

## **CORPORATE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 14 July 2020  
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Lisa Smart (Chair) in the chair; Councillor John McGahan (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Malcolm Allan, Lou Ankers, Carole McCann, Iain Roberts, Charlie Stewart,  
Wendy Wild and Matt Wynne.

### **1. MINUTES**

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 9 June 2020 were approved as a correct record, subject to the second bullet point on the Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio under Minute 5 'Portfolio Performance and Resources – Annual Reports 2019/20' being amended to read:-

A Member felt that a complaint either had justification or did not, and should be investigated at source. How complaints were handled did not alter the number of complaints as by then the complaint had been received and logged as such.

### **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.

The following interest was declared:-

#### **Personal Interest**

#### **Councillor**

#### **Interest**

Lisa Smart

That part of agenda item 5 'Corporate Performance and Resources – Annual Report 2019/20' relating to representations made to the Government by the Local Government Association as she undertakes work for the association.

### **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RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority), the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be

excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt information in the 'not for publication' appendices to agenda Item 9 "Greater Manchester Unlocking Clean Energy – Stockport's Solar PV Schemes" and agenda item 10 'St Thomas's Development' should it be necessary for the Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on these aspects of the reports.

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

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing Members with an annual report on the delivery of the Council's priority outcomes and budget since mid-year 2019/20, with a particular focus on the fourth quarter of 2019/20 (January-March 2020).

Whilst the start of the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on some budgets and performance measures at the end of the financial year, the Council's response had been set out in more detail against key work streams in a series of reports to the June Scrutiny cycle, alongside the 2019/20 Annual Portfolio Reports.

The report included an executive summary and performance analysis, along with the current position on revenue and capital, and had been considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 23 June 2020.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Elise Wilson) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- An issue was raised with regard to how the Council intended to report on the affect of Covid-19 on performance, For example, the Covid-19 pandemic may impact on a particular performance measure but may not be the only reason a particular measure had not been met. There were some performance measures which were already in the 'red' category and where performance would inevitably be worse as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There were also a number of targets not being met and in a lot of cases this could not be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A Member queried the definitions of the ratings and highlighted the definition of an amber indicator, namely that the indicator value had changed by less than 1% when compared to the previous period. With regard, for example, to the proportion of adults supported in the community who benefited from personal care and support, the data was also incomplete and provisional.
- Members expressed the view that improvements could be made to what was being measured and how it was measured. There needed to be a clearer focus on which areas could be improved.
- Reference was made to the 'One Stockport' campaign and more information was requested on the organisations who were involved with the campaign, which organisations were accountable and how it was being funded.
- It was queried what mechanisms there were for 'drilling down' on how Ami, the Artificial Intelligence 'chat bot', had improved customer experience. There was an iterative approach to developing feedback from Ami and Members would be keep informed of the feedback as it was received.

- Concern was expressed with regard to what the overall income from council tax may be at the end of the financial year given the increase in council tax support and the fact that the full economic impact of the job retention scheme was not currently apparent.
- A great deal of work was taking place to try and increase the number of young people in academic years 12 and 13 into apprenticeships.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That information on the funding and governance of the 'One Stockport' campaign be sent to all Members of the Scrutiny Committee.

## **6. COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACT AND RESPONSE UPDATE**

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council in 2020/21 and over the medium term period, and how the Council was responding to the significant financial challenge ahead. The report built on and updated the detail provided in the Corporate Performance and Resource Annual Report 2019/20. The report also referred to a further Government funding support package which had been announced on 2 July 2020, the possible financial impact beyond 2020/21 and the impact on the Council's Capital Programme, regeneration plans and employment.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The work that Officers had carried out in administering business grants during the pandemic was commended.
- The performance of Manchester Airport as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic was continually being looked at as part of the Reserves Policy and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **7. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2019/20**

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2019/20.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The report and the Council's investment strategy was commended.
- A Member enquired when the Schools Capital Strategy was expected to be submitted to the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **8. QUARTER 4 2019-20 COMPLAINTS REPORT**

A representative of the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of complaints as at the fourth quarter (January-March). The report also compared complaints received in 2019/20 with the previous year's complaints.

The Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus and Engagement (Councillor Kate Butler) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- The Scrutiny Committee considered the timescale and in particular, in line with best practice, the requirement for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints to be responded to within twenty days. The increase in the number of complaints escalating to Stage 2 reflected the complexity of some of the complaints.
- The report only recorded the formal complaints not the work Officers were undertaking to prevent formal complaints from escalating.
- Members expressed concern that the number of complaints which were responded to were decreasing and requested that the level of staff resources allocated to the service be re-examined.
- Of the lessons learnt, a Member highlighted two partially upheld complaints in the 3rd quarter about the Council's enforcement agent for council tax. The enforcement agent had been reminded to ensure that it adhered to a strict code of conduct and followed policy and guidelines which were set down by its governing body.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet be requested to examine the level of staff resources allocated to the complaints service.

## **9. GM UNLOCKING CLEAN ENERGY – STOCKPORT'S SOLAR PV SCHEMES**

A representative of the Corporate Director for Place Management and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Greater Manchester Clean Energy bid for European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) monies to support local clean energy generation as part of the Council's emerging Climate Action Now draft plan, and provided an outline of project proposals in Stockport.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance) (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

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

It was clarified that the process did allow the Council to bid for further projects if other local authorities did not take up their allocation of funding.

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 relationship with its health partners’ within the 2020/21 Scrutiny Work Programme and that the review be undertaken as a joint review with the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.

(2) That Councillors Carole McCann (proposed Lead Councillor); John McGahan, Lisa Smart and Wendy Wild be nominated to sit on the proposed scrutiny review panel from this Scrutiny Committee.

## **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 – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the reports requested by the Scrutiny Committee at previous meetings be assigned to future meetings of the Committee.

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

A representative of 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 the procurement of a main contractor.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

(NOTE: This item included a ‘not for publication’ appendix that had been circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The importance of consultation and engaging with local residents from the start through the pre-application consultation was highlighted.

- Engagement had already started with the local planning authority and a number of meetings had been held with Officers regarding the scheme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.59 pm