

## **APPENDIX 8 – SCRUTINY COMMENTS**

### **(a) Children & Families Scrutiny Committee – 6 December 2017**

#### **Medium Term Financial Plan Proposals - Consultation and EIA Update**

Representatives of the Corporate Director for People submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) inviting the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the proposals contained in the Council's Inclusive Growth and Reform Programme as it related to the Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Members for Children & Young People and Education attended the meeting and answered questions in relation to the report.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- A number of Councillors expressed concern in respect to the proposals for Participation and Education (Apprenticeships) and that the proposed closure of the Apprenticeship Store would actually be counter-productive in the long term.
- Opportunities to look at how the Apprenticeship Service is run in the future and working in consultation with partners and external organisations.
- It was suggested that the savings associated with the proposed closure of the Apprenticeship Store and the mitigation measure proposed were should be reconsidered and alternatives investigated.
- Councillors discussed the effectiveness of all those services which contributed to getting a child "school ready." Start Well had been piloted in a number of Authorities throughout the country and had proved to be successful focusing on the most vulnerable families.
- In respect to Start Well it was imperative that assessments were really well co-ordinated and effective plans drawn up for interventions. Assessment was based on need.
- Concern was expressed at the potential negative impact on mental and emotional health needs for Looked After Children if they are implemented. It was also suggested that savings now would result in higher costs to the Council in the future.
- Councillors sought clarity on the work of the clinical psychologists and the social work mental health leads. They noted that work would be targeted and focussed around statutory duties based on locality areas.
- Councillors expressed concerns in respect to the proposals for the provision of school bus passes and felt that there was a real threat that increased numbers of children would simply not attend school if they were to be agreed and implemented – particularly children in priority one areas.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and comments referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

**(b) Communities & Housing Scrutiny Committee – 4 December 2017**

**Car Parking Strategy**

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining a draft strategy which aimed to provide an overarching framework and a proposed way forward in line with the identified objectives, particularly those relating to tariff structures and income generation, which were intrinsically linked to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

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 current Electric Vehicle Charging Points were well used, and the provision of additional charging facilities needed to be considered.
- There was a need to maintain and invest in Stockport's parking facilities the cost of which needed to be funded through parking charges.
- It was important to encourage turnover in car parks to ensure there was sufficient capacity to meet demand and to ensure that people were using the car parks to support the economy in the town centre.
- The level of the parking tariff needed to be kept under annual review to reflect ongoing changes parking behaviour.
- It was commented that the Trafford Centre provided free parking and that Stockport needed to remain competitive in the context of this market. In response it was stated that Stockport had a different offer to large scale our of centre shopping centres, and that there were additional hidden costs associated with free parking at the Trafford Centre.
- The Stockport Metroshuttle bus was a significant advantage in efficiently moving people around the town centre.
- Further information was requested in relation to progress towards the expansion of the Mobike cycle share scheme to Stockport.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**(c) Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee – 5 December 2017**

**Information, Advice & Guidance Review**

The Cabinet Member for Reform & Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the Scrutiny Committee with an updated Business Case for the reconfiguration of Information, Advice and Guidance services following a consultation with stakeholders.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the following:

- Successful relocation of the advice services into Reddish Library, and it was proposed to move ahead with similar mergers elsewhere in the borough to provide greater flexibility in the deployment of staff resources.
- The existing Citizen's Advice Bureau contract had been extended by 1 year to allow for consideration of Greater Manchester opportunities.
- The proposals continued to provide a commitment to the Contact Centre for vulnerable residents.
- The public consultation had elicited a largely supportive response.

The Scrutiny Committee made the following comments/raised the following issues:-

- A number of councillors welcomed the commitment given to maintaining telephone contact provision and home visits for those vulnerable residents, as well as continuing to provide face-to-face contact through libraries.
- Support for residents to ensure they were able to claim those benefits they were entitled to was an invaluable service to some of the most vulnerable, and helped prevent more costly interventions while ensuring resources were available to spend in the local economy. The roll-out of Universal Credit was likely to put more demand on advice services.

It was reported that the increased use of 'Better off Stockport' website had reduced demand on services in relation to benefits advice, which had meant that the waiting times for support had reduced from 10 to 2 weeks. Councillors welcomed this improvement.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.