

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 30 JANUARY 2024

Present: Councillor S Dannheimer, Chair

Councillors: E Williamson
H Land
R D MacRae
J M Owen
A W G A Stockwell
C M Tideswell
S Webb
E Winfield
K Woodhead

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W Mee, H L Crosby and K Harlow

43 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R D MacRae declared an Other Registerable Interest as he was a member on the Stapleford Town Centre Board. Agenda item 4, minute number 45 refers. Therefore, he did not partake in the vote on this item.

44 **BUSINESS PLANS AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2024/25-2026/27-HOUSING**

The Committee considered proposals for business plans, detailed revenue budget estimates for 2024/25; capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27; and proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 in respect of the Council's priority areas.

Comments included the following:

- Delays caused by COVID-19 had affected the targets achieved in 2022/23 for New Council Houses built or acquired. During 2022/23, six properties had been acquired back into the Housing Stock. Further engagement was taking place with developers on the Fields Farm and Crematorium site to provide homes as part of the delivery. 200 new homes would be available across the Borough and former right to buy homes were being acquired from private landlords.
- The target for overall satisfaction with the service provided was set lower than 2023/24 due to most landlords experiencing a decline in satisfaction rates. The targets sets were higher than the House mark year end analysis based on UK wide peer group. The new targets were still aiming for top quartile performance.
- 118 households had been housed outside of the Borough in temporary accommodation of more than 7 days during 2022/23. This was due to delays in moving people on from their own temporary accommodation due to the lack of available ready to let properties. This delay had caused a bottle neck of

applicants being in bed and breakfast longer than anticipated. The target would be 0 for future years.

- Concern was raised with the targets set for relet times for General Needs and Independent living and if they were realistic going forward. Improvements had been made in the last 6 months and data analysis for quarter 3 and 4 had calculated the relet time to be 70 days on average with 123 properties relet for General Needs and 118 days calculated for Independent Living. With independent Living properties, there was a higher refusal rate due to applicants preferring bungalow style properties and difficulty in letting flats that were not on the ground floor due to the typical tenant having mobility concerns. This could result in the properties being void and ready to let for longer periods of time compared to General Needs properties.
- An explanation as to why the repairs and maintenance budget was lower than the previous year in the Housing General Fund Revenue Budget because there had been a reduction in the sub-contracting work and this had provided a more efficient and economical repairs and maintenance programme. There had been no reduction in repair activity.
- Changes to how services were provided within the homelessness service area was provided to the Committee to explain the decrease of £17k on employee costs.

RECOMMENDED that:

1. Cabinet approves the Housing Business Plan.

2. Cabinet recommends to Council that the following be approved:

- a) The detailed revenue budget estimates for 2024/25 (base).**
- b) The capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27**
- c) The fees and charges for 2024/25.**

45 BUSINESS PLANS AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2024/25-2026/27-BUSINESS GROWTH

Members considered the proposals for business plans, detailed revenue budget estimates for 2024/25; capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27; and proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 in respect of the Council's priority areas.

Comments including the following:

- The Kimberley Levelling up Programme had allocated projects that were already committed. The projects had been evaluated by Government and the Kimberley leisure Centre was not part of the bid. There was not enough resource to support writing a new bid. Currently there was over 7 different activities being delivered.
- No further funding would be budgeted from Broxtowe to the East Midlands Development Corporation. Current projects would be completed within the funds allocated.
- Stapleford Towns Deal Board had been given grants and additional funding from the UKSPF programme along with Kimberley Levelling Up Fund to support

business growth and occupancy rates within Town Centres. The scheme had been oversubscribed.

- Discussions were ongoing with the projects within the Kimberley Levelling Up Fund. Plans were to deliver a number of industrial units and work to deliver outcomes of the bid already committed.
- An update was provided to the Committee with the Neighbourhood Plans and with the 2 referendums taking place. Work was continuing with the Town and Parish Councils to develop and assist with progressing the Neighbourhood plans in the areas listed.
- A query was raised with the reduction in demand in car parks being used since the charges had been changed and would this affect the budget stated. The budget had been calculated to expect the reduction and was forecast to achieve the target after March 2024.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1. Cabinet approves the Business Growth Business Plan.**
- 2. Cabinet recommends to Council that the following be approved:**
 - a) The detailed revenue budget estimates for 2024/25 (base)**
 - b) The capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27**
 - c) The fees and charges for 2024/25**

Councillor RD MacRae left the meeting for this item and did not vote.

46 BUSINESS PLANS AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2024/25-2026/27-RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICE AREAS

Members considered proposals for business plans, detailed revenue budget estimates for 2024/25; capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27; and proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 in respect of the Council's priority areas.

Comments included the following:

- The target for working days lost due to sickness absence target was queried why this was set at 7.50 for 2023/24 and not lower and for the following years considering one local authority was 3.60. An explanation was given that Broxtowe was one of the lowest reported in the area and all sickness was monitored and had been lowered by 2 days since COVID-19.
- Active steps had been taken during 2023/24 to communicate with residents with the Corporate Plan consultation. Face to face consultations took place along with road shows and drop in sessions. Talks with the Civic Society was continuing and communications with resident involvement groups, Portfolio Holder meetings, bereavement group and climate change events were all leading an active way to communicate other than surveys.
- A suggestion to widen the social media platforms to engage with a younger generation was discussed to promote events and communicate information.

Twitter engagement had spiked during COVID-19. It was agreed to consider other social media platforms.

- Telephone abandonment was below the 10% target that was industry standard and recently had reached 4%. A total of 73,170 calls had been taken during 2022/23. The target for future years had been reduced as alternative online communication was being used. A comment to receive the Housing Repairs calls and abandonment data was suggested.
- The Council's performance for processing Benefit claims and changes to circumstances was in the upper quartile for the Country. The Department of Working Pensions had asked if the Council could support other Local Authorities to achieve the same success.
- Negotiations was going well with attracting a potential health facility to Beeston and the expected outturn for 2023/24 was 25%.

RECOMMENDED that:

- 1. Cabinet approves the Business Plans for the support service areas.**
- 2. Cabinet recommends to Council that the following be approved:**
 - a) The detailed revenue budget estimates for 2024/25 (base) including any revenue development submissions.**
 - b) The capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27**
 - c) The fees and charges for 2024/25**

47 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that the work programme was approved.