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CORPORATE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 1 March 2022
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor John McGahan (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Lisa Smart (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Lou Ankers, Carole McCann, Iain Roberts, Charlie Stewart, John Taylor and
Stuart Corris.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 18 January
2022 were approved as 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 of interest 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RESOLVED – That in order to prevent the disclosure of information which was not for
publication relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including
the authority), 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excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt information in the 'not for
publication' appendix to agenda item 12 'Edgeley Park'.

5. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - Q3 2021/22 UPDATE REPORT

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services (Deputy Chief Executive)
submitted a joint report of the Corporate Director, the Service Director for Strategy and
Commissioning and Service Director for Citizen Focus (copies of which had been
circulated) providing the third quarter update Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports
for the Citizen Focus & Engagement and Resources, Commissioning & Governance
Portfolios are presented for consideration by the Committee. These provide a summary of
progress in delivering the Portfolio priority outcomes since the mid-year reports.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning and Governance (Councillor Tom
McGee) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- It was queried how and why the reporting would be changed in relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- In response it was stated that the number of cases closed during the quarter and the percentage of those that were closed on time would be reported going forwards, this was to eliminate an anomaly in reporting as currently FOI requests were reported on the basis of when they were received which afforded the service 20 days to respond and close.
- Raised concerns in relation to the red status of the number of active digital champions.
- In response, Members were informed that the Digital Champion programme had been affected by the pandemic as volunteer capacity had reduced and the programme required an element of face-to-face support which had not always been possible. It was agreed that a detailed report on digital champions and digital inclusion would be shared with Members at a future meeting.
- In relation to the downward trend in the number of digital contacts and bin collection day visits, it was queried whether there was more that the council could do to improve the service. In response it was stated that the council could be more proactive within its communications and agreed to provide a future report on how the service is provided to residents.
- It was queried why the figures in relation to the number of visits to Stockport museums hadn't increased following a large number of school visits and half term. In response it was stated that the position had changed since the publication of the report as the figures did not include visits recorded during the half term week.
- In relation to the collection of Business Rates, Members requested clarification in respect of whether the outstanding rate collection related to a larger business or several smaller businesses. In response, it was stated that the council had a varied and wide range business base and that the debt related a number of businesses spread amongst the business rate baseline.
- Clarification was requested in relation to the council's position in relation to gully cleaners. In response, Members were advised that the council had commissioned a contractor, in addition to in-house capacity, to meet demand as currently resource in relation to staff who were qualified to operate the machines was insufficient. It was reported that the service was exploring options to resolve this issue which included training and recruitment.
- It was reported that there was an issue with the online forms as there was only a limited number of options and where a resident selected none, they were unable to continue. It was also reported that the forms required a Stockport address which was impractical for people visiting or passing through the borough to raise any issues they observed.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services (Deputy Chief Executive) be recommended to a conduct a review of the online forms system.

6. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - THIRD QUARTER UPDATE REPORT 2021/22

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services (Deputy Chief Executive) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing a summary of progress

in delivering the Council's priority outcomes since the mid-year report. In the case of the budget and capital updates, this covered the period since the Q2+ report considered at the last cycle of Scrutiny and Cabinet. The Corporate Performance and Resources Report (CPRR) included an executive summary and performance analysis, along with the forecast out-turn position on revenue and capital. As Portfolio Reports for Q3 were focused on performance data, this provided the basis for the summary.

The Corporate Performance Dashboard was also published alongside the CPRR. This provided further detail for the suite of 'Corporate' measures analysed in Section 2 of the report, including trends, comparative data and commentary.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Requested an update in relation to the Greater Manchester Treasures discussions on the Business Rates retention pilot. In response it was stated that the agreement reached with GMCA for the pilot was that the benefit would be shared by GMCA at a level up to a maximum of 50% due to the investment required at a GM level which included some investment at a regional. The ongoing discussions with the Treasurers centred around the investment requirement moving forwards.
- Welcomed the financial benefit generated from waste over the next 12 months.
- Welcomed the resolution that had been reached with Heaton School in relation to the higher needs budget and noted the benefits that this would have on the educational provision and students.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022/2023

The Director of Development & Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the progress of the 2021/22 Asset Management Plan Action Plan (AMP) capital programme and the programme of work for inclusion in the 2022/23 financial year and the indicative programme up to 2024/25.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- It was noted that the cost of the concrete repairs to Stopford House was less than expected by Members. In response, it was stated the money allocated to the repairs was following a significant number of surveys of the building which had identified that no significant repairs were required.
- It was commented that there was a Scrutiny Review being conducted in relation to the council's property portfolio and that the report felt passive rather than proactive in relation to asset management. Members inquired as to whether this was the correct approach.
- In response, it was stated that the service welcomed scrutiny in this area and awaited the key findings and recommendations from the review. It was reported that the service was conducting numerous investigations to provide direction in relation to future proposals and noted the impact of COVID on workstreams.
- Commented on the importance of the maintenance and improvements on the Town Hall as a heritage asset.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. ANNUAL PAY POLICY 2022/23

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services (Deputy Chief Executive) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out the Council's approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. The statement had due regard for the associated statutory guidance including supplementary guidance issued in February 2013 and the Local Government Transparency code 2014. The statement also incorporated the Council's Gender Pay Gap (GPG) information as the Council was now required to publish this on an annual basis under the GPG reporting requirements.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Welcomed the publication of the Council's Gender Pay Gap information and inquired to whether other pay gap reporting such as ethnicity was being conducted.
- In response it was stated that this information was already internally available and reported through HR and that the service would explore the possibility to make the information publicly available. Members were advised that the HR function was being reviewed to ensure that staff were explored at the correct level and to promote training.
- Members enquired about the number of apprenticeships that resulted in the individual receiving a permanent position. In response it was agreed that statistics relating to apprenticeship outcomes would be shared with Members.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and Pay Policy Statement for the Council be endorsed.

9. INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM UPDATE

The Service Director for Strategy & Commissioning submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the national, Greater Manchester and Locality arrangements for the Integrated Care System (ICS) in Stockport. This followed on from the report that was provided to Scrutiny Committees in September 2021 and the member's briefing on September 2nd 2021.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Commented on the importance of local representation within GM to ensure that the proposals are fit for purpose in Stockport.
- Requested clarification in relation to the scrutiny arrangements of the Integrated Care System.
- In response it was stated that there would be some functions delegated locally and others relating to the NHS taken at a GM level, each with alternative mechanisms for scrutiny. It was reported that Councillors John McGahan and Lisa Smart were part of the GM Task and Finish Group tasked to explore issues such as these and that the importance of retaining the scrutiny was recognised.
- Raised concerns in relation to challenges of partnership working and coordinated services.

- In response, Members were advised that the council recognised the challenges that may face as part of an integrated system and felt that key to successful integration was shared vision, ambition and culture, underpinned by strong working relationships, which would enable partners to work together to resolve disputes.
- Welcomed a future update report on the Integrated Care System and requested that information be included in relation to the future arrangements for staff with a shared role across the council and NHS and overall flexibilities and constraints envisaged.
- Members enquired about the impact of the system on the voluntary sector. In response it was stated that there were currently shadow arrangements in place with voluntary sector representation overseeing the transition and that the People and Communities Subgroup was focussed on engagement with the community and incorporating the views of local people.
- Commented on the opportunity that an integrated system presents in relation to exploring more creative and innovative solutions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. SHARED SERVICES PROGRAMME UPDATE

A representative of the Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services and Education submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on progress with developing shared leadership for the early years functions of the School Improvement Teams across Stockport and Tameside Councils. This report built on previous updates to scrutiny committee and provided further information and assurance on the stages taken for due diligence in development of shared services proposals.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Expressed disappointment in relation to delay in reporting on the Shared Services Programme to the Committee.
- It was noted that shared services had a number of benefits.
- Members queried the line management responsibility of staff working across the shared service and governance structure.
- In response it was stated that there was currently three posts funded through Stockport and one post funded through Tameside across the Shared Service Programme and that dependant on which authority funded the post, determined the line management responsibility of this member of staff.
- Raised concerns in relation to the ward boundaries, large scale housing developments and the impact on the offering of school places.
- In response it was stated that whilst there would be an increase in demand for school places, there was only a limited number of spaces available in Stockport schools and once the school had reached its published admission number it would not be able to admit any children in addition to those allocated.
- Requested assurances that feedback the in relation the consultation would be received and acted upon. In response Members were assured that all feedback would be listened to, however the outcome determined would be in the best interest for residents as a whole.

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 Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services (Deputy Chief Executive) be requested to submit reports to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the Integrated Care System and Shared Services.

Item including information 'Not for Publication'

12. EDGELEY PARK

The Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining Stockport County's vision to grow the Club over the next 5-10 years and the opportunities to maximise the social and economic impact that it had within the local community.

Members welcomed the proposals including the focus on protecting the club as a heritage asset and commented on the benefit that it provided for communities.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm.