



## **CORPORATE SELECT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting: Monday, 5 February 2024 at 6.30 pm in a Virtual Meeting**

**Present:** Councillor C Payne (Chair)

Councillors P Bell, N Clarke, J Collins, O Cross, L Grooby, R McKeown, R Quinn, P Reddy, E Siddall and J Taylor

**In Attendance:** Councillor(s) A Barrow, A McKeown and K Sizeland

**24/38 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT**  
(Agenda Item )

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was being broadcast live to the internet via the Council's website and was capable of repeated viewing. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council. All were asked to keep to the speaking guidelines which were outlined. Any views expressed by any speaker in the meeting are the speaker's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of High Peak Borough Council.

**24/39 TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST ON ANY MATTERS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**  
(Agenda Item 2)

There were no disclosures of interest.

**24/40 ANY MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE UNDER THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE**  
(Agenda Item 3)

None.

**24/41 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
(Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Barrow's apologies for absence, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**24/42 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Agenda Item 5)

It was requested that an update on Glossop Halls be added to the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the above, the Select Committees Work Programmes be noted.

**24/43      QUARTER 3 FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND PROCUREMENT REPORT**  
(Agenda Item 6)

The Committee considered a report which provided information around the Council's overall performance and financial position for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> December ("Third Quarter 2023/24"). Detailed analysis was provided in the appendices to the report and the position was summarised at paragraph 3.3 of the report.

Reference was made to a number of service areas with projected significant overspends. In respect of AES waste, the projected overspend is due to a number of factors including a higher than budgeted pay award and increased contribution to the Derbyshire Pension Fund, significant inflation on vehicle insurance and vehicle parts and a large shortfall on recycling income due to the reduction in the value of recycle.

Consideration was also given to matters relating to the HRA, including the projected overspend and costs relating to voids, as well as the repairs service provided by Alliance Norse, further detail on which would be provided at the next meeting. In response to a specific query around fencing, members were referred to the conditions within the tenancy agreements which would be circulated.

The Springs was performing well, rent reviews were on-going and rent arrears would be pursued. It was noted that demand and void levels were good and that some tenants were seeking longer term contracts.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Third Quarter 2023/24 financial, procurement and performance position detailed in Appendices A, B and C and summarised at paragraph 3.3 of the covering report be noted;
2. That the Executive be recommended to approve the write-offs as set out in Appendix D as set out in Part 2 of the agenda.

**24/44      2024/25 BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2027/28**  
(Agenda Item 7)

The Committee considered the proposed Budget for 2024/25, updated Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28, Capital Strategy 2024/25, proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25 and Procurement Forward Plan 2024/25.

The Executive Councillor presented key elements within the report around the capital programmes, HRA, efficiency programme, financial forecast, funding and income generation, risks and the MTFP revenue position and 2024/25 budget setting. Specific reference was made to paragraph 3.5 of the report where it was reported that the 2024/25 local government finance settlement was another one-year settlement which maintains a level of uncertainty in the Plan and makes medium term financial planning more difficult.

Consideration was given to the use of the Council's assets and in response to comments made around some DCC assets, members were advised that discussions were ongoing with partners around any areas of opportunity.

In response to a query around efficiency savings, reference was made to the assets programme, whereby the use of inefficient assets is being reviewed. Efficiencies are also being generated by increasing income through measures including internal project management arrangements, for example. The level of contingency within the HRA was queried, to which members were advised that this was due to extreme demands on the HRA and to cover unexpected events and to provide better standards.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive be recommended to make the following **recommendations** to Council:

- Approves the General Fund Budget for 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix A (section 8).
- Approves the revised Medium-Term Financial Plan (2024/25 to 2027/28) as detailed in Appendix A, including the revised Capital Programme (attached at Annex A).
- Approves the Capital Strategy 2024/25 as set out in Appendix B.
- Approves the proposed Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix C.
- Approves the proposed Procurement Forward Plan for 2024/25, providing the Authority to procure based on procurement activity detailed in Appendix D.
- Approves a Band D Council Tax of £217.68 for 2024/25 (an increase of £6.32 or 2.99% from 2023/24).
- HRA charges as follows:
  - All dwellings rents to increase by 7.7%, increasing the average rent from £77.78 to £84.09 per week (average rent takes into account new tenancies let over the previous year where the

higher formula rent was charged. This gives an arithmetical increase of 8.01%)

- Garage rents to be increased by 5% from £8.26 to £8.68 average per week.
  - Other Charges including service charges to increase by a maximum of 5%.
  - Fuel charges at individual blocks have been reviewed and the 2024/25 charge is based on the previous years usage and estimated costs, charged on an individual scheme basis.
- Notes the Chief Finance Officer's view that the level of reserves are adequate for the Council, based on this budget and the circumstances in place at the time of preparing it (Appendix A Annex C).

## **24/45 COUNCIL TAX SECOND HOME AND EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUM** (Agenda Item 8)

The Committee considered the implementation of the premium for empty homes (that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for one year or more) from 1 April 2024 and to implement the premium for second homes (not those sold or main residences) from 1 April 2025. It was noted that government consultation was on-going in respect of exceptions in certain circumstances, which subject to the outcome of that consultation would also be applied.

In respect of Airbnbs, members were advised that the whole property would need to be used as an Airbnb to be subject to business rates. Work was on-going to identify homes used as holiday lets and members were encouraged to submit any local information direct. Collaborative work around enforcement was also on-going jointly between the Revenues Team and Environmental Health.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and the Executive be recommended to:

- a. Implement the premium of 100% for properties that have been empty for over one year (applied to properties over two years currently) from 1 April 2024;
- b. Implement the maximum premium of 100% for second homes from 1 April 2025 (this being the earliest that the new charge can apply, as legislation states that twelve months' notice is required to be given to existing owners of second homes); and
- c. Subject to the outcome of the government consultation around exceptions, delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to implement the Council's policy on premiums in line with statute, the Council's requirements and any guidance given by the Secretary of State.

## **24/46 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (Agenda Item 9)

The Committee considered a summary of the Alliance's Employee Survey, results, and action plan, which had been designed to understand and improve employee experience and improve how the Council delivers for local residents.

A number of measures have been put in place to support any staff, including who experience bullying or harassment from members of the public. Reference was also made to online advice available to councillors around dealing with bullying and harassment. Support networks have been established for staff, including the introduction of mental health first aiders. The policy for time off for dependents and caring responsibilities is to be reviewed. The potential for long service rewards is passed on to those who transferred from the Council through the TUPE arrangements for Council controlled companies.

RESOLVED:

That the outcomes from the Employee Survey as detailed in the report be noted.

**24/47      ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**  
(Agenda Item 10)

The Committee considered the annual health and safety report which provided an update to councillors on the key aspect of health and safety activity which occurred across the two Councils during the period from April 2022 to March 2023. The report also provided detail on training information, emerging risks and supporting statistical information.

With reference to the lone worker policy, this would be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Group where an enhanced level of protection will be rolled out for high risk staff.

Reference was made to a review of tree inspections undertaken by the Council's insurers which had resulted in upgraded software which would be further reviewed by the insurers in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the 2022/23 Annual Health and Safety report be noted.

**24/48      ANY QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER (MEMBER SERVICES TO BE ADVISED OF ANY QUESTIONS AT LEAST 4 DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING)**  
(Agenda Item 11)

None

**24/49      EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**  
(Agenda Item 12)

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as there may be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**24/50 APPLICATIONS FOR WRITE OFF OF NON-RECOVERABLE DEBTS**  
(Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED:

That the Executive be recommended to approve the write-offs as set out in the report.

The meeting concluded at 8.32 pm

**CHAIRMAN**