

## **COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 22 November 2021

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Mark Roberts (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Lisa Walker (Vice-Chair); Councillors Shan Alexander, Malcolm Allan, Laura Clingan, Oliver Harrison, Rory Leonard, Kerry Waters and Matt Wynne.

### **1. MINUTES**

The notes of the Meeting of Members of the Communities & Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 11 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.

### **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 interests were declared:-

#### **Personal Interests**

<b><u>Councillor</u></b>	<b><u>Interest</u></b>
Shan Alexander	Agenda Item 5 – ‘Climate Action Now – Annual Report & Immediate Actions’ as her husband was the Chair of Stockport Hydro and the subject of hydro-electric power generation was raised as part of the discussion on this item.
Amanda Peers	Agenda Item 4 – ‘Portfolio Performance and Resources - Mid-Year Reports 2021/22’ as a paid member of ACE, Bridgehall which was mentioned within the report.
Kerry Waters	Agenda Item 5 – ‘Climate Action Now – Annual Report & Immediate Actions’ as an employee of One+All that had been involved in the Climate Action Now Summit event.

### **3. CALL-IN**

There were no call-in items to consider.

### **4. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - MID-YEAR REPORTS 2021/22**

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:-

#### Inclusive Communities Portfolio

- It noted that the Stockport Local Fund did not run during quarters one and two during the current financial year and it was confirmed that any unallocated funding remaining after the relaunch of fund in Quarter three would be rolled over into the next financial year.
- In response to a query around publicity for the Stockport Armed Forces Covenant it was stated that the covenant was a pledge rather than an offer of services, and there were a number of organisations that the council worked in partnership with that provided direct support to armed forces personnel, veterans and their families. However, work was taking place to provide a consistent approach in relation to communications and how people were signposted to support.
- It was confirmed that there was no upper age limit for the apprenticeships offered through the Apprenticeship Store.
- It was noted that performance indicator IN.19 (Continuing Education – Leaders from the borough's priority areas) was showing as 'red', and it was suggested that moving the adult education service into the more centrally located Central Library building might fit well in a longer term strategy for improving performance against this measure.

#### Sustainable Stockport Portfolio

- It was commented that performance indicator SS. 4.6 (Service failures per 100,000 bin collections (cumulative)) omitted those bins that were not collected due to changes to the schedule such as those rounds that were negatively affected by the pandemic or the national shortage of drivers which made it difficult for the committee to readily understand the ongoing impact of these issues.
- The inclusion of a new indicator in relation to 'New walking and cycling schemes created' was welcomed.
- It was noted that there remained some confusion amongst the public in relation to the distinction between fly-tipping and incorrectly presented waste (side-waste) which meant that this was often reported using the wrong online form and it was suggested more work could be done to direct and inform the public in relation to the difference between the two.
- It was commented that a decision had been made at the Greater Manchester level to introduce permits for vans taking waste to household recycling centres, and it was suggested that this might have a consequent impact on the level of fly-tipping in the borough.
- In response to a question regarding the work needed to improve the EPC ratings of those 10% of properties that were rated below category C, it was stated that the council

needed to continue to be opportunistic and respond when funding streams became available to make improvements.

- There was a programme for the development of community orchards across the borough that had previously been circulated to members.
- The performance of those teams responding to reported incidents of fly-tipping was commended.
- It was stated that on occasion there were difficulties with reports of fly-tipping on private land in encouraging landowners to resolve the problem.
- It was suggested that in specific locations, signage may not be sufficient to advise motorists that the council was offering 4 hours of free parking on Saturdays.
- Members requested further information on the draft programme of new affordable homes attached to the £15.997m of borrowing detailed in the report.
- It was suggested that where new performance measures were included within the report, baseline data should be provided so that current performance could be measured against it.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **5. CLIMATE ACTION NOW – ANNUAL REPORT & IMMEDIATE ACTIONS**

The Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the progress made in line with the Climate Action Now (CAN) Strategy since its launch in 2020 and proposing further plans to enhance the Council's approach to responding to the Climate Emergency.

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:-

- The proposal to create further areas as grassland meadow was welcomed, but it was emphasised that this needed to be accompanied by communication with local residents so that the benefits were more widely known and understood.
- The holding of the first Climate Action Now Summit and launch of the Stockport CAN Funding Scheme on 9 November 2021 was considered to be a success, but it was suggested that consideration be given to holding future such events during the evening or at weekends to broaden participation. In response, it was stated that consideration would be given to how these type of events would be held in the future, however it was stated that videos would be made available for those who were unable to attend.
- The timeframe for establishing an external CAN advisory panel was discussed and it was stated that proposals in this area would be progressed during early 2022.
- It was reiterated that the scrutiny committee should receive a report in relation to the EPC rating of properties that it had developed.
- There was a gap between what was necessary and what could be achieved, noting that many residents in the borough's older properties would be unable to afford the work required to make them energy efficient.
- Recent initiatives were commended such as the introduction of LED street lighting, the appointing of a Head of CAN and the launch of a micro-funding scheme.

- The next meeting of the CAN Working Group would consider the implementation of measures agreed by the Council Meeting as part of the 'Making a Climate Action Now Step Change' motion adopted on 7 October 2021.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **6. GREATER MANCHESTER (GM) VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (VCSE) ACCORD STOCKPORT POSITION**

A representative of the Corporate Director (Corporate & Support Services) & Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Accord which was agreed at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for further local consideration.

The report considered Stockport's progress against the accord commitments and recommends for local adoption the commitments for a resilient and thriving Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector.

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

Concern was expressed that the wording of the accord was vague and ambiguous which limited how useful it would be. In response, it was stated that the accord was a document intended for use and adoption across Greater Manchester, however the report intended to provide an overview of what it meant for Stockport and the positive progress being made.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **7. 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 – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Director (Place) & Deputy Chief Executive be requested to submit reports to a future meeting of the scrutiny committee on the following issues:-

- Missed waste collections.
- EPC ratings comparative analysis
- Rights of private tenants and publicly accessible information, support and guidance.

The meeting closed at 8.11 pm