



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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HOUSING COMMITTEE

18 October 2022

7.00 - 8.45 pm

Council Chamber

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Mattie Ross (Chair)

Councillor Paula Baker
Councillor Katrina Davis
Councillor Colin Fryer
Councillor Nicholas Housden
Councillor Laurie Davies

*= Absent

Councillor Lucas Schoemaker (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Steve Hynd
Councillor Christopher Jockel
Councillor Jenny Miles
Councillor Loraine Patrick

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Officers in Attendance

Strategic Director of Communities
Interim Head of Housing Services
Democratic Services & Elections Officer

Principal Accountant
Community Health & Wellbeing Manager

HC.016 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Laurie Davies.

HC.017 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

HC.018 Public Question Time

There were none.

HC.019 Appointment of Performance Monitor

A nomination for Laurie Davies was withdrawn due to the change of Committee Membership which was due to be approved at the Full Council meeting on the 20 October 2022.

HC.020 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 1

The Principal Accountant introduced the report and explained that it had been postponed from the previous meeting due to the passing of Her Majesty, The Queen, therefore the information was a little out dated. He then highlighted the significant variances of the report which included:

General fund revenue position

- There was an overall Underspend of 162k which was summarised in table 1 on page 4 of the reports pack.

General Fund Capital Programme

- This was summarised in table 2 on page 5 of the reports pack.
- Green Homes LADS Park Homes had an overspend of £90k due to slippage as part of the deadline extension.
- Warm Homes had an overspend of £40k, due to slippage costs.
- Warm Homes – Low Carbon Initiatives had a pressure of £1,000k due to becoming active after the last round of budget setting. It would be realigned throughout the next stage of the budget setting.

Housing Revenue Account Budget

- Showed an overspend of £269k which was summarised in table 3 on page 6 of the reports pack.
- There were still many uncertainties which surrounded inflation and it was predicted that costs would rise by more than what was anticipated within the budget.
- Total Income showed a loss of £173k due to high number of void properties. This number had been reduced from 164 at the start of 2021 to an updated figure of 33 properties.
- Supervision and Management had an underspend of £201k due to a number of vacant posts within the Council.
- Repairs and Maintenance had an overspend of £218k due to the use of contractors to cover vacant posts and additional slippage costs as explained in 5.6 of the reports pack.
- Independent Living Modernisation had an overspend of £75k due to Council tax charges.
- The Council were expecting a rise in salaries due to the anticipated pay award and a rise in utilities and materials.

HRA Capital Programme

- £3.5m pressure showed in table 5 on page 9 of the reports pack.
- Decarbonisation Project showed a pressure of £2,742k.
- New build and Regeneration had an £840k overspend.

It was agreed to get back to Councillor Green with the following information:

- Who would be covering the overspend of £40k on item 4.4 due to slippage costs from the agent.
- Were the remaining £33k of additional costs identified in item 5.6 spent on subcontractors.
- How many of Stroud District Council's independent schemes still had the district heating system described in item 5.9.

The Interim Head of Housing gave the following answers in response to questions asked:

- Due to the volume of repair requests the Council received, they were prioritised into 3 levels. Lower priority repairs would be required to wait until they could be scheduled around the higher priority repairs and the materials could be sourced.

Councillor Hynd commended that the void properties had been reduced to 33 and were back to pre-covid levels.

It was agreed to circulate figures surrounding the effect of the void properties on rental income.

In response to Councillor Miles, the Principal Accountant explained that the new round of budget setting was currently underway and would be reported to Members at the next meeting to show any financial adjustments made to any upcoming projects.

Councillor Housden questioned whether the overspend on repairs was financially sustainable and should the service be outsourced. The Operations Manager explained that the voids contracts used contractors to complete the repairs which was then managed in house by the Repairs Team.

Councillor Schoemaker proposed and Councillor Baker seconded.

Councillors Baker and Schoemaker commended the report and the team for the results.

Councillors debated the use of subcontractors in relation to the void repairs.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED To note the outturn forecast for the General Fund and HRA revenue budgets and the Capital Programmes for this Committee.

HC.021 Update on Housing Management System Procurement

The information sheet was circulated as part of the reports pack.

It was agreed to come back to Councillor Green with answers to the following questions:

- The quality score on page 12 showed to be below the initial ratio sought, would that still be acceptable.
- How much was the Council currently spending on the multiple different systems in comparison to the new system and was the cost of the new system within budget.

HC.022 Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022-2025

The Community Health and Wellbeing Manager introduced the report and advised the plan had been produced to collate the Health and Wellbeing aspects contained within the Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy, Housing Strategy, Physical Activity Plan and the Council Plan into one document. She continued and provided an overview of the 5 themes listed within the plan, which were:

- Community Resilience and Wellbeing
- Healthy, Affordable Homes
- Supporting Better Mental Health
- Encouraging Physical Activity
- Healthy Ageing

In response to Councillor Green, the Community Health and Wellbeing Manager explained that the reason that the Daily Mile was not referenced was because this, along with other work, was being covered by other providers. Stroud District Council (SDC) were focusing on the areas that were not covered by other providers.

Councillor Jockel proposed and Councillor Fryer seconded.

Councillors Fryer, Miles and Brine commended the report.

The Interim Head of Strategic Housing Services thanked the Community Health and Wellbeing Manager and gave a brief update on pet friendly accommodation which was aiming for completion in February 2023.

The Chair, Councillor Ross commended the report and expressed her gratitude that the Council still had its own housing stock.

The Community Health and Wellbeing Manager explained, in response to Councillor Miles, that it was an aim of SDC to work towards a network approach towards the youth services much like the community Hubs have with the older generation in the Independent Living Schemes.

The Strategic Director of Communities gave a brief update on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and explained that it required a multiagency approach in order to tackle which is what they were working towards.

Councillor Jockel commended the report and brought the committees attention to the key priorities that stuck out for them which were the Community Resilience and Wellbeing and the Healthy, Affordable Homes.

After being put to a vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED To adopt the Health & Wellbeing Plan 2022-25.

HC.023 Progress update on Key action plans (Cleaner Estates & Service Standards and tenant engagement)

A written report was circulated prior to the meeting and formed part of the reports pack.

The Interim Head of Housing explained that the satisfaction levels from the Survey of Tenants & Residents (STAR) survey were expected to have dropped across all social landlords, housing associations and local authorities.

Councillor Green raised concerns over the frequency of positions changing names and explained that it could be confusing to residents. The Interim Head of Housing agreed that they would be sticking to the term Housing Officer from then onwards and they were searching for a better term for the new Housing Hubs to avoid confusion with other Hubs in the district.

Ms Adams, the Tenant Representative, suggested Housing Community Hubs as an alternative name.

In response to Councillor Green, Ms Adams confirmed that there was a social media post from SDC regarding the survey.

Councillor Patrick commended the work completed in Oak Drive regarding the new bin stores and requested that Ubico be asked to always lock them due to fly-tipping. It was agreed for the Interim Head of Housing to take the comments back to Ubico.

HC.024 **Member / Officer Reports**a) Tenant Representatives

Ms Adams informed the committee that they had recently undertaken a walk around the Stonehouse estates with the Housing Officer which was very informative and gave them the opportunity to meet tenants. They hoped that this would be the first of many to come.

b) Performance Monitoring Q1

A written report was circulated prior to the meeting and forms part of the reports pack.

Councillor Green requested for any suggestions to be directed to them should there be anything which required a more detailed analysis.

The Chair and the Vice-Chair commended the report.

c) Retrofit / Carbon Reduction Task and Finish Group

Councillor Jockel explained that he had circulated an updated version of the report to the committee earlier that day. They further explained that the loss of the Head of Contract Services had created continuity challenges within the project but that an interim team had been continuing the work.

The Chair and Vice-Chair commended the report.

Councillor Hynd commended the report and the importance of the project in the current climate.

HC.025 **Work Programme**

It was agreed to get back to the Tenant Representative, Ms Adams, with further information on the tenant handbook.

The chair reminded members of the upcoming housing review panel which would be taking place on Wednesday 26 October 2022.

HC.026 **Members' Questions**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Chair