

COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 7 December 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 and Kerry Waters.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 21 September 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 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RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for publication, the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the exempt information in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 10 – ‘Future Active Communities/ Leisure Delivery Arrangements’.

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

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the Mid-Year Portfolio Performance and Resource Report (PPRR) for the Inclusive Communities and Sustainable Stockport Portfolio. The report provided a summary of progress in delivering the portfolio priorities, reform programme and other key projects in the first half of the year, with a particular focus on the second quarter (July to September). 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 Members for Inclusive Communities (Councillor Amanda Peers) and Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

Sustainable Stockport Portfolio

- Members welcomed the launch of the Portfolio Performance Dashboards that provided easy access to the latest data, including detailed trend, comparative analysis and commentary for portfolio performance measures.
- In response to a comment about the number of erroneous complaints in relation to missed bin collections, it was stated that this was largely attributed to when there had been changes to the cycle of bin collections due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that some residents were not aware of. It was stated that the Council had made significant efforts to communicate these necessary changes to residents and new schedules had been distributed to residents which should mitigate against this in the future.
- It was noted that the report stated that lower targets had been set for the Active Communities programmes as it had been anticipated that there would be lower levels of physical activity during periods of 'lockdown'. However, it was suggested that anecdotal evidence suggested that more people had taken advantage of parks and green spaces as alternative options had become more limited.

Inclusive Communities Portfolio

- Further information was requested in relation to the 11% reduction in the number of charity organisations that were known to the Council. It was noted that the report stated that this was due to a change in the search functionality on the Charity Commission's website.
- It was commented that it was notoriously difficult to fully understand the number of voluntary and charity organisations operating in the borough due to rapid change and turnover within the sector.

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 on 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 COVID19 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 Members for Inclusive Communities (Councillor Amanda Peers) and 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 commented that the accompanying report was circulated relatively late due to matters outside of the Council's control and members were encouraged to feedback any further comments they might have on the report directly to officers once the meeting had concluded.
- The detail in report around the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was welcomed.
- It was requested that any further reports should include an analysis of the impact of Brexit and any planning undertaken so far.
- It was commented that proposals to reduce the budget provision for the consultation team may have a negative impact on the Council's ability to effectively engage with local communities. In response it was stated that the report did not make any proposal to reduce capacity in this area.
- Concern was raised in relation to the potential for an increase in Council Tax of up to 4.99% in addition to any increase in the Greater Manchester Mayoral and policing precepts which would constitute a significant burden on local residents.
- The savings identified in the Sustainable Stockport portfolio were to be met through vacancy management and income generation from commercial waste collections.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. 2019 FLOODING - FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the various aspects of the flood events in July 2019 and specifically incorporates the Final Independent Section 19 Investigation Report in accordance with the Flood & Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 on the investigation into the flooding events 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:-

- Further work needed to be done to capture and retain water where it landed, and it was welcomed that the report identified this as a priority.
- Concern was expressed that residents were frequently passed from agency to another with each denying responsibility.
- It was important the United Utilities and the Environment Agency were fully committed to implementing the recommendations in the report and it was suggested that they be invited to future meetings of the Scrutiny Committee when update reports were submitted.
- Concern was expressed that members had previously requested that language such as 'quick wins' should be removed from the report following repeated requests from ward councillors, and that this had not been acted upon. In response, it was stated the report would be corrected prior to its submission to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That it be noted that annual update reports would be submitted to meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

8. STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY REVIEW

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) stating that Stockport Council was the Licensing Authority for the area of Stockport, and under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 (the Act) it was therefore responsible for the regulation of licensing matters within the borough. The Act further required the Council to have a Statement of Licensing Policy which must be reviewed every five years. The current policy was last published in 2016 and so a review and publication was now due.

The report outlined the approach taken to review the existing Statement of Licensing Policy and the next steps in readiness for ongoing approval up to the Council Meeting on 21 January 2021.

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.

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.

The Chair commented that he hoped that the Scrutiny Committee's Scrutiny Review Panel would shortly get underway.

It was further requested that the Scrutiny Committee be provided with a report identifying the Council's approach to gully cleansing and reactive maintenance.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Item 'Not for Publication'

10. FUTURE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES/ LEISURE DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

The Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing proposals to move to new delivery arrangements for Council-owned leisure facilities and Active Communities programmes.

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

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(NOTE: This item consisted of 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 7.25 pm