

## **COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 13 July 2020

At: 6.00 pm

### **PRESENT**

Councillor Mark Roberts (Chair) in the chair; Councillor John McGahan (Vice-Chair); Councillors Dickie Davies, Charles Gibson, Janet Mobbs, Tom Morrison, Adrian Nottingham, Kerry Waters and Matt Wynne.

### **1. MINUTES**

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 8 June 2020 were approved as a correct record.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interest 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. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the exempt information in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 9 – ‘St Thomas’s Development’ should it be necessary for the Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on these aspects of the report.

### **5. CLEAN AIR LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE**

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the progress that had been made following the Government’s response to Greater Manchester’s Outline Business Case to tackle Nitrogen Dioxide Exceedances at the Roadside, and the implications of pandemic management policies (the extent of which are not yet fully understood) for the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities in relation to the schedule of work and statutory consultation on the Clean Air Plan and the link to taxi and private hire common minimum licensing standards.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was noted that a proportion of businesses had stated their intention to pay the daily charge rather than make changes to their current vehicle fleet and that this may therefore not achieve the desired outcome of reducing nitrogen dioxide exceedances at the roadside.
- Concern was expressed that roads maintained by Highways England, including the M60 were not included within the scope of the Clean Air Plan in the light of the fact that such roads were one of the biggest contributors to poor air quality in the borough.
- It was commented that the success of the plan was partially predicated on the creation of an appropriate system of electric vehicle charging facilities and yet there was some doubt over whether this was achievable. In response it was stated that discussions were ongoing with regard to the development of a draft Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy.
- It was suggested that the development of hydrogen-powered vehicles provided a more sustainable solution to the problem of poor air quality as there was a long-term problem with the ability to properly dispose of and recycle batteries from the current generation of electric vehicles.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **6. STOCKPORT HOMES DELIVERY PLAN OUTCOMES 2019/20**

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) that stated that under the long term Management Agreement with Stockport Council, Stockport Homes was required to provide the Council with a five yearly Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan for the 2016 – 2021 was approved by the Council's Executive in 2016 and it was agreed that an annual report on the progress against the five yearly plan would be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committee. This is the fourth annual report of the Delivery Plan 2016-2021 and demonstrated how Stockport Homes delivered against its aims and the Council's objectives in 2019/20.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members noted the relatively low levels of sickness absence at Stockport Homes which it was suggested was indicative of the fact that Stockport Homes was a good organisation to work for with high levels of job satisfaction.
- It was noted that report identified there were more women in senior officer roles at Stockport Homes than in other similar organisations; however in middle ranging technical officer posts, Stockport Homes didn't perform as well with men significantly outnumbering women.
- Stockport Homes had been award 'Best Place to Work' at the UK Business Awards 2020.
- It was commented that Stockport Homes' private lettings operation was only of only five agencies in Greater Manchester that had equitable lettings agency status.
- A discussion took place in relation to the use language around 'customer', 'tenants' and 'residents' and the benefits and disadvantages of each. In response it was stated that this can be a difficult issue as some people identified negative connotations with the word 'tenant' whereas customer was seen as more neutral.

- Members commented on the relative ease with which they were able to communicate and resolve issues with officers from Stockport Homes.
- With regard to the number of disrepair claims that were successfully challenged by Stockport Homes, resulting in significant savings for the organisation, further information was requested on the number such claims that were not so challenged as means of providing a meaningful comparison.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **7. ALLIANCE FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHWAY RELATED SERVICES**

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposal for the procurement of specialist highway and bridge contractors to support the Council in its delivery of significant infrastructure works over the next decade in terms of highway and bridge improvement and maintenance.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a question, it was stated that approximately half of the companies shortlisted were based within Greater Manchester or Cheshire, and a significant proportion of the remainder had a depot within the locality. It was stated that part of the scoring element for local value was based on whether they would use local suppliers and support local apprenticeships.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **8. HIGHWAY STRUCTURES MAINTENANCE POLICY STATEMENT**

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) that aimed to provide guidance on the way in which highway structures were inspected, assessed and maintained and how the relevant data was stored and utilised and to ensure that the way in which the Council managed its structures aligned with Section C of 'Well-managed Highways Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Item 'Not for Publication'

## **9. ST THOMAS'S DEVELOPMENT**

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposal to transform the site of the former St Thomas' Hospital, Stockport into a new intergenerational community with a view to reinvent the way the Council delivered intermediate care. The report detailed the overall

approach as well as a commitment to take the scheme to a detailed design stage which would also include planning submission and procurement of a main contractor.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Members extended their thanks to officers for their work in bringing these proposals to this stage and commended them for approval.
- It was commented that the Council needed to be as ambitious as possible in terms of the sustainability of the development and consideration needed to be given to the potential for ground heating and the provision of solar panels.
- The preservation of a number of historic buildings on the site was welcomed.
- The speed with which the proposals had been brought to fruition was applauded.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **10. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC SELECTION AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021**

A representative of the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a suggested process for the selection of scrutiny review topics and an explanation as to how the reviews would be supported. The Committee was invited to choose a topic for their next review.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Council Meeting be recommended to include ‘The Council’s policy for Active Streets, Play Streets and School Streets’ within the 2020/21 Scrutiny Work Programme.

(2) That Councillors Adrian Nottingham (Lead Councillor); Charles Gibson, John McGahan, Mark Roberts and Kerry Waters be nominated to sit on the proposed scrutiny review panel.

#### **11. 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 7.41 pm