



## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20th JUNE 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Cook (Chair), Councillors C Bain, L Clarke, R Claymore, G Coates, S Doyle, D Maycock and B Price

**CABINET** Councillors P Turner, T Jay and S Smith

The following officers were present: Anica Goodwin (Executive Director Organisation), Rob Barnes (Executive Director Communities), Paul Weston (Assistant Director Assets), Leanne Costello (Democratic and Executive Support Officer), Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager) and Tracey Smith (Democratic Services Assistant)

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor M Bailey.

### **2 APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE-CHAIR**

Resolved that Councillor D Maycock was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

*(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor C Bain)*

### **3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the two previous meetings held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were approved as a correct record.

*(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor B Price)*

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

## **5 CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair had nothing to update

## **6 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair reported that the recommendation to wind up Solway (Tamworth) Limited to Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> April was not agreed but it was agreed to place it in dormancy to release associated savings.

## **7 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET / COUNCIL**

None

## **8 QUARTER FOUR 2022/23 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Report of the Leader of the Council on the Quarter Four 2022/23 Performance Report to provide the Committee with an overview of Council performance, risk and financial health-check towards achieving the strategic projects detailed within the Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The information contained within the report covered performance for the final quarter of the financial year (January to March 2023). Cabinet will consider the report on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report

The Committee sought clarification in the following areas;

- Marmion House – any further update after being unsuccessful with the Levelling Up Funding. It was confirmed that the council is still looking to dispose of Marmion house. Work taking place around the Mast on the roof, with more details to follow later in the year.
- Update on garage sites – work still ongoing but on track to come back to committee. Planning issues now resolved.
- Completion of Boundary Review. - TBC is expecting the Local Government Boundary Commission to make contact anytime from September onward regarding the electoral review of the Borough
- Is there a reason that Universal Credit claims have gone down for Private sector but up for council tenants. -  
Graph 1 is total claimants in Tamworth (that's all people. This is stats provided by the Job Centre e.g. Council Tenants, owner occupiers, non-dependants living in households of which they are not responsible for the bill and private tenants).  
Graph 2 as we know is Council Tenants  
We don't have individual figures for Private Tenants

- Is there a reason for the drop in Housing Discretionary Payments - This is a reflection of the reduction in DHP grant paid by the Government - £138k received in 2021/22 and £98k received in 2022/23

RESOLVED That Corporate Scrutiny Committee endorsed the contents of the report.

*(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor D Maycock)*

## 9 HOUSING REPAIRS PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Report of the Assistant Director, Assets on the Housing Repairs Performance Update to provide an update on the housing repairs performance statistics.

Assistant Director – Assets gave update on the following:

- On average the council undertakes a little under 17,000 jobs per annum, this excludes any works of a planned nature.
- Highlighted the void turnaround due to a number of high costs voids in the last few years, those under 3k are turned around within 16 days.
- Out of the complaints recorded 10 were service requests (Outside of area – some tenant responsibility). 12 were service failures

Portfolio Holder Councillor S Smith highlighted

- The move from schedule rates to price per property allows contractor to be able to deal with more than one repair on each visit.
- Encouraged members to scrutinise
- Invited members along to visit the team with the Portfolio Holder.

Members sought clarity on the following:

- Following from response to residents survey's figures show 69% repairs are right first time so 835 were not right first time - AD confirmed these figures are not a performance statistic but tenant perception figures from customer satisfaction survey's by the repairs team. Customers perception is important but there will always be a time when multiple agents will have to visit to complete works. The reports the indicator with our contractor is that they work at 83% first item fix. Acknowledged that there would be some service failures. Information for KPI's comes out of the shared repair system.
- Further clarification over data was sought. Councillors felt that data does not represent the complaints that Ward Councillors receive. Executive Director – Communities confirmed that a review is underway by the Assistant Director – People to bring together all the feedback that is received from members via a single email address which will allow us to use that as the primary source of data so we have a fuller view about the what feedback we are receiving.
- Issues around damp and mould were raised and clarification sought on the monitoring equipment and how this can be implemented. AD confirmed

that the equipment is used where the cause of damp cannot be diagnosed and tenants cannot request this equipment.

The Chair confirmed that he would discuss the report with Officers and the item be put on the agenda for the next meeting to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023

The following motion was moved

RESOLVED That the committee

Ask Cabinet that all avenues of complaints are fed in through the Tell Us process.

*(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor D Maycock)*

## 10 LEASEHOLD SERVICE CHARGES

Report of the Assistant Director, Assets on Leasehold Service Charges to provide an update on the current status of Leasehold Service charges following previous discussions at Committee.

AD Assets provided an update on the following:

- Work is planned through Wates and no invoices have been issues
- Confirmed legal process as been followed and stage 3 notices have been issued (to see if works are required)
- Noted that not all properties are sold by Tamworth Borough Council, some are onward sales and the lease information would be picked up in conveyancing process.

Chair detailed the following recommendations that were taken to Cabinet on 23/02/2023

RESOLVED: That Cabinet

1. Agreed to a one-off look for this piece of work, with an independent assessor to assess if the costs are correct

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)*

2. Agreed that the Portfolio Holder would consider the implications of assessing all repairs in advance of leaseholders being asked to contribute and bring the report back to the next available Cabinet meeting.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by*

*Councillor S Doyle)*

3. Review the council's communications when residents buy a council house, including what responsibilities and obligations are on the owner occupier.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

4. Review communications and include the information from the whole capital programme in the communications.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

5. Referred back to Corporate Scrutiny that the Committee look at the process for requesting at least two face to face drop ins with residents before any work commences and Scrutiny should consider whether this is for all works or works over a certain monetary threshold.

**This recommendation was not moved or seconded**

6. Agreed that if any of the 44 Leaseholders roofs haven't been assessed they will be assessed immediately.

*(Moved by S Doyle and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

7. Agreed that the affected 44 leaseholders would not be faced with increased costs as a result of the delay in works being commenced.

*(Moved by Councillor A Farrell and seconded by Councillor J Oates)*

The following motion was moved:

**RESOLVED** That this entire issue is referred to full council for a debate and make a decision how we are going to treat these vulnerable residents.

*(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor R Claymore)*

The Executive Director – Communities clarified that the recommendations above had been looked at and information was provided to the PH at the time.

The Portfolio Holder Councillor Smith updated it is important that the leaseholders are all heard

The effect its going to have on the HRA account, the potential preventing the sale of properties for those that want to sell their properties are being held back by the delay and the delay could be increasing the costs for leaseholders and or tenants. It is important that this is heavily scrutinised, its important it is debated.

Members sought clarity on the following

- No figures included in the report the report to full council needs to have full list of costs.
- Are there any residents who potentially do want to sell at the moment. Officers are aware of one leaseholder who is looking to sell.
- Causing stress to residents, could the company who we are using attend the Leaseholders meetings to explain the difference between local quotes and the difference of the quote of £36,000. Chair will request information but there may be some commercial issues in providing this.
- Would this have an impact on the Housing Revenue Account. The Executive Director – Communities - no information in the report it would depend on if we were making an exemption for this work or a complete policy change.
- Members reiterated that communication is at the heart of it and the committee had still not seen copies of the letters that were sent to leaseholders, the letters need plain English documents so they see what they are taking on. The humanity can get lost in the legal process.

## **11 WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

No Updates

## **12 FORWARD PLAN**

Agreed to discuss outside the meeting.

## **13 CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN & ACTION LOG**

Housing Repairs Performance Update to be included on the agenda for 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023

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Chair