ECONOMY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 25 November 2021
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Oliver Johnstone (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Colin MacAlister (Vice-Chair); Councillors Grace Baynham, Becky Crawford, Will Dawson, Roy Driver, Steve Gribbon, Mike Hurleston and Andy Sorton.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 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 agenda items for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interests

Councillor

Andy Sorton	Agenda item 5 ' Future high Street Fund - Stockroom' as his partner works for the Stockport Libraries' service.

Officers

Paul Richards	Agenda item 4 'Portfolio Performance and Resources – Mid-Year Report 2021/22' as Chief Executive of the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation.
Paul Richards and Caroline Simpson	Agenda item 4 ''Portfolio Performance and Resources – Mid-Year Report 2021/22' as Directors of Stockport Exchange Phases 2 and 3 Limited and the Stockport Hotel Management Company Limited Board.

Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor	Interest
Mike Hurleston	Agenda item 4 'Portfolio Performance and Resources – Mid-Year Report 2021/22' as a member of the Board of the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral

Development Corporation.

It was noted that the Standards Committee had approved a dispensation to enable those councillors who were members of the Board of the Stockport Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation and who would otherwise have a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter being discussed to take part in the debate.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - MID-YEAR REPORT 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 Economy and Regeneration 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 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:-

- A Member requested additional information on district heating systems.
- Part of the work to create an economic plan for Stockport included consideration of what green economy businesses would need to be attracted to Stockport as a place to be based, including employment land suitability/availability, infrastructure needs and skills/workforce training and supply. The work being carried out in this area was welcomed.
- Drain cleaning was an area which needed to be addressed as a priority.
- The number of young people starting on Kickstart had been much lower than expected across the country and a Member wondered if the scheme could be made more accessible to young people. Further information was requested on this issue.
- An audit of completed schemes undertaken through the Mayoral Walking and Cycling Challenge Fund was requested so that it could be ascertained whether value for money was being achieved in terms of usage of the routes.
- A Member enquired what programme of improvements to the highways infrastructure was planned for Hazel Grove.
- Concern was expressed that the Greater Manchester Local Fibre Network may not reach all parts of the borough, including the more rural areas in the east of the borough.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND - STOCKROOM

Consideration was given to a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on progress with Stockport's High Street Fund project, Stockroom, and updating Members on the recent consultation which had been undertaken.

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

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Reference was made to the differences in the consultation responses between those which were on-line and those which were face-to-face with a majority of residents who completed the online self completion questionnaire disagreeing with the proposal to move library services from Central Library to Stockroom.
- The proposals were geared to creating more potential users of the library than those who current used the Central Library. However, a number of library users had indicated that they wouldn't use the library service if it went to Stockroom.
- Concern was expressed that the majority of people who responded to the consultation had indicated that they wished to keep the library in its current location and the proposals in the report went against their wishes.
- A Member enquired whether the possibility of expanding the Central Library building had been explored.
- A Member's perception was that the area around Central Library felt safer than the Merseyway Precinct.
- Concern was expressed about the longevity of the fabric of the Merseyway Precinct given its age.
- The linkage of the Changing Places toilet facilities to the Stockroom building were raised as this had not been referred to in the original proposals.
- There was the opportunity to provide a significant community space through Stockroom which would be accessible to all. There would be a sensory room and changing facilities with hoists for severely disabled children.
- Concern was expressed that a majority of residents with a disability or long term health condition were opposed to the proposals.
- Residents had not been advised of the possible alternative uses for the Central Library at the time of the consultation. A clear strategy was required which could be shared with everybody.
- A Member set out how he had become more reassured as he had acquired more information about the proposals and the intention behind them. He supported cultural activities being held in the Central Library building such as concerts.
- The report highlighted for the first time that the digitisation of resources (library, museum and heritage archives) was distinct from the proposals for Stockroom.
- By reference to the drawings attached to the report, a Member expressed concern about how easy the Stockroom building would be for residents to find their way around.
- If there were concerns about the accessibility of Central Library as a library building, the same concerns would exist if the building was used as an adult education centre.

MOVED AND SECONDED - That the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Cabinet do not proceed with moving library services from Central Library.

For the motion 6, against 3

MOTION CARRIED

It was then

RESOLVED – (6 for, 3 against) That the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee recommends that the Cabinet do not proceed with moving library services from Central Library.

6. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service and Monitoring Officer (Legal and Democratic Services) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and any Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm