COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 31 July 2017
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Christine Corris (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Julian Lewis-Booth (Vice-Chair); Councillors Geoff Abell, Becky Crawford, Yvonne Guariento, Adrian Nottingham, Paul Porgess and Andy Sorton.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 3 July 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - FIRST UPDATE REPORT 2017/18

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the first update Portfolio Performance and Resource Report for the Communities and Housing Portfolio providing a summary of progress in delivering the portfolio priorities, reform programme and other key projects since the final update report, with a focus on the first quarter of the year (April to June 2017). The report also included out-turn performance and financial data for the Portfolio, along with an update on the portfolio savings programme.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to present the report and respond to councillors’ questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The Safer Stockport Partnership was currently working on a refreshed version of its Strategic Assessment which provided an overview of current community safety issues.
- It was proposed that the Scrutiny Committee should receive a presentation on the forthcoming draft strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour.
• With regard to the increase in reported incidents of anti-social behaviour it was not possible to identify whether this could be attributed to an actual increase in such incidents or improvements in the reporting and recording of anti-social behaviour.
• Representatives of Greater Manchester Police would be in attendance at future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee to provide further information and to answer members’ question in relation to the crime data provided within the report.
• In response to a question relating to the progress of the Highways Investment Programme, it was stated the Programme was currently working to the programmed timetable and was on target to achieve consequent reductions in insurance claims and to improve the overall condition of the highway network. It was stated that a report would be submitted to a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee before the end of the calendar year providing an overview of progress on the implementation of the Programme.
• Concern was expressed in relation to the proliferation of fly-posting in certain parts of the Borough by operators of waste removal businesses. It was further queried where any such waste collected was being disposed of in the light of the charges being advertised.
• A discussion took place in relation to underspend against the budget for the Disabled Facilities Grant. In response, it was stated that demand on the budget was increasing, however the underspend was the result of a significant increase in the amount of the grant from government.
• Councillors’ experience of anti-social behaviour would make a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of the anti-social behaviour policy.
• The work of the Council and Stockport Homes to reassure and support tenants and the effective communications following the Grenfell Tower fire was welcomed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. OPEN SPACE STUDY

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the Open Space Assessment which would provide an evaluation of the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space provision in the Borough; identify shortfalls in provision and recommend standards and effective mechanisms in order that appropriate provision was secured to meet future needs.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to present the report and respond to councillors’ questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

• It was noted that there were a number of identified deficiencies in current open space provision.
• It may not always be possible to meet identified open space deficiencies within the boundaries of each ward due to local constraints.
• The information secured through the Open Space Study will be used to inform the Local Development Plan.
• The value of and access to local areas of play within new residential developments was discussed.
RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. TOWN CENTRE LIVING

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposed approach to support an ambition to create a thriving sustainable town centre by creating the right conditions for Town Centre Living which included increasing residential development in Stockport Town Centre supported through the Council’s Brownfield First approach.

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to present the report and respond to councillors’ questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The Scrutiny Committee has previously given approval to undertaking a scrutiny review in relation to Town Centre Living which would guide and influence the formation of the overarching policy on town centre living.
- There were a number of buildings within the town centre which were underutilised and could be put to better use.
- It was important that those residents already living within the town centre had security of tenure.
- It was felt that there needed to be a definition was what was considered to be the town centre for the purposes of town centre living.
- The historic centre of Stockport needed to be preserved and enhanced.
- A way would need to be found of ensuring that residential and commercial uses could reasonably coexist in the development of a town centre living policy.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Democratic Services Manager submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee’s next meeting and any relevant Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.03 pm