

**REPORT TO:** SHAREHOLDER SUB COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 18 NOVEMBER 2021

**TITLE:** BEST VALUE REVIEW UPDATE

**LEAD OFFICER:** SIMON HILL, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE SUPPORT (01279) 446099

**CONTRIBUTING OFFICER:** REBECCA FARRANT, OPERATIONS MANAGER (01279) 446811

**RECOMMENDED that** the Sub Committee notes:

- A** The progress on the Best Value Review Action Plan.
- B** The BAU Action Plan progress to date.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. A Best Value Review of HT (Property and Environment) Ltd was completed in October 2019 and on 5 December 2019 Cabinet resolved that the current contract with HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd be extended for the maximum five year period provided for subject to completion of four pre-contract requirements, which were all completed by August 2020.
2. It was also resolved that the recommendations of the Best Value report be adopted as an action plan for the contract extension and that the 'Business as Usual' activities arising from the Review would be monitored for their completion by the Shareholder Sub Committee.

## **CONTRACT EXTENSION ACTION PLAN**

3. The Action Plan arising from recommendations made in the Best Value Review Outcomes report have been prioritised into a programme of short and long term projects, to be completely in its entirety by March 2023, this being the commencement of the agreed contract extension period.
4. The projects identified for completion in August 2020 are complete, with those related to the company's strategic financial approach having been subsumed into the company's operational processes for refreshing its Business Plan. Medium term activities are due for completion by December 2021 and work on these is in progress with three recommendations completed and twelve in progress. There are three activities which have not yet started, but these are interrelated tasks around procurement which are not onerous and HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd have provided assurance that these will be completed before the end of December 2021 deadline.

5. A scheduled audit was undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit team in July and August 2021 to review joint working arrangements between the Council and HTS. The final report is in the process of being finalised, but provides substantial assurance over the adequacy of mechanisms to ensure the recommendations of the Best Value Review action plan are implemented.
6. The current status of the BAU Action Plan can be found at Appendix A. All actions have been met as per stated deadlines with the exception of the customer feedback work. As previously reported this work commenced on schedule and a number of visits to work with other LATCs/similar organisations were planned to achieve benchmarking and peer review exercise. These could not take place due to the restrictions in place in relation to COVID-19 pandemic. Given the refocusing of Council and HTS' efforts on response and recovery, and similar responsibilities of peer organisations involved, it was agreed to put this work on hold for 6-12 months, however due to the additional national lockdown restrictions in early 2021 the work had to be suspended for a further period. Visits to other organisations are now scheduled for November 2021, these visits will inform decisions on any changes to the customer service metrics and support enhancement of customer access. Future progress of work in this area will continue to be monitored by the Shareholder under the Cabinet decision regarding the BAU Action Plan.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)**

As set out in the report.

**Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration**

### **Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)**

As set out in the report.

**Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance**

### **Housing**

As set out in the report.

**Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing**

### **Community Wellbeing**

As set out in the report.

**Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment**

### **Governance (Includes HR)**

As set out in the report.

**Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support**

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – BAU Action Plan (dated 20 October 2021)

## **Background Papers**

None.

## **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

BAU - Business as Usual

LATC - Local Authority Trading Company