void properties and repairs in the city
- d) commended officers throughout the housing department for their efficient work throughout the year

- e) stated that this would be the last report from him and took this opportunity to thank all officers past and present for their support and advice over the years.

Members thanked Councillor West for his hard work and commitment over the time he had been Portfolio Holder.

**Comment:** The Central Heating Scheme had not been publicised over all the wards but seemed to be confined to the usual 3 wards.

**Response:** There was a need to commit to areas where there was thought to be poverty deprivation.

**Comment:** This was not good enough - there were needs in all areas and should not be bound by geography but by need.

**Response:** It was agreed that there was a requirement for assistance in all areas however this was a pilot scheme with only £200k to spend. This amount would only cover between 40 – 45 properties and the Council did not want to raise expectations and then not be able to deliver. As it was a pilot scheme this would be monitored carefully with an aspiration to grow the scheme and should there be no take up then the offer would be opened up to other areas.

**Question:** The Committee had been waiting a long time for a report on Homelessness, how many people were on the homelessness register and was any progress being made on this issue?

**Response:** The section had suffered staff vacancies and there were 3 other significant reasons for the report being delayed. These were as follows:

- Replacement of the IT system with a market product rather than a bespoke one, along with issues with the supplier.
- Policy changes – Allocation policy
- Preparation for the Homelessness Act coming in during April 2018.

The report was now scheduled for June as it would contain more meaningful targets and take into account any changes brought about by the implementation of the Homelessness Act. The Council was endeavouring to work closely with partners to achieve a more joined up approach.

**Question:** Did officers know what impact Universal Credit would have on homelessness?

**Response:** This was a challenge and the effects were not known at the moment. However a considerable amount of work had been going on in the background in preparation for this time. An increase in rent arrears was expected. The Council considered eviction as a very last resort when all other avenues of help had been exhausted and a structured tenant support team would be available to help residents.

RESOLVED that the content of the Portfolio Performance Overview of Housing be noted.

## **65. Central Market Review**

*(Councillor Mair left the room during the discussion of this item, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the matter to be discussed.)*

Kate Ellis, Director of Major Developments

- a. presented a report at the request of Performance Scrutiny Committee to provide members with an update on the current position with regards to the Central Market
- b. advised that substantial construction work had taken place in the Sincil Street area for the Transport Hub and redevelopment by the Lincolnshire Co-operative Society in the Cornhill Quarter
- c. confirmed that a reduced income target for 2017/18, was expected to be met following additional stall lettings in City Square with the potential of a small surplus to offset the increased expenditure incurred as a result of a range of activity to support market traders and businesses in the area during the construction works on the Hub, as detailed at paragraph 4.3 of the report
- d. stated that:
  - Out of 71 interior stalls, 61 were let.
  - The outside area was more problematic and monthly meetings were held with the traders and Lincoln BIG. Market activity and event activity was discussed at these meetings and it was agreed that nationally indoor markets tended to be at the higher end of food and drink suppliers and intended to attract tourists.
  - Traditional traders were focused outside.
  - Market towns found it hard to cope with the larger supermarkets and the Lidl/Aldi groups
- e. explained that 2018/19 would be the year in which the retail assessment, the outcome from the BIG review and the options for the market within that would be explored and funding options investigated
- f. concluded by asking members for comments or questions.

The Committee thanked the Director of Major Developments for the report and proceeded to ask the following questions:

**Question:** With regards to the Market Charter was it known what the rights and privileges were? The market currently seems to be unpopular with traders and the public.

**Response:** As there has been a considerable amount of construction and disruption it was understood that traders and the public were not happy with the situation. However now that the bus station and car park were open hopefully trade would increase in the market and Cornhill area. With regards to the Market Charter as this was quite complicated legal advice always had to be sought. The charter incorporated the showground and an area of 6.25 miles from the market.

**Question:** At the monthly meetings did all the stallholders attend or just representatives? Were the fruit and vegetable stalls a high priority as they were high priority for members of the public?

**Response:** The meetings were facilitated by Lincoln BIG who were currently undergoing a review. The stallholder group had encountered issues over the years however they were now coming together to form a committee. Fruit and vegetable stalls were better accommodated outside and semi-permanent structures were more beneficial. A solution was being sought in terms of Heritage

Conservation but semi-permanent constructions were costly. Continued discussions would take place with Lincoln BIG and the stallholders and an agreement on a single, co-ordinated and joined up approach to the markets offer and its delivery was still required in line with the Council's jointly agreed strategy.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and comments from members be noted.

**66. Vision 2020 - Quality Housing Progress Report**

*(Councillor Helena Mair re-joined the meeting at this stage.)*

Bob Ledger, Director of Housing and Regeneration:

- a. presented a report which focused on the progress made towards delivering the quality housing priority
- b. identified that there were 20 projects in year one programme for delivering quality housing and of these 5 had been completed, 2 projects were delayed and the remaining 13 were on track for delivery
- c. explained that even though this was the first year of Vision 2020 there were some notable successes already which included:
  - Extension of the Rogue Landlord Scheme for a further 2 years
  - A minimum standard for affordable housing was introduced
  - A £0.99 million grant from Homes England secured for 33 shared ownership units
  - Building has commenced for over 200 affordable units
  - A £3.33 million grant from Homes England secured to build De Wint Court which would provide 70 extra care units.
- d. advised of and explained the emerging Performance Indicators at Appendix C of the report and asked for Members comments and questions.

Members discussed the report in further detail, making observations and asking questions as follows:

**Question:** The £0.99 million grant for 33 properties were these going to be shoeboxes or flats?

**Response:** Neither, they were going to be quality houses.

**Question:** With regards to Lytton Street would these properties be coming back to the Council?

**Response:** The intention was that the properties should come back to the Council but at that point in the exercise procurement rules would have to be adhered to.

**Comment:** It would be useful to show as an objective the target of 50 houses per year.

**Response:** This comment was noted.

**Question:** At page 66, Appendix B of the agenda papers it stated that since December 2017 594 properties had been inspected under the Rogue Landlord Scheme. Was this figure correct?

**Response:** The officer would investigate this matter further and respond to members after the meeting under separate cover.

**Question:** On page 67 of the agenda papers what did the acronym SAP stand for?

**Response:** The officer would investigate this further and respond to members under separate cover.

**Question:** Why was homelessness recorded as being complete on the report?

**Response:** The completed statement refers to the scoping out of homelessness prevention and a private sector housing partnership which was the original piece of work. It was the scoping out that had been completed.

**Question:** Members were still very concerned about empty properties, could officers provide more information on this issue?

**Response:** Part of addressing this issue was included in the empty homes strategy which would be presented to Policy Scrutiny in March or April 2018. Capital money was required to be able to enforce compulsory purchase orders and very often the properties were empty for very good, complex reasons. First and foremost it had to be understood why the properties were empty. The processes for compulsory purchase orders were lengthy, slow and bureaucratic due to legislation.

Members thanked officers for the report and their comments and responses and emphasised the importance of information being provided in an understandable manner.

RESOLVED that:

1. The following information be provided to members under separate cover:
  - The number of properties inspected under the Rogue Landlords Scheme since December 2017
  - The definition of the acronym SAP used within the report.
2. The contents of the report be noted and that comments be referred to Executive for information.

**67. Performance Scrutiny Work Programme 2017 -18**

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a. presented the draft work programme for 2017/18 as detailed at Appendix A of the report
- b. advised that the work programme for Performance Scrutiny Committee was put forward annually for approval by Council; then regularly updated throughout the year in consultation with 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 2017/18
- e. agreed that any deferred items for the following year would be kept on the current work programme to ensure that this item was not overlooked.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2017/18 as detailed at Appendix A to the report be noted.

**68. Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because it was likely that if members of the public were present there would be a disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**69. Christmas Market Outturn 2017- Update**

Simon Colburn, Assistant Director Health and Environmental Services gave a verbal update on the Christmas Market Financial Outturn for 2017.

Members discussed and commented on the contents of his verbal report.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.