

Commercial Revenue Committee

Draft Minutes

Monday 1 November 2021

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Max Schmid and Adam Connell

Officers: Emily Hill, Director of Finance; Sharon Lea, Strategic Director of Environment; and David Pearlman, Head of Commercial and Sales

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. DISSOLUTION OF LBHF JOINT VENTURES LIMITED (10812552)

Emily Hill gave a brief presentation outlining details about the dissolution of Joint Venture Limited. The company was established to provide ethical debt solutions to the council and other local authorities. The joint venture partner had made clear its intention to leave the partnership due to the unexpectedly difficult commercial market conditions. Members of the board had met in June 2021 to recommend that the company was struck from the company's register. It was recognised that this decision did not alter the council's policy on ethical debt collection and importantly, the council would continue to not use bailiffs for the collection of unpaid council tax and in other financial areas

such as housing benefit overpayment or former tenant arrears and recovery arrangements had been put in place to ethically support this in house. As the two main areas, these would be monitored and evaluated to ensure efficient provision.

Councillor Connell sought an assurance that individuals with an existing payment plan with the joint venture would be transferred to the in house provision. He also asked for further information about the process that the council would follow to continue with ethical debt collection. Emily Hill confirmed that there was a detailed handover plan in place to ensure that those on payment plans would transition smoothly to the new provision. The Tax Team had undertaken significant work to ensure that debt collection was ethical using text reminders and early notification, signposting support and advice, particularly during Covid. Communication and the agreement of payment plans ensured that people could maintain an affordable payment plan. The council's ethical approach supported those that qualified, and the council would also continue with a generous council tax support scheme.

RESOLVED

1. That Commercial Revenue Committee, acting as the shareholder, agreed to the formal commencement, by the directors, to the application to dissolve LBHF Joint Ventures Limited and its removal from the Companies Register through the completion of form DS01; and
2. That Commercial Revenue Committee, as the shareholder, agreed to the distribution of shareholder funds in LBHF Joint Ventures Limited, prior to dissolution and in proportion to the company's shareholding.

5. FUTURE DATES OF MEETINGS

To be confirmed.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm
Meeting ended: 6.38 pm

Chair

Contact officer: Bathsheba Mall
Committee Co-ordinator
Governance and Scrutiny
☎: 020 8753 5758 / 07776672816
E-mail: bathsheba.mall@lbhf.gov.uk