

Joint meeting of the Finance & Audit and Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Minutes of a joint meeting held on Tuesday 1 December 2015, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Ashford, Barrott, Boad, Mrs Cain, D'Arcy, Davison, Day, Edgington, Gifford, Heath, Illingworth, Mrs Knight, Mann, Margrave, Naimo, Quinney, Mrs Redford, Mrs Stevens and Thompson.

Also present: Councillors Cain, Coker, Gill, Mobbs and Phillips.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Butler and Rhead.

7. **Appointment of Chairman**

It was proposed and duly seconded that Councillor Barrott be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

Resolved that Councillor Barrott be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

8. **Substitutes**

Councillor Ashford substituted for Councillor Miss Grainger, Councillor Mrs Stevens substituted for Councillor Harrington, Councillor Quinney substituted for Councillor Parkins and Councillor Mrs Knight substituted for Councillor Quinney.

Councillor Cain was advised that because no prior notification had been given to Committee Services, he could not substitute for Councillor Butler.

9. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

10. **Future Delivery of Housing Aids and Adaptations Services (HEART)**

The Committee received a briefing from Housing and Property Services officers on the future delivery of Housing Aids and Adaptations Services (HEART).

The briefing covered:

- the background to the South Warwickshire Housing Assessment Team's (HAT) pilot project;
- an explanation of what HAT was;
- an update on HAT performance; and
- the next steps.

Members were informed of the types of adaptations being made to properties to help people with disabilities and what grant funding was available to provide these facilities. Means testing was required to obtain a Government grant, but adaptations to Council owned housing did not require means testing and adaptations to this housing stock was funded from the Housing Revenue Account from a budget of £920k.

It was noted that providing adaptations to help people with disabilities was a growing demand because of the increasing number of older people in the District, and the fact that advances in medical knowledge meant that more people with complex disabilities were surviving into adulthood. Members were advised of the rate by which growth in demand would increase. Increased spending would offset costs incurred in Social Care services by allowing people to live more independently and with dignity.

Officers explained how the service was being improved and that the objectives of the HAT pilot were:

- to improve performance;
- to increase resilience;
- to create a multi-skilled team;
- to create a broader caseworker role – capable of delivering straightforward applications from start to finish;
- to reduce end to end times; and
- to provide a more holistic service.

In response to questions, Members were advised that:

- when stair lifts were installed, there was a five year maintenance agreement, after which it was the homeowner's or tenant's responsibility to keep the equipment maintained;
- if properties were not suitable for adaptation, then residents might be offered more suitable accommodation, however, the Council had no authority to compel people to move. If the property was Council owned, then if the tenant agreed to move, the Council would then try to match the now vacant dwelling with someone whose needs were met by that vacant property, but this was not always possible.
- if the resident died after a stair lift had been installed, then ownership of the stair lift could return to the Council if it was within five years of installation; past that point, the stair lift was owned by Next of Kin; and
- residents who did not qualify for grant funding would be directed to other sources of help such as Age UK.

(The meeting ended at 6.51 pm)