

ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 19 September 2019

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Steve Gribbon (Chair) in the chair; Councillors Brian Bagnall, Grace Baynham, Dickie Davies, Roy Driver, Philip Harding, Colin MacAlister and Suzanne Wyatt.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 8 August 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the eleventh bullet point in Minute 4 'Town Centre West Strategic Regeneration Framework consultation' being amended to read 'The use of smart technology was supported, but it was acknowledged that it may be obsolete before the proposals came into force'.

Tour of Britain Cycle Race 2019

The Chair congratulated the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration and Officers on the success of the Tour of Britain cycle race which passed through the borough on 14 September 2019.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

The following interest was declared:-

Personal Interest

Councillor

Interest

Grace Baynham

Agenda item 5 'Rail Update' as her husband works for Network Rail.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PROGRAMME (MTFP): OUR BUDGET CHOICES FOR 2020/21

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to comment on the Medium Term Financial Programme and on the development of proposals which had been agreed by the Cabinet in February 2019.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- A Member requested more information on the pilot for the allocation of community rent awards through the Stockport Local Fund and was requested to contact the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods.
- With regard to the Council's commitment to be a Radical Digital Council, the Scrutiny Committee debated the Council's website and in particular the interface between the community and the Council. It was suggested that either a scrutiny review on the Council's website was undertaken, a Member Focus Group established on similar lines to the Digital by Design Steering Group and end users asked for their views on the difficulties they encountered with the website. A discussion also ensued on how the Council assisted residents who did not possess the required level of digital skills to use the Council's website.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. RAIL UPDATE

A representative of the Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out an update on rail related issues which affected the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- It was concerning that every facet of the rail network (stations, signals, junctions and rolling stock) was now becoming outdated and was incapable of delivering the 2019 timetable requirements. It would have made sense for the obsolete signalling mechanisms and junctions (Edgeley, Heaton Norris and Slade Lane) to be upgraded at the same time as the West Coast mainline.
- It was disappointing that Stockport was nowhere near the top of the national lists for improvements to its rail network. A Member felt that stronger representations should be made to the Government.
- A Member expressed support for the long term aspiration of the Council to bring a tram train route from Stockport town centre to Marple either utilising existing lines possibly Reddish South or on a new alignment through the town centre to join existing rail lines in the Brinnington/Bredbury area.
- It was hoped that the requirement of the Department for Transport for Community Rail Partnerships to adopt a range of formal policy guidelines did not deter community rail groups from becoming involved.
- The proposals for new railway stations had been driven by the work on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and it was important that the business cases, which although linked to the work on the GMSF, remained as stand alone documents. The business cases could be included in Stockport's Local Plan.

- The new stations had historically been identified in previous studies, including the SEMMMS Strategy, the A6 Corridor Study and the A34 Corridor Study.
- There seemed to be a lack of accountability in the rail industry when raising issues, for example, of timetabling. There did not appear to be a single, accountable body. This was central to the Williams review of the railway system. A representative of the Corporate Director agreed to pursue the loss of services with the appropriate operators.
- Concern was expressed about security of parked cars at railway stations, particularly where the lighting need improving such as at Strines station. The Cabinet Member agreed to pursue these issues with Transport for Greater Manchester.
- Work needed to take place with neighbouring Councils to address, for example, the number of people from New Mills parking at Marple station in order to avoid parking charges.

RESOLVED – (1) That the information provided in the report be noted and the continued work to deliver the strategy and the action plan be endorsed.

(2) That the key capacity issues on the Stockport line and the need for improvements at Stockport station and the two adjacent structures be noted, and Officers be requested to work with Transport for Greater Manchester and Transport for the North to resolve these issues.

(3) That further updates on the strategy and action plan, and on the ongoing work on tram train and new stations be requested.

6. UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE UK'S DEPARTURE FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

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 built on those previously presented to the Corporate, Resource Management and 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 Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to Members' questions.

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 planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and Forward Plan items that fell within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm