

## **COMMUNITIES & HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting: 13 June 2022

At: 6.00 pm

### PRESENT

Councillor Amanda Peers (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Oliver Johnstone (Vice-Chair); Councillors Sheila Bailey, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Oliver Harrison, Catherine Stuart, Sue Thorpe and Matt Wynne.

### **1. MINUTES**

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 28 February 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors and officers were invited to declare interests in any of the items on the agenda for meeting.

The following interest was declared:-

#### Personal Interest

#### Councillor

#### Interest

Oliver Johnstone	Agenda Item 4 – ‘Portfolio Performance and Resources - Q4 2021/22 Annual Report’ as a member of the Friends of Torkington Park which was referenced on a number of occasions within the report.
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### **3. CALL-IN**

There were no call-in items to consider.

### **4. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES - Q4 2021/22 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Place Management submitted a joint report of the Director and the Corporate Director (Corporate & Support Services) & Deputy Chief Executive (copies of which had been circulated) providing a summary of progress in delivering the portfolio priorities, reform programme and other key projects since the final update report, with a focus on the fourth quarter of the year (January to March). It includes out-turn performance and financial data (where this is available) for the Portfolio, along with updates on the portfolio savings programme.

The Cabinet Members for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts); Communities & Housing (Councillor Helen Foster-Grime); and Highways, Parks and Leisure Services (Councillor Grace Baynham) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that the report was a backward-looking report reflecting on the previous municipal year and the former cabinet portfolios.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

#### Inclusive Communities Portfolio

- An update was requested in relation to the relocation of the adult education service from Hardman Street to the Central Library building. In response it was stated that the intention was to maintain certain elements of the library service at Central Library and that the Chief Executive had been asked to undertake a review to determine the options available.
- It was queried whether the retention of library services at Central Library would mean that the adult education service would be required to remain in their current inadequate facilities.
- A timescale was requested in relation to when the review of the Central Library service would be complete.
- Concern was expressed in relation to the availability of data from Greater Manchester Police which made it difficult to assess performance in a number of areas.
- It was noted that there would be an opportunity to question partners from Greater Manchester Police when the Safer Stockport Partnership Annual Report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee later this year.
- £150,000 of earmarked reserved had been identified for investment in the in the control room. It was clarified that this related to some of the work that had been undertaken for the transition of operations to Stockport Homes and that a number of cameras had been identified that were not fully operational.
- Details of the new portfolio holder's priorities for tackling inequalities would be brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- A significant amount of support had been put in place to support Ukrainians relocating to Stockport.
- It was suggested that any future proposals relating to Stockport's district centres should be submitted to the Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in addition to this committee in view of the cross-cutting nature of the subject area.
- Greater Manchester Police should engage more regularly and consistently with local communities through Stockport's area committees.

#### Sustainable Stockport Portfolio

- It was intended that a report would be brought to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in relation to flood management that would also include the gully maintenance programme.
- An update was requested on the stalled development at Melford Road, Hazel Grove.
- Discussions were ongoing with TLC in relation to the savings that they needed to make to meet the budgetary challenges of the medium term financial plan. It was noted that the expectation from the Council was that this should minimise the impact on the public realm.
- There had been improvements in the green bin collection service and the service was far more resilient than it was last year. However, with regard to recruitment it was noted that inflation continued to rise rapidly and that it was possible that the rates paid by TLC could become uncompetitive again.

- Further clarity was requested with regard to the implementation of a Clean Air Zone for Greater Manchester and the implications for residents and businesses.
- The Housing Strategy was due to be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee which would provide some clarity around the Council's ambitions for affordable housing.
- It was noted that the Central Stockport Area Committee had passed a resolution last year with regard to the implementation of an Article 4 directive to protect residents who live in areas of high density where there had been an increase in the number of property conversions to HMOs. It was queried why the Council had not yet committed to including this within its Local Plan.
- There was no plan to reduce the temperature within swimming facilities in Stockport.
- It was requested that further information be provided on the number of young people who do not get 30 minutes of exercise, with a specific focus on whether this could be broken down geographically.
- The Council needed to more aggressively pursue the provision of EV charging points throughout the borough.
- The decrease in fly-tipping rates was welcomed and it was confirmed that in some cases the Council did try to obtain evidence from waste to pursue prosecutions. It was suggested that more publicity around successful prosecutions be provided.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **5. CLIMATE ACTION NOW (CAN) ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing the Climate Action Now (CAN) Annual Report for 2021//22.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- Further clarity was requested in relation to the new administration's approach to tackling climate change in the light of the motion they had proposed that had been critical about the pace of work in this area. In response, it was stated that following the agreement of the Council Meeting to that motion, there had been rapid progress made including the appointment of dedicated officer support in this area. It was noted that the Council was reliant on obtaining external funding for much of the work in this area.
- The work undertaken to engage young people through the Schools' Climate Assembly was highlighted.
- While there had been a significant number of achievements, the scale of the challenge was not underestimated.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **6. GAMBLING RELATED HARMS**

The Director of Strategy submitted a report of the Director of Public Health (copies of which had been circulated) outlining the legal context, the issue of gambling related harm

and the national, regional and local perspective, before summarising the actions being taking in Stockport to address this issue.

It was noted that the report had been prepared at the request of the Adults, Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Communities & Housing (Councillor Helen Foster-Grime) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

It was commented that there remained significant difficulties in this area including the proliferation of online gambling which meant that problem gambling was becoming increasingly hidden from view and online and television advertising for such services.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **7. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC SELECTION**

A representative of the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out a suggested process for the selection of scrutiny review topics and an explanation as to how the reviews would be supported.

The Committee was invited to choose a topic for their next review.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Council Meeting be recommended to include ‘Access to Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points’ within the 2022/23 Scrutiny Work Programme.

(2) That Councillors Steve Gribbon and Oliver Johnstone be nominated to sit on the proposed scrutiny review panel with authority being delegated to the Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance), in consultation with the Chair, to appoint other such members to the Panel as necessary.

## **8. 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 Strategic Head of Service & Monitoring Officer (Legal & Democratic Governance) be requested to make arrangements for an item to be programmed onto the agenda for a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in relation to ‘leisure centres post-pandemic’.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm