

COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 21 September 2020

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

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

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 13 July 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RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the exempt information in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 12 – ‘Active Communities: Sustaining Council Owned Leisure Centres Post Covid-19’.

5. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - DRAFT AGREEMENTS 2020/21

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the draft 2020/21 agreements for the Sustainable Stockport and Inclusive Neighbourhoods portfolios for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee.

he agreements articulated the policy priorities for 2020/21 that were set out within the adopted Council Plan, incorporating the shared outcomes from the Borough Plan alongside specific priorities of the Cabinet. The priorities within the Portfolio Agreements would form the basis for regular in-year reporting through the Portfolio and Corporate Performance and Resource Reports, enabling the Scrutiny Committee to hold the Cabinet to account.

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

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

Sustainable Stockport

- In relation to SS5.3, it was queried whether the proposed meadows that were to be created in all wards by 2025 would be grassland meadows or wildflower meadows and where these had been created during 2020/21.
- The work of the refuse collection service to maintain a quality service during the coronavirus pandemic was congratulated.
- It was suggested that where new measures had been introduced to replace existing calculation methods, that comparative information should be provided on an interim basis to allow members to have relevant comparative data. Specific reference was made to change in the way in which sickness absence levels at TLC were now presented within the report.

Inclusive Neighbourhoods

- It was clarified that the red indicator in relation to Support Funds (formerly the Stockport Local Assistance Scheme) was as a result of a predicted increase in applications to the fund which would mean that there was a risk that the savings target for this area may not be achieved.
- It was important that local councillors were involved in the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour across Stockport.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOMELESSNESS AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing a summary of the initial impact of the crisis and the response within the Borough with regard to homelessness, and outlining some of the longer-term legacy issues anticipated, particularly in relation to people falling into financial difficulties and the potential increased incidence of domestic abuse.

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 queried how councillors could feed into the 'virtual' stakeholder event that was undertaken on 16 September 2020. In response it was stated that the event was well attended with professionals from across the sector and the most encouraging aspect of the event was the involvement of health partners. It was stated that there would be opportunities for councillors to feed into the review of the Homelessness Strategy.

- The work of officers from both the council and Stockport Homes in tackling homelessness was commended.
- Further information was requested on how support was offered to those that needed help in those areas of the borough that were most remote from the town centre. In response it was stated that Stockport Homes had two outreach support workers that visited various areas of the borough each day looking for rough sleepers and there was also a 24 hour emergency telephone service.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the thanks and appreciation of the scrutiny committee be relayed to those officers involved in providing the Council and partners' ongoing response to homelessness and the provision of temporary accommodation during the covid-19 pandemic.

7. STOCKPORT LOCAL FUND

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the delivery of Stockport Local Fund, setting out how more than £500k Council investment in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector had been used to catalyse and develop innovative projects within the third sector supporting more than 100 groups to improve outcomes for local people.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods (Councillor Amanda Peers) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was queried whether any work had been undertaken to understand the costs associated with administering the Fund and whether there was an opportunity to move some of the responsibility for that to the third sector.
- The work by the council to bring together and co-ordinate the various support groups and organisations that emerged at the onset of lockdown measures as a response to the coronavirus pandemic was congratulated.
- The sharing of best practice through organisations such as Sector3 was welcomed.
- It was requested that further reports be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the work of the council and its partners in ensuring that the various third sector organisations were being assisted to become self-sustaining.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. RESIDENTS PARKING REPORT

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing proposed revised principles to guide future parking policy decisions and seeking feedback on the proposed changes to resident parking policy and town centre parking policy to reflect the revised principles.

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:-

- Concern was expressed in relation to the proposal within the report to supply councillors with free permits allowing them to park in residents parking zones in their wards and what the justification was for this. In response, it was stated that the proposal had been included on the basis that members may need to visit a resident or some other duty connected with their role as a councillor as part of their duties and where it would be difficult to park in another area.
- It was queried how visitors to residential accommodation within the town centre would be accommodated within the proposals, particularly in the light of proposals to significantly increase residential developments in the town centre. In response it was stated that there was insufficient space to provide parking capacity for residents and visitors, however it was stated that the town centre benefited from the best public transport infrastructure in the borough so people can get into the town centre by alternative means.
- The report stated that it did not anticipate any impact on LGBTQ people, however it was suggested that they are far more likely to be victims of hate crime and are therefore more cautious in their behaviour and as a consequence have an interest in being able to park as close as possible to their door. In response, it was stated that this would be reviewed in the light of the concerns expressed.
- In response to a question about behavioural change and what work had been undertaken thus far, it was stated that the council and TfGM had invested significantly in walking and cycling schemes to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport.
- Consideration needed to be given providing a facility for carers and personal care providers to park without incurring significant financial penalties.
- It was requested that ward councillors be involved in delineating the boundaries of the town centre for parking policy purposes.
- Discussions were ongoing with regard to the final cost to residents for a parking permit under the new scheme.
- It was clarified that any scheme would be introduced at least initially using paper-based permits, however work was taking place to transition this to e-permits.
- It was suggested that the report be submitted to area committees for their comments in the light of the localised impact that the proposed strategy would have on communities across the borough.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Proper Office be requested to place this matter on the agendas of the area committees for the week commencing 28 September 2020.

9. CLEAN AIR CONSULTATION INCLUDING UNIFIED TAXI LICENSING REPORT

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the progress that had been made on the development of Greater Manchester's Clean Air Plan following the decision that the GM Local Authorities will move to a statutory public consultation on the GM Clean Air Plan as soon as reasonably practicable in light of COVID-19 restrictions, and the link to taxi and private hire common minimum licensing standards. The report also considered the formal governance mechanisms that will underpin the delivery of a GM Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and the supporting measures.

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:-

- Consultations were planned to take place virtually and it was asked how this was planned to take place and fully engage residents. In response it was stated that the consultation was being led by Transport for Greater Manchester and as many avenues as possible would be used to ensure that people were aware of the consultation.
- There were 40 taxi charging points planned across Greater Manchester and it was queried how many of those would be introduced in Stockport. In response it was stated that the focus would be on the town centre, and it was likely that these would be clustered around a single location because of the cost associated with introducing the required infrastructure. Specifically it was stated that locations around New Bridge Lane and Stockport Station were being investigated and potentially in Hazel Grove.
- It was stated that the charges associated with the GM Clean Air Zone would be paid to Transport for Greater Manchester to fund the costs associated with implementing the scheme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. 2019 FLOODING DRAFT INVESTIGATION REPORT

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the various aspects of the flood events that occurred on the last week of July and first week of August 2019 and specifically incorporated the draft Independent Section 19 Investigation Report in accordance with the Flood & Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 on the investigation into the flooding events that had been undertaken independently by Mott MacDonald Consulting Engineers.

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 suggested that the use of phraseology such as ‘quick wins’ within the report was potentially unhelpful, particularly as one of the named schemes was at Bean Leech Road which had been flooded three times in the last four years, and if the solution was as easy as suggested then it may rightly be asked why it hadn’t been done sooner.
- It was commented that the flood alert in Stockport hadn’t been triggered despite widespread flooding and improvements needed to be made to this system.
- The Environment Agency should be strongly encouraged and requested to undertake the flood mapping recommendation identified in the report..

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer

(Legal & Democratic Governance) 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.

Item 'Not for Publication'

12. ACTIVE COMMUNITIES: SUSTAINING COUNCIL OWNED LEISURE CENTRES POST COVID-19

The Corporate Director for Place Management & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a proposed approach to sustaining Council owned leisure centres following closure and business interruption due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and the provision of necessary funding to support continued service delivery and the potential transition to new arrangements.

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

(NOTE: The report comprised a 'not for publication' report that was circulated to members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm