ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 10 December 2020
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

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

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meetings held on 24 September and 5 November 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 Interests

Officers

Paul Richards and Caroline Simpson	Agenda item 5 - 'Portfolio Performance and Resources – Mid-Year Report 2020/21' as Directors 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 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RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings, 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in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt information in the 'not for publication' appendices for agenda item 9 – 'BHS – Redevelopment Proposals' and agenda item 10 – 'Former Ritz Cinema Car Park and former Greenhale House Disposal'.

5. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - MID-YEAR REPORT 2020/21

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the Mid-Year Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports (PPRR) for the Economy and Regeneration Portfolio for consideration by the Committee. The report provided a summary of progress in delivering the portfolio priorities, reform programmes and other key projects in the first half of the year, with a particular focus on the second quarter (July to September) and up to the end of October where possible. The report also included a forecast on performance and financial data (where this was available) for the portfolio, along with an update on the portfolio savings programme.

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:-

Cancellation of outdoor artisan markets on 5 December 2020

- Concern was expressed by some Members about the cancellation by Officers of three outdoor artisan markets in Stockport on 5 December 2020 despite outdoor markets being permitted under Tier 3 restrictions. The markets in question were Heaton Moor Producers Market, Cheadle Makers Market and Romiley Village Square Market and they had been cancelled at short notice due to concerns about Covid-19. Members felt that the appropriate Cabinet Members should have been consulted on this issue before the decision had been taken. It was hoped that the markets could be rearranged before Christmas if Greater Manchester was moved into Tier 2 and, if so, Members requested that they be notified of the rearranged dates.
- Although a Member supported the decision to cancel the markets on the grounds of public health and safety, he expressed concern about how the decision had been communicated to Councillors and communities.
- The £200 discretionary grant allocation to the market traders affected was seen as a contribution towards the overhead costs the traders had incurred in preparing to attend the events, and for not being able to trade in Stockport due to the local restrictions that had been introduced at short notice to manage the risk of the spread of the virus.
- A Member felt that £200 was to small an amount to offer to the traders and did not help the nearby businesses who would also have gained business from having the outdoor artisan markets held near to their premises. The Corporate Director agreed to provide Members with information on how the figure of £200 had been arrived at and how it was to be distributed to the market traders affected.

Other issues

- A Member raised the unsuccessful bid by the Council to the Active Travel Fund where Transport for Greater Manchester had felt that the bid did not meet the criteria.
- The marketing of the One Stockport initiative was raised. The initiative was an opportunity to improve relations with the private sector and recognise their role in

regenerating the town centre. Responses were being prepared to comments made at the area committees about improving the marketing of the One Stockport initiative and introducing bespoke marketing for each district centre.

- Support for small businesses was highlighted and the role of entrepreneurs in the regeneration of the borough.
- In response to a Member's question, it was clarified that the review of options for the Metrolink/tram train between East Didsbury and Stockport was being worked upon and discussions had taken place with Transport for Greater Manchester regarding the ambition for a Metrolink connection between Manchester and Marple. A Restoring Your Railways bid for development funding was being planned which would include Stockport to Ashton-under-Lyne and Marple via the proposed Reddish Curve as potential heavy rail/Metrolink/tram train routes.
- With regard to performance indicator E&R3.1 regarding the number of 'Kickstart' jobs created through the Council's partnership with the Growth Company, a Member felt that the target of 30 should be higher. Members requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the 'Kickstart' scheme.
- Questions were asked regarding the proposed closure of the Debenhams and Sainsbury's stores in the town centre and the Cabinet Member agreed to report back when he had more definite information when the stores would close.
- A Member requested details on the £15,000 earmarked for the SEMMMS Refresh – feasibility/design – New Study Station.
- Details were provided of the £37,000 allocated to the HS2 Growth Review.
- Reference was made to the Solar PV Schemes. The Clean Energy projects would see the installation of Solar PV and Solar Car ports across several identified sites across the borough. All schemes were part ERDF funded with a match-funding element from the Council.
- With regard to the GM Local Full Fibre Network, the Council was working in partnership with the GMCA, TfGM and six GM local authorities to deliver the GM Local Full Fibre Programme which would provide state of the art connections to over 1,300 public sector sites across Greater Manchester through the provision of an optical 'dark' full fibre network. Ultimately Greater Manchester would have the best high-speed digital infrastructure coverage of any city-region in the UK.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. RESPONDING TO OUR MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - UPDATE FOLLOWING THE 2020 SPENDING REVIEW

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report of the Corporate Director (Corporate and Support Services) and Deputy Chief Executive (copies of which had been circulated) building upon the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update report presented to the Cabinet meeting in October to ensure the MTFP forecasts and assumptions continued to be robust and based on the latest information.

The report included an update on the financial impact of announcements made since October including the ongoing national and local response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Government's 2020 Spending Review.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Commissioning, Resources & Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) and 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:-

- The Council's savings proposals for 2021/22 appeared manageable and concern was expressed that more far reaching savings requirements would be put forward for 2022/23.
- Further guidance was expected from the Government on the use of Brexit reserves and a decision would be made on the use of the fund once the guidance had been received.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. GETTING BUILDING FUND

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate and Support Services) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the Government's Getting Building Fund, those projects which had been successfully allocated funding and their fit to wider strategy.

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

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. ACQUISITION 80, 80A, 82, 82A WELLINGTON ROAD SOUTH COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER RESOLUTION

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a proposal for the Council to acquire land compulsorily and existing rights and interests where agreement cannot be reached to implement a highway and public realm scheme at the junction of Wellington Road South and Railway Road, Stockport.

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

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. 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.

Items 'Not for Publication'

10. BHS - REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director (Corporate and support Services) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) seeking approval for the redevelopment of the former BHS store, acquired by the Council, into three units, with new public realm to provide grade level access to the front of the store, a rear access leading to a first floor unit and a new shopfront.

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

(NOTE: The report contained 'not for publication' appendices that had been circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. FORMER RITZ CINEMA CAR PARK AND FORMER GREENHALE HOUSE DISPOSAL

A representative of the Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out and summarising the marketing campaign that had recently concluded on two key town centre development sites at the former Ritz Cinema car park and the former Greenhale House site.

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

(NOTE: The report contained 'not for publication' appendices that had been circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee only).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.28 pm