

CORPORATE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 28 February 2023
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Tom McGee (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Mike Hurleston (Vice-Chair); Councillors Stuart Corris, Jilly Julian, Janet Mobbs, Tom Morrison, Ian Powney and Charlie Stewart.

1. MINUTES

The minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 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.

The following interests were declared:

Personal interests

<u>Councillors</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Carole McCann Janet Mobbs	Agenda Item 15 – ‘Life Leisure Business Plan 2023/24’ as members of Life Leisure

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded (if required) for the following item as exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as containing information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the local authority):

Agenda item 15 ‘Life Leisure Business Plan 2023/24’

4. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

5. LIFE LEISURE BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining Life Leisure’s proposed business plan for the financial year 2023/24 and an

indication of the lively funding required for delivery of the plan, including active communities programmes and the operation of Council-owned/leased leisure centres.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, and the Head of Culture and Leisure, Peter Ashworth, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- The importance of growth and recovery in business post-pandemic was stressed.
- It was felt that this was an opportunity for the council to play a role in preventative health, improving health and reducing health inequality which had been deepened by the pandemic, as opposed to purely operators of facilities.
- It was advised that the model for health provision within the borough was likely to become a combination of facilities and outreach work in order to tackle health issues in a joined-up way.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. DRAFT FINAL REPORT: SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL - LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE SUSTAINABILITY

Chair of the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Review Panel, Councillor Mike Hurleston, submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the work of the panel's review of Local Government Financial and Governance Sustainability and sought the Scrutiny Committee's agreement for onward submission to Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

7. PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES REPORTS: QUARTER 3 UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had already been circulated) setting out the Quarter 3 Update Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports (PPRRs) for the Finance and Resources Portfolio. The Quarter 3 update focused on highlights and exceptions in relation to delivering the portfolio priorities since the mid-year report presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2022. The report included forecast performance and financial data (where this was available) for the portfolio, along with an update on the portfolio savings programme.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- A Cost of Living Task Force were meeting regularly and beginning to review the council and partner response to the cost of living crisis.

- Members were advised that staff in the council's finance department were offered high quality learning and development opportunities in supporting recruitment and retention.
- It was noted Stockport Council had a 98% council tax collection rate, and that collection rates were continuously monitored by the relevant department.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES QUARTER 3 UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which have been circulated) setting out the Quarter 3 Update Corporate Performance and Resource Report (CPRR) which provided a summary of progress in delivering the council's priority outcomes up to 31 December 2022, with a particular focus on the third quarter of 2022/23 (October to December 2022).

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was suggested that the presentation of the report be reviewed to make clear which services were provided by the council, partners and others, so that members could easily identify services within the council's remit.
- Members welcomed the positive investments made over the last year, and asked that consideration be given to the longer term potential impact on services once monies were exhausted and/ or no longer available.

RESOLVED –

- That the key achievements and other issues quarter in each of the councils seven priorities (in the Executive Summary) and analysis of corporate performance for 2022/23 (Section 2 – Corporate Performance: Overview and Analysis) be noted.
- That the Cash Limit and Non-Cash Limit forecast positions for 2022/23 as set out in section 3.3 and 3.6 be noted.
- That the update to the council's positive investments as set out in section 3.4 be noted.
- That the update on the council's Contain Outbreak Management Fund investments plan set out in section 3.5 be noted.
- That the Dedicated Schools Grant, Housing Revenue Account and Collection Fund forecast positions as set out in sections 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9 be noted.
- That the appropriations to/ from reserves and balances as set out in section 3.10 and the resulting reserves and balances position as of 31 December 2022 be noted.
- That the position for the 2022/23 Capital Programme as set out in section 4.1 be noted.
- That the adjustments and re-phasing of capital schemes during the quarter as set out in section 4.2 be noted.
- To endorse the resourcing of the capital programme as set out in section 4.3
- To endorse the 2022/23 prudential indicators as set out in section 4.4.

9. DRAFT CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN 2023/24

A representative of the Director of Strategy submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) stating that the LGA corporate peer process had taken place in Stockport between 1 and 4 November 2022.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- The review process involved officer and councillor peers from across the sector reviewing council services and functions through constructive and respectful challenge. The process enabled experience and expertise to be shared across the sector collectively, and was a central element of sector-led improvement.
- The final Local Government Association report contained 11 core recommendations.
- The report was considered to be a success and the recommendations contained within the report were found to be helpful, and were accompanied by an action plan to support their implementation.
- It was felt that recommendation two (maximise the benefits of Neighbourhood/ Area Working in the Borough) was considered to be timely, particularly in terms of the relationship between Area Committees and boundary review.
- Members welcomed recommendation four, the development of a comprehensive member development programme for May 2023, which could provide newly elected members with a comprehensive induction to Stockport Council. It was suggested that refresher training for long-standing members could be useful.
- It was noted that the structure of the leadership of the council had changed, and reflecting on those changes would allow for smarter decision making.
- Members requested an update to the report in 6 - 12 months' time.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance be requested to schedule an agenda item 'Update on the Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan 2023/24' for a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in 6 – 12 months' time.

10. TLC TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

A representative of the Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the progress to increase the resilience of the council's key public realm services through its wholly owned company Totally Local Company (TLC).

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, and the Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods, Emma Stubbs, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Following a review of TLC, a streamlined delivery model had been recommended in order to achieve a sustainable long-term approach in continuing to provide key council services whilst delivering efficiencies.
- It was noted that the programme had the potential to impact the workforce as the design phase developed. Trades unions had been, and would continue to be kept up to date throughout the process, and TLC were working closely with the council's Human Resources Team.

RESOLVED – (1) That progress made on the programme of work to date be noted.

(2) That a further update would be brought to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (June 2023) be noted.

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 - 2027-28

A representative of the Director of Development and Regeneration submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) of the Asset Management Plan Capital Programme which formed part of the council's annual budget papers and set out the budget requirement for capital works for future years.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- The Asset Management Plan Capital Programme sought to prioritise investment in the portfolio where required to ensure that the council had the right property in the right place, ensure that assets retained were fit for purpose, well maintained and supported modern and efficient service delivery with minimal environmental impact. Members noted that the capital programme was ambitious.
- It was reported that, although green measures such as solar panels brought benefits, the high energy costs could not be underestimated.
- Some planned work had been delayed when it is hoped there would be a higher degree of economic stability.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

12. ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the council's approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. The statement also incorporated the council's Gender Pay Gap (GPG) information, to which the council was obliged to publish on an annual basis under the GPG reporting requirements.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Malcolm Allan, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- It was reported that a large increase to the minimum wage was expected, and that cost of living pay rises could be issued.
- It was also reported that the gender pay gap was minimal at the council and that there has been a significant and welcome shift to female officers in a number of senior posts.
- Members welcomed the news that the council were attracting apprentices to Stockport Council.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

13. AREA COMMITTEE BOUNDARIES

The Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out the review undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England of the council's electoral arrangements and made recommendations for new warding patterns to be used for the May 2023 Local Elections onwards.

Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance, Vicki Bates, attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:

- Concern was expressed about the new ward boundaries, for example residents of Heald Green were up to two miles from the location of the Area Committee and would need to cross a busy road to attend.
- It was noted that some population sizes of wards had increased.
- It was suggested that ward boundaries be aligned with partner organisation boundaries such as the local police and fire services in order to improve joint working.
- Members were advised that the Area Committee boundaries report would be submitted for consideration and comment at Area Committee meetings and thereafter, the Cabinet, prior to a decision being made by the Council Meeting on 30 March 2023.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

14. COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURE RULES - AMENDMENTS

The Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Governance submitted a report (copies of which had already been circulated) detailing the considerations of the Constitution Working Party in relation to the potential for the introduction of a deadline for the submission of amendments to motions on notice at the Council Meeting.

It was noted that the matter had been previously considered by the Constitution Working Party at their meeting held on 16 February 2023.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

15. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Assistant Director for Legal and 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 – That the report be noted.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair announced that this was the final meeting of the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year and thanks were expressed to members and officers for their work to date.

The meeting closed at 7.04 pm