

COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 16 September 2019

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Helen Foster-Grime (Chair) in the chair; Councillor John McGahan (Vice-Chair); Councillors Dean Fitzpatrick, Mark Roberts, Andy Sorton, Kerry Waters, Mark Weldon and Matt Wynne.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 5 August 2019 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. SAFER STOCKPORT PARTNERSHIP - ANNUAL UPDATE

Kathryn Rees (Service Director for Strategy & Commissioning, Stockport Council) and Superintendent Marcus Noden (Greater Manchester Police) attended the meeting and made a presentation on the key achievements of partnership working across partner organisations against the Safer Stockport Partnership Themes and Priorities during 2018/19 and to date.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods (Amanda Peers) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The uptake level for restorative justice was comparatively high in Stockport a result of the longstanding and strong history of a robust voluntary sector and developed partnership working arrangements around restorative justice programmes that had been in place for a number of years
- A discussion took place in relation to the type of crimes for which restorative justice might be suitable. In response, it was stated that restorative justice was primarily used for low value crimes involving theft or criminal damage.
- It was stated that there needed to be a degree of caution in relation to reported incidents of knife crime, as the number of incidents where a knife was reported to have been present was far higher than those where a knife was found. It was stated that the

myth or rumour of knife possession was particularly prevalent amongst high school age children.

- Additional police officers were being allocated to Stockport which included four neighbourhood beat officers, ten which had been split across five response teams, and a further four dedicated to work tackling child sexual exploitation.
- There was a need to bolster the number of special constables.
- It was commented that there had been difficulties in securing police attendance during recent traveller incursions in the Cheadle Hulme and Hazel Grove areas that had resulted in additional delays in moving them on from the site.

RESOLVED – That Kathryn Rees and Superintendent Marcus Noden be thanked for their attendance and presentation.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PROGRAMME (MTFP)

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) and the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods (Amanda Peers) submitted a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the response of the Cabinet to the ongoing financial challenges facing the Council and seeking the views of the Scrutiny Committee on budget proposals related to communities and housing.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The report identified a commitment on the part of the Cabinet to ensuring that inclusion ran through the design of services, however this appeared at odds with the proposal to make a budgetary reduction of £315,000 from within the proposal for the Stockport Local Assistance Scheme that would impact some of the most vulnerable residents in Stockport.
- It was suggested that the Cabinet should look to make savings in areas other than those such as the Stockport Local Assistance Scheme.
- It was stated that at this stage the Cabinet's preferred model for the reconfiguration of the approach to delivering crisis support in Stockport would be based around the 'support focussed model' identified as Model 2 within the report, however, this remained subject to full consultation.
- There had been constructive discussions with TLC in relation to the proposed budgetary reduction of £1m.
- A discussion took place in relation to the impact of the proposals that affected in TLC on the winter maintenance programme. In response, it was stated that this had been evaluated on the basis of the relatively mild winters in recent years, although it would be subject to a degree of contingency to allow the service to cope in the eventuality of harsher conditions.
- It was stated that there could be no guarantees in relation to the impact of the savings proposals for Life leisure on the programmes that they were able to deliver.
- Further work needed to take place to support those residents who were unable to use digital media to access Council services.
- Notwithstanding the proposed reductions in the budget for street cleansing, it was stated that residents should not see a change in the quality of the service being currently experienced as the saving was being achieved by not filling existing vacancies.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet be recommended to give consideration to the comments of the Scrutiny Committee in the formulation of its proposals for presentation to the Scrutiny Committee on 28 October 2019.

6. PREPAREDNESS FOR UK DEPARTURE FROM THE EU

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Council's preparation for the UK's departure from the European Union. The report builds on those previously presented to the Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee in January and April 2019 that provided the latest update at the time on the Council's preparations for Brexit.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- In response to a query about the work that had taken place to ensure that those members of staff that were EU nationals had applied for the EU Settlement Scheme, it was stated that the Council had commenced a communications programme targeting all EU nationals in Stockport that also included the Council's own staff.
- Work was taking place across Greater Manchester to ensure that a consistent and co-ordinated approach was being taken across the conurbation.
- Concern was expressed in relation to the late circulation of the report for presentation at this committee meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive 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 7.52 pm