

## **ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 11 June 2020

At: 6.00 pm

### PRESENT

Councillor Tom Dowse (Vice-Chair) in the chair; Councillors Will Dawson, Roy Driver, Helen Foster-Grime, Philip Harding, Colin MacAlister, Charlie Stewart and John Taylor.

### **1. MINUTES**

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 5 March 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **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 interests were declared:-

#### Personal Interest

##### Officer

##### Interest

Caroline Simpson,  
Corporate Director  
For Place Management  
and Regeneration

Agenda item 5 'Portfolio Performance and Resources Annual Report 2019/20' as a Director of Stockport Exchange Phase 2 Limited and the Stockport Hotel Management Company Limited Board.

Paul Richards,  
Director for Development  
and Regeneration

Agenda item 5 'Portfolio Performance and Resources Annual Report 2019/20' as a Director of Stockport Exchange Phase 2 Limited and the Stockport Hotel Management Company Limited Board.

### **3. CALL-IN**

There were no call-in items to consider.

### **4. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST REPORT**

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the exempt information in Agenda Item 7 – 'MDC Strategic Business Plan 2020- 2025' should it be necessary for the Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on these aspects of the report.

## **5. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the annual Portfolio Performance and Resource Report (PPRR) for the Economy and Regeneration Portfolio. Given the unprecedented circumstances, it had been agreed that it focussed on the financial and performance out-turn data for 2019/20 rather than the usual more comprehensive summary of progress against priorities.

The PPRR was based on the 2019/20 Portfolio Performance and Resource Agreement which had been considered by the Committee on 9 July and approved by the Cabinet on 23 July 2019. Out-turn performance data was reported where available. Provisional data was included in some cases, and the latest data was shown where the full-year figure was not yet available. Exception commentary was also included to provide context to the data.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Members commended the Council's support to local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic and the work to help them get back on track. Following the Government's announcement on 1 May 2020 regarding a top up grant scheme for businesses that were not eligible for the other grants linked to business rates that it had previously made available, the Council had administered a local discretionary grant to local businesses. A Member enquired whether there was additional funding available from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- With regard to performance indicator E&R1.1, it was highlighted that there had been an unusually large number of works undertaken in 2019/20 for which planning consent was required, but had not been granted.
- In response to a Member's question, the Scrutiny Committee was advised that there were standard timescales for the inspection of bridges.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **6. RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the Council's response to date to the Covid-19 pandemic, building on regular updates received directly by Members and including detail relating to the remit of this Committee, and a view of how this response would be developed over the coming weeks and months.

The report provided an overview of the activity, progress and impact to date in relation to the programmes and services relevant to this Committee in the following areas:-

- Economic resilience
- Stockport Jobs Match – job scheme for residents
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- Business Support Finder service

- Loan Scheme for small businesses
- Launch of the SK Business Recovery website

The Corporate Director outlined the borough's 'One Stockport' campaign which the Council would shortly be launching with its economic partners. It was a new borough wide campaign where, by working in collaboration, Stockport could become united and encouraged to build a better future for everyone by supporting the local economy, connecting communities, and promoting health and wellbeing.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- There was support for the business and economic recovery support initiated by the Council and the 'One Stockport' campaign. The financial support, advice and guidance available to local businesses, including how businesses could reopen safely, had been well received. Effective communications were of paramount importance in conveying information to Councillors and residents.
- A webinar on economic recovery had been sent to local businesses via the Stockport Economic Alliance.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That it be noted that further reports on this issue would be submitted to future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

## **7. MDC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2025**

The Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation's (MDC) Strategic Business Plan which would formally guide the MDC's activity and act as the document against which the MDC's effectiveness could be assessed.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- A Member asked for further information on the recruitment process for the Chair of the Mayoral Development Corporation Board.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful to the Scrutiny Committee to look at issues in isolation rather than contained in their entirety in the Business Plan.
- Future reports would benefit from an assessment of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic situation at the moment in time. However, it was the view of Officers that the benefits of the Mayoral Development Corporation would remain the same in a 'post Covid-19 pandemic' environment.

(NOTE: The item included a 'not for publication' appendix that had been circulated to members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **8. COVID-19 CYCLING AND WALKING MEASURES**

The Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the Council's proposed approach to support safe cycling and walking under the social distancing guidelines in the short term and initiatives to support the continuation and acceleration of increased cycling and walking levels in the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- A number of the routes were temporary, but being put in place quickly in response to schools and shops re-opening following the lockdown as part of the Covid-19 pandemic. If an initiative proved successful, a full consultation would be carried out a later date.
- Officers would continue to inform and engage with local Members on the proposals.
- The Council had expressed support for those who wished to cycle into Manchester from Stockport and Manchester City Council was working with the Council to help facilitate this.
- Work would be carried out to explore routes that crossed over the boundaries of the borough into neighbouring local authorities to see if there was scope for joint working with the other local authorities.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME AND 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 Forward Plan items.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- A Member requested that an update on the work of the Development Plan Working Party and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- A Member enquired how major town centre events such as Foodie Friday would be able to operate in a 'post Covid-19 pandemic' environment.
- Concern was expressed about the delay to the submission of the Parking Strategy Update Report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.42 pm